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Research Article

# A Comparative Study to Assess Adjustment Problems among Adolescents on the basis of Gender

Nazira Shaban[1], Perkash Kour[2], Mohd Ayoub Dar[3], Massrat Majeed[4]

[1,4]MSc Nursing Scholar, [2,3]Assistant Professor, MMINSR, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India.
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## I N F O

**Corresponding Author:**
Nazira Shaban, MMINSR, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India.
**E-mail Id:**
naazirashaban@gmail.com
**Orcid Id:**
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8657-2979
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## A B S T R A C T

*Background:* Adjustment is an important concern during the adolescent stage. It is a behavioural process for maintaining the equilibrium of one's needs and obstacles offered by the environment. The rapid changes in the contemporary society contribute to adjustment problems among adolescents. Adjusting to constant changes in their internal as well as external environment becomes a major challenge during this stage. This study was conducted to assess the adjustment problems faced by adolescent boys in comparison to adolescent girls in the home, health, social, and emotional areas.

*Methodology:* Quantitative research approach with a comparative descriptive research design was used to assess and compare the adjustment problems among adolescent boys and girls. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data from the 100 adolescent students (50 boys and 50 girls) using Bell's adjustment inventory by RK Ojha.

*Results & Conclusion:* Data analysis revealed that there is a significant difference in the adjustment problems among adolescent boys and girls ($p = 0.019$). On comparison, adolescent girls have been found to be suffering from more adjustment problems (mean ± SD = 66.84 ± 16.853) than boys (mean ± SD = 58.60 ± 17.682). No significant association could be found between the adjustment problems of boys with residence, type of family, education of parents, occupation of parents, and religion, while a significant association could be found between adjustment problems among girls and type of family ($p = 0.02$).

**Keywords:** Adjustment, Adjustment Problems, Home Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Health Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment, Adolescent Students

## Introduction

Stanley Hall, the father of adolescence, defines adolescence as "the period of storm and stress of human life". Storm refers to a decreased level of self-control, and stress refers to an increased level of sensitivity.[1] As per W.H.O, adolescents are individuals between 10 to 19 years of age.[2] It is the period of rapid physical and physiological

transition which makes adolescents particularly vulnerable to emotional and behavioural disorder. The term adolescence has emerged from the Latin verb "Adolescere" which means "to grow".[3] It is a changeover age from childhood to adulthood. A thorough understanding of adolescence in society depends on information from various perspectives, including psychology, biology, history, sociology, education, and anthropology. Within all of these perspectives, adolescence is viewed as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, whose cultural purpose is the preparation of children for adult roles.[4] Adolescents form 21.4% population in India which equals 1/5th of the total population.[5] By 2025, the world population is expected to include more than 830 million people in the age group of 12 to 18 years.[6] Adolescence has been defined as "a period of great risk to healthy development" (Takanishi, 1993, p.86). 25-50% of the adolescents are believed to be involved in risky behaviours that lead to adverse health and behaviour outcomes like sexually transmitted diseases, drug abuse, and unwanted pregnancy (Weissberg, Caplan, and Harwood, 1991). During this transition, there is an increase in reporting of several problems such as depression, suicidal thoughts, and substance abuse (Dubow et al, 1990). Dryfoos (1991) approximated that one in four children, or 7 million children are in need of immediate intensive intervention for high-risk behaviour.[7] It is also a critical age educationally, if you're not well and don't have high well-being, you may not reach your educational potential. This has implications for the individual for higher education and also for entering the workforce.[8] To contribute effectively towards the prevention of adjustment problems, and thereby mental health problems among adolescents, nurses need to undertake studies of the present nature.

