



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2020; 6(2): 361-366
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 17-12-2019
Accepted: 09-01-2020

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Adjustment among rural and urban female college students

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Abstract

The aim was to study the adjustment among female college students. The objective was to study the adjustment among rural and urban female college students and to compare the level of adjustment between rural and urban female college students. It was hypothesised that there will be a significant difference in adjustment between rural and urban female college students. A Quasi experimental between group design and purposive sampling was opted for the study. The sample consisted of 60 rural and 60 urban female college students pursuing their degree course aged between 19 to 21 years. Students scoring more than cut off point on General Health Questionnaire and reporting any major physical or psychological problems were not considered for the study. Students were administered Kuppaswamy Socio-economic Scale was used to identify students belonging to middle Socio-economic status. Rural and urban female students belonging to middle socio economic status were administered the screening tool of General Health Questionnaire and students scoring above the cut off point were not assessed further. Rest of the students were administered Adjustment Inventory for College Students. The assessment tool was scored and results analysed. Statistical analysis was done by using, 't' test for the scores on different areas of adjustment between rural and urban college students. The results showed that on adjustment inventory for college students; overall the rural female students had average adjustment whereas urban female students had unsatisfactory adjustment. The 't' scores and the significance values indicated that there is a significant difference between urban and rural area on different areas of adjustment Scale.

Keywords: Adjustment, rural college students, urban college students, female college students

Introduction

Adjustment is also a very important aspect for the students of all courses. Adjustment to the environment requires a workable relationship between the persons need and expectations those of his society. Professional Social adjustment problems were found common among students (Dohrenwend 1998) [3].

Adjustment, in psychology, is defined as the behavioural process by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles of their environments. Recent development in this area has recognised the importance of positive psychological states, and has highlighted the necessity of assessing both positive and negative affect in relation to coping (Folkman, 1997; Folkman, and Moskowitz, 2000) [6, 7].

Adjustment is harmonious relationship with the environment involving the ability to satisfy most of one's needs and most of the demands, both physical and social that is put upon one (Wolman, Dictionary of Behavioural sciences, 1989) [31]. Adjustment is a state in which the needs of the individual on the one hand and the claims of the environment on the other are fully satisfied (Eysenck, Arnold, W and Meili - Encyclopedia of Psychology, 1972) [5]. Adjustment refers to the extent to which an individual personality functions efficiently in the world of people (Hurlock, 1978) [12]. According to Ramsay *et al.* (1999) [23], adjustment describes the fit between students and the academic environment.

The college years represent a developmentally challenging transition to adulthood, and untreated mental illness may have significant implications for academic success, productivity, substance use, and social relationships (Justin Hunt and Daniel Eisenberg, 2009) [13].

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Fong and Peskin (1969) [8] who did the earliest study examined gender differences in adaptation. They suggested that female students experience more strain than their male counterparts. Other studies that examined international students showed that female students had higher emotional, physiological, and behavioural reactions to stressors (Misra *et al.* 2003) [18] and also were more likely to feel homesick and lonely than were male students (Rajapaksa and Dundes 2002) [22].

Several researchers have investigated how students' language proficiency in English affects their adjustment (Poyrazli *et al.* 2002; Swami *et al.* 2009) [11, 28]. Poyrazli *et al.* (2002) [21] measured the general adjustment in their study involved the ability to negotiate issues related to education, cultural adjustment, and the establishment of social relationships with Americans. Success in these areas depended on the students' ability to communicate in English. Similarly, Swami *et al.* (2009) [28] found that Malaysian students with higher English proficiency were better adapted in Britain.

Sumer *et al.* (2008) [27] studied the predictors of depression and anxiety among students and found that social support had a significant contribution to the model in predicting depression. Besides background variables that have been discussed above, personality variables also play significant roles in adjustment. In fact, Wang (2008) [30] highlighted that personality variables have been studied individually or in a small group in adjustment without having an overarching framework. Ward *et al.* (2004) discovered that socio cultural adaptation, agreeableness and conscientiousness were also linked to psychological well-being.

