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A STUDY OF DYSFUNCTIONAL ATTITUDE, FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND GENDER DIFFERENCE AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

The current study designed to study dysfunctional attitude and family environment among adolescents and 150 (75 male and 75 female) adolescents has been selected from various schools located in Chandigarh. The age of the sample ranged between 16 to 18 years with a mean age of 16.37. Family Environment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1994), Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (Weissman & Beck, 1978) and statistical analysis of the obtained data has been done with the help of descriptive statistics and 't' values to discuss the results. The t-value revealed that a significant difference between the two sets of values. The obtained p-value reflected that the difference is statistically significant and it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in family environment between the two sets of data, but no significant difference in dysfunctional attitude.

Key words: Dysfunctional attitude, family environment, adolescents

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INTRODUCTION:

The dysfunctional attitude means a negative or counterproductive way of thinking or belief that can delay the wellbeing, relationship and overall functioning of a person.

Such attitude usually contributes toward maladaptive behavior, negative emotions and even hampers the personal growth. It can be very commonly associated with cognitive distortions pertaining to biased and irrational thoughts. The research examining dysfunctional attitudes as role

players in stressful situations are mainly related to macro stressors, or major life stress events. Research is being done to determine whether similar role is being played by micro stressors or hassles of daily life.

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale, (SRRS: Holmes and Rahe, 1967), measures major life events as sources of stress. It doesn't include the names you mentioned (Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, Lazarus) in its development. As for daily

hassles, it was indeed researchers (Lazarus and Folkman 1980s), expanded the stress and coping framework to include daily

On the other hand, Richard and Lazarus (1966) was a prominent psychologist known for his work on stress and coping. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which emphasizes the role of cognitive appraisal in the stress process as the Transactional Model on stress and coping. The relatively minor stressors or daily hassles that are common to everyday life may be more important sources of stress than the major even if less frequent, stressors assessed by most life events measures (Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, and Lazarus, 1981). These daily hassles are considered as the irritating, frustrating, stressful demands which characterize the daily dealings with the environment (Kanner et al., 1981).

It is revealed that the Daily Hassles Scale (DHS) which is a measure of such micro stressors is better at prediction of negative feelings and psychological symptoms than were measures of macro stressors (Olinger et al. 1987). The dysfunctional attitudes played an important role in moderating the effects of micro and macro stressors. The individuals were likely to perceive minor frustrations and demands of daily life in a more serious manner and threatening to one's own

hassles as significant contributors to overall stress and coping.

esteem and well-being had increased level of dysfunctional attitude. An accumulation of such micro stressors over time resulted in higher levels of emotional disturbance in these individuals than in those with more rational attitudes.

It appears that children, who develop borderline pathology, like adults who develop the disorder, have similar risk factors. It has been differentiated the group of children with the borderline disorder from children with other psychiatric disorders were physical abuse, sexual abuse, extreme neglect, and substance abuse by parents or criminality and the risk factors associated with it (Guzderet et.al., 1999). Cumulative abuse seemed to predict the disorder and was correlated with cumulative parental dysfunction.

The families may have a higher incidence of alcoholism as (Loranger , Oldham at. al., 1982), antisocial personality disorder (Soloff et al. in the year 1983, and other cluster personality disorder (Pope and Jonas et al. 1983), the same behavior found in BPD patients as mentioned (Clarkin, Marziali, Munroe-Blum 1991). Goldman et al. who reported high rates of psychopathology among family members of patients with the

personality disorder compared with a controlled group of other psychiatric disorders.

Depressed groups were characterized by dysfunctional attitudes on the elevated side but the same shown by the DAS were not specific to depression. Elevations were typically found in other clinical groups as (Hollon, Kendall, & Lumry 1986). Cognitive models for different psychological disorders lay emphasis on the content than the kind of dysfunctional thinking that is different for different disorders and this is termed as the cognitive content-specificity hypothesis as mentioned (Beck 1976) Elevations in some peculiar type of dysfunctional attitude has also been predicted for vulnerability to other disorders however the base lies on the hypothesized characteristic content of those disorders.

Family is the foundation of human existence and experiences. It is a ceaseless source of survival that contributes in determining the basic character of its members and cultivates their overall development. It is the leading source of acquired values and norms of the society. *“Family is a social unit in any society and the source of early stimulation and experience in children”* Collins (2007). Therefore, the environment that exists within the family is of great importance.

As the environment in which people live is not a mere situational unit, that ordains the track of their life, rather it is a varied progression of transactional dealings of life, in which, individuals act in order to shape the course of their personal development (Hultsch & Plemons, 1979; Baltes, 1983; Bandura, 1997). Therefore, family-environment is the most influential learning state in which parents and other family members act as educators and provide the composition in which their young ones are groomed.

According to Knafo and Plomin (2006) the quality of relationship and interaction among family members, have a significant role in inculcating cognitive and affective elements of the prosocial behaviour (i.e., empathy and social relatedness) in children. Thus, parent child communication and other family experiences are directly associated with the development of social behaviour among children.