## Material and Methods

This study used a quantitative research approach with a comparative descriptive research design. Ethical clearance was taken from the Institutional Ethics Committee prior to the start of the study and from authorities of the selected higher secondary school prior to data collection. Data collection was done in a time frame of almost four weeks in the month of 2020. Data were collected after obtaining consent from the study subjects. Non-probability convenient sampling technique was used to select the study subjects from a selected higher secondary school of Baramulla, Kashmir. Online data were collected from 119 adolescent students, out of which only 100 were taken for analysis due to various reasons, 50 from each gender. The inclusion standard included those students who were in the age group of 13-19 years, studied in 11th and 12th standard, were available at the time of data collection and were willing to participate in the study. The standard excluded those students who were not willing to participate and those who were not available during the data collection period. The data for the study was collected by using Bell's adjustment inventory-student form by Dr RK Ojha, which was put in section II of the tool while the items related to demographic data were kept in section I of the tool. They included gender, residence, type of family, education of parents, occupation of parents, and religion. Data were analysed by applying SPSS-16. To make the comparison, t-test and F-test were used, and the association of adjustment problems with demographic variables was calculated by using Chi-square test.

## Results

The findings of the study are discussed under four separate sections which are as follows:

### Section I: Analysis of Demographic Data of Study Subjects

Table 1, reveals that 50% of the study subjects were males and 50% were females, 67% belonged to town and 33% were from villages, father of 28% of the students were post-graduate, 23% were graduate, 16% were qualified up to higher secondary, 27% were middle school pass, and only 6% were illiterate. The table further depicts that mothers of 22% of the students were illiterate, 27% were middle school pass, 21% had qualified higher secondary, 20% were graduate, and 10% of them were postgraduate. It also shows that most of the students (73%) had unemployed mothers, 13% of them had self-employed mothers, and the mothers of 14% of the subjects were government employees. 61% of the students had their fathers working as Govt. employees, while the fathers of 32% of the students were self-employed, and of 7% of the subjects were unemployed. Majority of the subjects (94%) were Muslims and only 6% were Sikhs.

### Section II: Adjustment Problems among Adolescent Students on the basis of Gender

Table 2, shows that adolescent girls have more overall adjustment problems with mean ± SD found to be 66.84 ± 16.853 and median 65.00 as compared to adolescent boys with mean ± SD found to be 58.60 ± 17.682 and median 59.60.

Table 3, shows that both adolescent girls, as well as boys, were having more adjustment problems in the area of emotional adjustment with mean ± SD found to be 21.06 ± 5.954 for girls and 17.48 ± 6.750 for boys followed by the areas of social adjustment with the value of mean ± SD calculated to be 18.90 ± 3.872 for girls and 17.38 ± 4.823 for boys, home adjustment problems with mean ± SD calculated to be 14.08 ± 6.050 for girls and 12.76 ± 5.902 for boys, and health adjustment problems with mean ± SD found to be 12.80 ± 6.269 for girls and 10.98 ± 6.149 for boys.

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### Section III: Comparison of Adjustment Problems among Adolescent Students on the basis of Gender

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in the level of adjustment problems among adolescent girls with mean ± SD value found to be 66.84 ± 16.853 and boys with mean ± SD value found to be 58.60 ± 17.682. The t-value calculated is 2.385, which is significant (p = 0.019) at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 5 shows that there is a significant difference among adolescent boys and girls in the home adjustment problems (p = 0.038), social adjustment problems (p = 0.038), and emotional adjustment problems (p = 0.035) whereas no significant difference was found in the area of health adjustment problem (p = 0.205) among adolescent boys and girls.

### Section IV: Association of Adjustment Problems among Adolescent Students with their Selected Demographic Variables

Table 6 shows that there is no significant association of adjustment problems among boys with their selected demographic variables like residence (p = 0.197), type of family (p = 0.722), education of father (p = 0.878), education of mother (p = 0.296), occupation of father (p = 0.372), occupation of mother (p = 0.937), and religion (p = 0.720).

**Table 1.Socio-demographic Profile of Study Subjects**

| Socio-demographic Profile of Study Subjects | | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 50 | 50 |
| | Female | 50 | 50 |
| Residence | Village | 33 | 33 |
| | Town | 67 | 67 |
| Type of family | Joint | 33 | 33 |
| | Nuclear | 63 | 63 |
| | Extended | 4 | 4 |
| Education of father | Illiterate | 6 | 6 |
| | Middle pass | 27 | 27 |
| | Higher secondary | 16 | 16 |
| | Graduate | 23 | 23 |
| | Postgraduate | 28 | 28 |
| Education of mother | Illiterate | 22 | 22 |
| | Middle pass | 27 | 27 |
| | Higher secondary | 21 | 21 |
| | Graduate | 20 | 20 |
| | Postgraduate | 10 | 10 |
| Occupation of father | Govt. employee | 61 | 61 |
| | Self-employed | 32 | 32 |
| | Unemployed | 7 | 7 |
| Occupation of mother | Govt. employee | 14 | 14 |
| | Self-employed | 13 | 13 |
| | Unemployed | 73 | 73 |
| Religion | Muslim | 94 | 94 |
| | Sikh | 6 | 6 |