Methodology

The objective was to study the adjustment among rural and urban female college students and to compare the level of adjustment between rural and urban female college students. It was hypothesised that there will be a there will be a significant difference in adjustment between rural and urban female college students. A Quasi experimental between group design and purposive sampling was opted for the study.

The sample consisted of 60 rural and 60 urban female college students pursuing their degree course aged between 19 to 21 years. Students were administered Kuppuswamy Socio-economic Scale was used to identify students belonging to middle Socio-economic status. Students scoring more than cut off point on General Health Questionnaire and reporting any major physical or psychological problems were not considered for the study. Rest of the students were administered Stress Response Checklist and Adjustment Inventory for College Students. Both the assessment tools were scored and results analysed. Appropriate statistical analysis was done to understand the difference in adjustment between rural and urban college students.

Tools

General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg & Hillier, 1972) [10]

The GHQ is used as screening tool to detect those likely to have or be at risk of developing psychiatric disorders, it is a measure of the common mental health problems/domains of depression, anxiety, somatic symptoms and social

withdrawal. It is a self-administered questionnaire in which the patients base their responses on their health state over the past two weeks. Respondents indicate if their current "state" differs from his or her usual state - thereby assessing change in characteristics and not lifelong personality characteristics.

The GHQ-28 is appropriate for individuals who are at least 11 years of age. The scale takes less than 15 minutes to administer and score (appears easy to complete).

Available in a variety of versions using 12, 28, 30 or 60 items, the 28-item version is used most widely. This is not only because of time considerations but also because the GHQ28 has been used most widely in other working populations, allowing for more valid comparisons. Validity across studies shows Reliability coefficients ranging from 0.78 to 0.95 in various studies.

Kuppuswamy's Socio-Economic Status Scale Revised (Kuppuswamy, 2014):

The Kuppuswamy scale proposed in 1976, measures the Socio economic status of an individual based on three variables namely, education and occupation of the head of the household and income of the family of the three variables. Of the three variables, education and occupation of the head of the household do not change frequently with time. The scale consists of 21 Items which could be self-administered. The reliability of the scale on test-retest method was 0.93. The content validity was tested of proposed socio economic status scale by opinion of subject experts (Kusum Lata Gaur, 2013) [16]. In the present study kuppuswamy scale was used to identify the students belonging to higher socio economic status and lower socio economic status.

Adjustment Inventory for College Students (Sinha & Singh, 1996) [25]

The inventory measures adjustment in five areas - home, health, social, emotional and educational. It is standardized on 1550 and 730 female students. It consists of 102 questions. It is a 'Yes' or 'No' form of Inventory. The responses are scored according to the scoring key and norms provided by the author. As mentioned above five areas of adjustment could be assessed. Each area could be assessed on high and low scores. On home adjustment high score indicated unsatisfactory adjustment and low scores indicated satisfactory adjustment in their respective areas. On social adjustment low scores indicated aggressive behaviour and high scores indicated submissive and retiring behaviour. On emotional adjustment low score indicated emotional stability and high score indicated unstable emotion. On education adjustment low score indicated adequate adjustment and high score indicated poor educational adjustment.

In terms of standardisation procedure of the scale Initially 210 items for these areas were constructed. 10 judges agreed on retention of 166 of the items which were administered on 270 randomly selected students. Biserial r between an item and total score led to further elimination of 64 items. The final form was given to 2280 (including 730 female) university students. Split-half coefficients ranging from. 83 to. 97, test-retest coefficients from. 82 to. 96, Hoyt's coefficients from. 85 to. 95, and Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 coefficients from. 82 to. 92 were obtained. Validity was demonstrated by interarea independences, and against

Hostel Supdt's rating of inmates (N = 120) $r = .58$ was obtained.