Family environment not only affect and individual's actions and reactions, but various situations of one's life and achievements too. It influences a child at an earliest possible time of life, when child's tender mind is developing and is most acquiring. It must be encouraging for the overall growth of children through different phases of their

lives. Therefore an enriched and compassionate family environment helps in the accomplishment of high scholastic achievement in students (Daulta, 2008; Muola, 2010; Mishra & Bamba, 2012).

OBJECTIVES:

On the basis of aforesaid review, the following objectives have been formulated for the study conducted with the help of selected variables and targeted population:

To study the relationship between family environment and dysfunctional attitude among adolescents

To study the significant difference on family environment and dysfunctional attitude among adolescents

HYPOTHESES

It is expected that there is a significant relationship on family environment and dysfunctional attitude among adolescents

There is a significant difference on family environment, dysfunctional attitude and gender difference among adolescents.

SAMPLE:

The proposed sample of the present study comprised of 150 adolescents (75 males and 75 females) randomly selected from different schools located in Chandigarh. The age of the sample ranged

between 16 to 18 years with a mean age of 16.37. The verbal consent has also been sought from the selected sample and all have been assured about the anonymity of their participation in the current study and also assured about confidentiality of their obtained results.

TOOLS USED:

Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (Weissman & Beck, 1978)

It consists of 90 items in ten subscales that measure the social environmental characteristics of all types of families. The ten FES subscales assess three underlying domains or sets of dimensions.

Family Environment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1994):

It is an instrument which is also used as a self reporting one for assessment of attitudes associated with symptoms of depression. It contains two 40-item forms that are DAS-A and DAS-B, whereas earlier it was a 100 item form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

After completion of scoring done as per the mentioned procedure of the respective manuals, all the data has been tabulated as per mentioned statistical analyses.

TABLE-1: Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis on Family Environment

| Family Environment | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------|
| | Male | Female |
| Mean | 76.74 | 78.30 |
| SD | 11.66 | 9.51 |
| Skewness | -0.71 | -.26 |
| Kurtosis | .33 | -.04 |

The average Family Environment score for males is 76.74 and for Females: The average Family Environment score for females is 78.30 whereas for males The Family Environment scores for males have a standard deviation of 11.66. This indicates the extent of variability or dispersion of scores around the mean. For Females: The Family Environment scores for females have a standard deviation of 9.51. A lower standard deviation suggests less variability in the scores for females compared to males. For Males: The skewness is -0.71. A negative skewness indicates a slight leftward (negative) skewness, suggesting that the distribution of Family Environment scores for males is slightly skewed towards higher values. For Females: The skewness is -0.26. Similarly, a negative skewness for females indicates a slight leftward skewness, suggesting that the distribution of Family Environment

scores for females is slightly skewed towards higher values.

The skewness is -0.71. A negative skewness indicates a slight leftward (negative) skewness, suggesting that the distribution of Family Environment scores for males is slightly skewed towards higher values. For Females: The skewness is -0.26. Similarly, a negative skewness for females indicates a slight leftward skewness, suggesting that the distribution of Family Environment scores for females is slightly skewed towards higher values. For Males: The kurtosis is 0.33. A positive kurtosis indicates that the distribution of Family Environment scores for males has slightly heavier tails and a slightly sharper peak than a normal distribution. For Females: The kurtosis is -0.04. A negative kurtosis suggests that the distribution of Family Environment scores for females

has slightly lighter tails and a slightly flatter peak than a normal distribution.

In summary, the mean gives you an idea of the central tendency, the standard deviation measures the spread of scores,

skewness indicates the asymmetry of the distribution, and kurtosis describes the shape of the distribution (whether it is more or less peaked and whether the tails are heavier or lighter than a normal distribution).

TABLE-II: Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis on Dysfunctional Attitude:

| Dysfunctional Attitude | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Mean | 53.83 | 57.13 |
| SD | 13.45 | 13.22 |
| Skewness | -.31 | -.57 |
| Kurtosis | -.32 | -.20 |

The mean represents the average value of the data. In this context, it suggests that the average dysfunctional attitude is higher in the second set compared to the first set. The standard deviation indicates the spread or dispersion of the data points. In this case, both sets have relatively similar standard deviations, suggesting comparable levels of variability. Skewness measures the asymmetry of the distribution. Negative skewness indicates that the distribution is skewed to the left. Both sets have negative skewness, suggesting a slight leftward skew in the distribution of dysfunctional attitude.