**Table 2.Mean, Median, Range, SD, and Mean percentage of overall Adjustment Problems as per Gender of Adolescents**

| | Gender | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean ± SD | Median | Mean % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Adjustment Problem | Boys | 78 | 22 | 100 | 58.60 ± 17.682 | 59.50 | 58.60 |
| | Girls | 71 | 34 | 105 | 66.84 ± 16.853 | 65.00 | 63.66 |

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**Table 3.Mean, Median, Range, SD, and Mean percentage of Area wise Adjustment Problems among Adolescent Students as per their Gender**

| Areas | Gender | N | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean ± SD | Median | Mean % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Home | Boys | 50 | 23 | 3 | 26 | 12.76 ± 5.902 | 12.00 | 49.08 |
| | Girls | 50 | 25 | 3 | 28 | 14.08 ± 6.050 | 13.50 | 50.29 |
| Health | Boys | 50 | 35 | 0 | 35 | 10.98 ± 6.149 | 11.00 | 31.37 |
| | Girls | 50 | 21 | 5 | 26 | 12.80 ± 6.269 | 11.50 | 49.23 |
| Social Adjustment | Boys | 50 | 18 | 10 | 28 | 17.38 ± 4.823 | 16.00 | 62.07 |
| | Girls | 50 | 16 | 11 | 27 | 18.90 ± 3.872 | 19.50 | 70.00 |
| Emotional Adjustment | Boys | 50 | 29 | 2 | 31 | 17.48 ± 6.750 | 18.50 | 56.39 |
| | Girls | 50 | 26 | 8 | 34 | 21.06 ± 5.954 | 21.50 | 61.94 |

**Table 4.Comparison of Overall Adjustment Problems among Adolescent Students on the basis of Gender**

| | Gender | N | Mean ± SD | t-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Adjustment Problems | Boys | 50 | 58.60 ± 17.682 | 2.385 | 0.019 |
| | Girls | 50 | 66.84 ± 16.853 | | |

**Table 5.Area wise Comparison of Adjustment Problems among Adolescent Students on the basis of Gender**

| Area of Adjustment | Levels of Adjustment Problems | Gender | | | | | | F-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Boys | | Girls | | Total | | | |
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % | | |
| Home Adjustment | Less Adjustment Problem | 5 | 10.0 | 1 | 2.0 | 6 | 6.0 | 2.04 | 0.038* |
| | Moderate Adjustment Problem | 14 | 28.0 | 18 | 36.0 | 32 | 32.0 | | |
| | More Adjustment Problem | 31 | 62.0 | 31 | 62.0 | 62 | 62.0 | | |
| | Total | 50 | 100.0 | 50 | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 | | |
| Health Adjustment | Less Adjustment Problem | 12 | 24.0 | 2 | 4.0 | 14 | 14.0 | 1.098 | 0.205 |
| | Moderate Adjustment Problem | 8 | 16.0 | 20 | 40.0 | 28 | 28.0 | | |
| | More Adjustment Problem | 30 | 60.0 | 28 | 56.0 | 58 | 58.0 | | |
| | Total | 50 | 100.0 | 50 | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 | | |
| Social Adjustment | Aggressive | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2.65 | 0.002* |
| | Average | 36 | 72.0 | 34 | 68.0 | 70 | 70.0 | | |
| | Retiring | 14 | 28.0 | 16 | 32.0 | 30 | 30.0 | | |
| | Total | 50 | 100.0 | 50 | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 | | |
| Emotional Adjustment | Less Adjustment Problem | 4 | 8.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 4.0 | 2.14 | 0.035* |
| | Moderate Adjustment Problem | 6 | 12.0 | 2 | 4.0 | 8 | 8.0 | | |
| | More Adjustment Problem | 40 | 80.0 | 48 | 96.0 | 88 | 88.0 | | |
| | Total | 50 | 100.0 | 50 | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 | | |