Procedure:

Rural and urban female college students pursuing their degree course aged between 19 to 21 years were considered for the study. Female college students from different urban and rural areas were administered Kuppaswamy Socio-economic Scale was used to identify students belonging to middle Socio-economic status. Female college students belonging to middle socio economic status was administered General Health Questionnaire. Students scoring more than cut off point on General Health Questionnaire and reporting any major physical or psychological problems were not considered for the study. Students scoring below the cut off score on General Health Questionnaire were administered Adjustment Inventory for College Students. A total of 120 students were considered for the study. 60 each belonged to urban and rural area. The responses on adjustment inventory were scored and results analysed.

Analysis of results

The results were analysed using mean, standard deviation and 't' test to study the significant difference in adjustment between rural and urban female college students.

Results

Table 1: Showing general demographic details and number of rural and urban female college students studying in Degree colleges:

Area of college	Rural	Urban
Number of students	60	60
Age	19 to 21 years	
Gender	Female	
Class	Pursuing degree course	
Socio economic status	Middle socio economic status	

60 females pursuing degree course from rural and urban area each, aged between 19 to 21 years, belonging to middle socio economic status were considered for the study.

Table 2: Showing, the total, average and interpretation on different areas of adjustment scale for rural and urban female college students:

Sl. No.	Area of adjustment	Rural Area		Urban Area	
		Average score	Interpretation	Average score	Interpretation
1	Home	5.27	Average adjustment	7.06	Unsatisfactory adjustment
2	Health	3.5	Average adjustment	5.23	Average adjustment
3	Social	6.63	Average adjustment	8.96	Unsatisfactory adjustment
4	Emotional	10.37	Average adjustment	15.73	Unsatisfactory adjustment
5	Education	4.58	Average adjustment	8.48	Unsatisfactory adjustment
6	Total	30.35	Average adjustment	45.46	Unsatisfactory adjustment

The table 2 shows that on home adjustment the rural students overall have average adjustment were as urban female students have unsatisfactory home adjustment. On health adjustment both rural and urban female students have average health. On social adjustment the rural female students have average adjustment where as urban students have unsatisfactory adjustment indicating that the urban female students are not socially well adjusted. On emotional adjustment the rural female students have average emotional

balance whereas urban students have tendency of being aggressive in nature. On educational adjustment the rural female students have adequate educational adjustment whereas urban students have showing that they have difficulty in copying with educational aspects. Overall on adjustment inventory for college students, the rural female students have average adjustment where as urban students have unsatisfactory adjustment.

Table 3: Showing the mean, SD, 't' value and significance on Adjustment for rural and urban students:

Adjustment Areas	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t ratio
Home	Rural	60	5.37	2.39	3.29**
	Urban	60	7.18	2.93	
Health	Rural	60	3.62	2.42	3.18**
	Urban	60	5.32	3.55	
Social	Rural	60	6.43	2.75	4.35**
	Urban	60	8.97	2.94	
Emotional	Rural	60	10.27	5.24	5.66**
	Urban	60	15.73	5.12	
Educational	Rural	60	4.94	2.76	7.03**
	Urban	60	8.58	2.85	
Adjustment Total	Rural	60	30.63	11.76	6.43**
	Urban	60	45.78	12.20	

** >0.01 level

As shown in the table 3 on different areas of adjustment scale the mean scores for rural female students are less than the mean scores of urban female students. The scores of rural and urban areas on all the different adjustment areas are significantly different at 0.01 levels. The 't' scores and the significance values indicate that there is a significant difference between urban and rural area on different areas of Adjustment Scale. Hence the hypothesis stated that there

will be a significant difference in adjustment between rural and urban female college students is accepted.

The results indicate that on home adjustment the urban females are significantly not well adjusted when compared to rural students. Related to health adjustment though both the groups have adequate health, the rural female students have significantly much better health when compared to the urban students. Regarding the social adjustment urban

females are significantly showing more aggressive behaviour when compared to rural students. When it comes to emotional adjustment urban females are significantly indicating unstable emotion when compared to rural students. Finally on related to the education adjustment urban females are significantly indicating poor educational adjustment when compared to rural students.