The negative kurtosis indicates a distribution that is less heavy-tailed than a normal distribution. Both sets have negative kurtosis, suggesting a distribution with lighter tails compared to a normal distribution. In summary, the second set has a higher mean, slightly lower skewness, and slightly higher kurtosis compared to the first set, indicating differences in the central tendency, skewness, and kurtosis of the dysfunctional attitude data between the two sets

Table-III: Mean, Standard Deviations, 't' value on family environment and dysfunctional attitude among adolescents

| S. No | VARIABLES | MEAN | SD | t-ratio | p-value |
|-------|------------------------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| 1 | Family Environment | 29.77 | 5.85 | 3.97 | .000** |
| | | 26.58 | 7.05 | | |
| 2 | Dysfunctional Attitude | 36.17 | 4.53 | 0.69 | .48 |
| | | 36.70 | 5.68 | | |

**significant at 0.01 level

The obtained mean value 29.77, SD- 5.85 and P-value is 000 is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. There are two sets of values provided representing two groups or time points. The first set has a mean of 29.77 and an SD of 5.85, while the second set has a mean of 26.58 and an SD of 7.05. The t-ratio of 3.97 suggests a significant difference between the two sets of values. The p-value of .000 indicates that the difference is statistically significant at a conventional significance level of 0.05.

Mean-36.17, SD-4.53 and p-value: .48 (not statistically significant and 't' ratio is 0.69, Similar to the family environment, there are two sets of values.

The first set has a mean of 36.17 and an SD of 4.53, while the second set has a mean of 36.70 and an SD of 5.68. The t-ratio of 0.69 suggests a smaller difference between the two sets of values for dysfunctional attitude compared to family environment. The p-value of .48 indicates that this difference is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, suggesting that any observed difference could be due to random variation. It can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in family environment between the two sets of data, but no significant difference in dysfunctional attitude. The t-ratio and p-value are essential in interpreting the significance of these differences.

Table-IV: Mean, Standard Deviations, ‘t’ value on family environment dysfunctional attitude and gender difference among adolescents

| S. No | VARIABLES | GENDER | MEAN | SD | t-ratio | p-value |
|-------|------------------------|--------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| 1 | Family Environment | Male | 30.16 | 6.82 | 4.82 | .000** |
| | | Female | 24.28 | 7.05 | | |
| 2 | Dysfunctional Attitude | Male | 35.18 | 4.43 | 0.69 | .47 |
| | | Female | 34.51 | 6.16 | | |

**significant at 0.01 level

The obtained mean value of Male 30.16, SD = 6.82 Female: Mean = 24.28, SD = 7.05, **t-ratio: 4.82, p-value: .000**** (significant at a high level, likely $p < 0.001$). Male: Mean = 35.18, SD = 4.43, Female: SD = 4.98, **‘t’-ration: 0.69, p-value: .47** (not significant, likely $p > 0.05$). In the context of a t-test, the t-ratio represents the difference between the means of the two groups relative to the variability within each group. The p-value indicates the probability of observing such a difference if there were no true difference in the population.

For the Family Environment variable, the significant p-value suggests that there is likely a significant difference between males and females in terms of family environment. On the other hand, for the Dysfunctional Attitude variable, the non-significant p-value suggests that there is no significant difference between males and females in terms of dysfunctional attitude.

The **t-ratio** is a measure of the size of the difference relative to the variability in the data. A larger t-ratio, especially in conjunction with a small p-value, indicates a more substantial and likely meaningful difference.

It's important to note that the interpretation of these results should be done in the context of your study design, the specific hypotheses you tested, and the characteristics of your sample. Additionally, it seems like there might be a formatting issue with the provided information (missing standard deviation for females in Dysfunctional attitude. It has also highlighted the protective role of secure attachment in buffering the impact of family stressors on the development of dysfunctional attitudes (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007).

Research suggests that parenting styles significantly influence the development of dysfunctional attitudes in

adolescents. Authoritarian or overly permissive parenting styles may contribute to the formation of negative thought patterns. It is revealed that adolescents raised in families characterized by high levels of criticism and low warmth were more likely to develop dysfunctional attitude (Beck, et al. (2001).

Communication within the family is vital in shaping an adolescent's cognitive and emotional well-being. Poor communication patterns, such as lack of open dialogue or excessive criticism, have been linked to dysfunctional attitudes. Further it has also corroborated that the importance of positive communication and family cohesion in protecting adolescents from developing dysfunctional attitude (Fincham and Beach, 1999).

Research on family environment and dysfunctional attitudes among adolescents is a broad and multifaceted field that encompasses various psychological, sociological, and developmental perspectives. Dysfunctional attitudes refer to negative thought patterns and beliefs that can contribute to emotional distress and maladaptive behaviors. In conclusion, research on family environment and dysfunctional attitudes among adolescents is a complex and evolving field. It highlights the importance of considering various factors, including

parenting styles, family dynamics, genetics, and cultural influences, to better understand and address dysfunctional attitudes in adolescents. Further research is needed to explore the nuanced interactions among these variables and their implications for mental health outcomes in adolescence and beyond. The parental negative cognitive styles were associated with the transmission of dysfunctional attitudes to their adolescent children (Alloy et al. 2001).

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