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**Table 6.Association of Adjustment Problems among Adolescent Boys with their Demographic Variables**

| Variable | Category | Less adjustment problem | Moderate adjustment problem | More Adjustment problem | Chi-square | df | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Residence | Village | 0 | 7 | 14 | 3.253 | 2 | 0.197 |
| | Town | 1 | 14 | 24 | | | |
| Type of family | Joint | 0 | 6 | 15 | 2.073 | 4 | 0.722 |
| | Nuclear | 1 | 5 | 21 | | | |
| | Extended | 0 | 0 | 2 | | | |
| Education of father | Illiterate | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3.763 | 8 | 0.878 |
| | 10th | 1 | 3 | 10 | | | |
| | 12th | 0 | 1 | 5 | | | |
| | Graduate | 0 | 2 | 9 | | | |
| | Postgraduate | 0 | 4 | 13 | | | |
| Education of mother | Illiterate | 0 | 3 | 7 | 9.579 | 8 | 0.296 |
| | 10th | 1 | 4 | 8 | | | |
| | 12th | 0 | 1 | 9 | | | |
| | Graduate | 0 | 0 | 10 | | | |
| | Postgraduate | 0 | 3 | 4 | | | |
| Occupation of father | Govt employee | 0 | 8 | 27 | 4.258 | 4 | 0.372 |
| | Self-employed | 1 | 3 | 8 | | | |
| | Unemployed | 0 | 0 | 3 | | | |
| Occupation of mother | Govt employee | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0.814 | 4 | 0.937 |
| | Self-employed | 0 | 2 | 7 | | | |
| | Unemployed | 1 | 8 | 25 | | | |
| Religion | Islam | 1 | 11 | 36 | 0.658 | 2 | 0.720 |
| | Sikhism | 0 | 0 | 2 | | | |

**Table 7.Association of Adjustment Problems among Adolescent Girls with their Demographic Variables**

| Variable | Category | Less adjustment problem | Moderate adjustment problem | More Adjustment problem | Chi-square | df | p-value | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Residence | Village | 0 | 0 | 12 | 1.008 | 1 | 0.315 | |
| | Town | 0 | 3 | 35 | | | | |
| Type of family | Joint | 0 | 0 | 12 | 7.644 | 2 | 0.02 | SIG |
| | Nuclear | 0 | 2 | 34 | | | | |
| | Extended | 0 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Education of father | Illiterate | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4.537 | 4 | 0.338 | |
| | 10th | 0 | 0 | 13 | | | | |
| | 12th | 0 | 1 | 8 | | | | |
| | Graduate | 0 | 1 | 11 | | | | |
| | Postgraduate | 0 | 0 | 11 | | | | |

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| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education of mother | Illiterate | 0 | 1 | 11 | 1.671 | 4 | 0.796 | |
| | 10th | 0 | 0 | 14 | | | | |
| | 12th | 0 | 1 | 10 | | | | |
| | Graduate | 0 | 1 | 9 | | | | |
| | Postgraduate | 0 | 0 | 3 | | | | |
| Occupation of father | Govt employee | 0 | 1 | 25 | 1.037 | 2 | 0.5 | |
| | Self-employed | 0 | 2 | 18 | | | | |
| | Unemployed | 0 | 0 | 4 | | | | |
| Occupation of mother | Govt employee | 0 | 1 | 6 | 1.160 | 2 | 0.5 | |
| | Self-employed | 0 | 0 | 4 | | | | |
| | Unemployed | 0 | 3 | 37 | | | | |
| Religion | Islam | 0 | 2 | 44 | 2.783 | 1 | 0.095 | |
| | Sikhism | 0 | 1 | 3 | | | | |

Table 7 shows that there was a statistically significant association between adjustment problems among adolescent girls with demographic variable, type of family (p = 0.02), whereas no significant association was found for other demographic variables like residence (p = 0.315), education of father (p = 0.338), education of mother (p = 0.796), occupation of father (p = 0.5), occupation of mother (p = 0.5), and religion (p = 0.095).

## Discussion

The findings of the present study have been discussed under as:

1. Comparing the Adjustment Problems among Adolescents on the basis of Gender

The result of the study showed that the mean ± SD for overall adjustment problems among adolescent girls was 66.84 ± 16.853 which is higher than boys (58.60 ± 17.682). It was also found that home adjustment problems among girls were higher with a mean ± SD of 14.08 ± 6.050 as compared to boys with a mean ± SD of 12.76 ± 5.902. The mean ± SD for boys and girls in health adjustment problems was 10.98 ± 6.149 and 12.80 ± 6.296 respectively. The social adjustment problems were found to be more among adolescent girls with a mean ± SD of 18.90 ± 3.872 than boys with a mean ± SD of 17.38 ± 4.823. For girls, emotional adjustment problems were again higher with a mean ± SD of 21.06 ± 5.954 than boys with a mean ± SD of 17.48 ± 6.750.

The findings of the current study are comparable to a study conducted by Agarwal A et al.[9] (2017) on 64 adolescent students. The results of the study showed that in overall adjustment, the mean ± SD was found to be 51.53 ± 13.38 for boys and for girls, it was 59.18 ± 13.38. In home adjustment, for boys, the mean ± SD was 13.68 ± 4.276, for girls, it was 13.46 ± 5.333. In health adjustment, the mean ± SD for boys was 10 ± 4.54, for girls, it was 10.34 ± 5.76. In social adjustment, the mean ± SD of boys was 16.40 ± 4.07, for girls it was 18.90 ± 3.14. In emotional adjustment, the mean ± SD for boys and girls was 11.43 ± 5.81 and 16.46 ± 7.13 respectively.

The findings of both the studies concluded that adjustment problems are more among adolescent girls than boys. The reasons for this could be over expectation of the society from girls, perceived emotional weakness within the girls, and biological/ hormonal changes like early onset of puberty.

2. Association between adjustment problems of boys with selected demographic variables i.e., residence, type of family, education of father, education of mother, occupation of father, occupation of mother, and religion

The results of the current study showed that there was statistically no significant association between the adjustment problems among adolescent boys with their selected demographic variables like residence (p = 0.197), type of family (p = 0.722), education of father (p = 0.878), education of mother (p = 0.296), occupation of father (p = 0.372), occupation of mother (p = 0.937), and religion (p = 0.720). The calculated chi-square values were less than the table value at the 0.05 level of significance.

In a similar study conducted by Varghese et al.10 (2018) on adjustment problems among adolescents and its association with various variables, the results showed that there was no significant association between adjustment problems and type of family (p < 0.085), education of father (p < 0.100), occupation of father (p < 0.448), and occupation of mother (p < 0.119), whereas a significant association was found between adjustment problems and education of mother (p < 0.019).

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3. Association between adjustment problems of girls with their selected demographic variables i.e., residence, type of family, education of father, education of mother, occupation of father, occupation of mother, and religion

The results of the current study revealed that there is a statistically significant association between the adjustment problems among girls and type of family (p = 0.02), while no statistically significant association was found between the adjustment problems among adolescent girls and other demographic variables like residence (p = 0.315), education of father (p = 0.338), education of mother(p = 0.796), occupation of father (p = 0.5), occupation of mother (p = 0.5), and religion (p = 0.095).

In a similar study conducted by Rehman R, and Singh H11 (2015) to find the association between the adjustment problems of adolescent students and their type of family in U.P. India, the findings revealed that 35% of girls of nuclear families were found to have more adjustment problems and 15.6% had fewer adjustment problems. 17.5% of the girls of joint families had more adjustment problems in all areas and 31.9% had fewer adjustment problems. Association between the adjustment problems and type of family was found statistically significant at p < 0.01.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that on comparing the adjustment problems among adolescent boys and girls, it was found that adolescent girls had more adjustment problems than boys (p = 0.019). No significant association could be found between the adjustment problems of boys with selected demographic variables like residence, type of family, education of parents, occupation of parents, and religion. For girls, a significant association was found between adjustment problems and the demographic variable, type of family (p = 0.02), while no significant association was found with other demographic variables like residence, education of parents, occupation of parents, and religion.

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