Discussion

The college years represent a developmentally challenging transition to adulthood, and untreated mental illness may have significant implications for academic success, productivity, substance use, and social relationships (Justin and Daniel, 2009) [13]. Dohrenwend (1998) [3] found Social adjustment problems common among students.

Some studies have compared adjustment differences between genders and focused on female student's adjustment. Study by Fong and Peskin (1969) [8] was the earliest study which examined gender differences in adaptation. They suggested that female students experience more strain than their male counterparts. Other studies that examined international students showed that female students had higher emotional, physiological, and behavioural reactions to stressors (Misra *et al.* 2003) [18] and also were more likely to feel homesick and lonely than were male students (Rajapaksa and Dundes 2002) [22]. A study by Agarwal (1970) [1] investigated the problem of adjustments of college students in relation to various areas and sex of Ss. Results showed that arts students were better adjusted than science students, Adjustment of arts girls was best in the home adjustment area but poor in the personal and health area. The study by Maria Chong, (2009) [17] which aimed to explore college adjustment processes found that students' overall adjustment was at a moderate level and male students were found to be better adjusted compared to female students. In the present study conducted on females college students adjustment the results indicates that on adjustment inventory for college students, Overall the rural female students have average adjustment where-as urban female students have unsatisfactory adjustment. And hence there is a significant difference between urban and rural females on different areas of Adjustment Scale like home, health, social, emotional and educational adjustment.

The factors contributing to adjustment could be diverse. The study conducted by Kenny, Stryker & Sonia (1996) [14], examined that social adjustment among students was associated more with family support characteristics for racially and ethnically diverse students and with college friendships for European American students. Sheryl, Craig and John (2002) [24] in their study indicated that a combination of self-concept and family environment variables was able to predict psychosocial adjustment. In the study conducted by Sylvia and Albert results show dimensions of the campus climate affect all forms of student adjustment. In the study by Gordon, Paul and Tessa (1996) [11] results demonstrated that high socially prescribed perfectionism was associated with a variety of psychosocial adjustment problems, including greater loneliness, shyness, and fear of negative evaluation, and lower levels of social self-esteem. In the study by Ann, Kelly, Janie, Cyndi & Bret Fuller (1999) [2] the results showed that academic adjustment at the end of the 1st year in college was predicted by development in collective self-esteem. Moreover, development in collective self-esteem was

associated with improvements in adjustment to college from the 1st semester to the second semester. The results of the study on Student's differential coping styles impact adjustment to college, by Frederick, Margaret & Peter (1997) [9] indicated that academic adjustment and personal/emotional adjustment were related to the coping strategies. Active coping, which focuses on doing something positive to solve the problem, was predictive of academic adjustment. A study by Edward, Lawrence, Meghan, Ann, Kathryn and Michael (2007) [4], focused on examining the relations between problem-solving styles and psychological. Problem-focused styles were found to be associated with psychological adjustment. Stress was not found to wholly mediate the associations between problem-focused styles and psychological adjustment. Though the present study has not investigated on the factors contributing to adjustment the study has found that there is a significant difference between urban and rural females on different areas of adjustment Scale like home, health, social, emotional and educational adjustment. These results point out that the conditions across in rural area differ from the urban area which is contributing to the increased maladjustment among urban female students.

Students from different and varied backgrounds have different adjustment at college. Academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment and institutional attachment were examined by Tomlinson & Saundra (1998) [29] students differed on personal-emotional adjustment by race, with Black women reporting a greater sense of psychological and physical well-being than White women. Nomani, H.R., (1965) [19], conducted a study of Adjustment of the Adivasi Students. A significant difference was found in health adjustments of Ranchi and Simdega samples and social adjustment in general was not satisfactory. A Comparative Study of Personality Patterns of Scheduled Caste and High Caste Students by Pal.R, (1984) [20] showed that scheduled caste students differed significantly from their high caste counterparts. They were more reserved, expedient, Shy, tough minded, tense and had indiscipline self-conflict. On the other hand, high caste students were more outgoing, conscientious, venturesome, tender minded, controlled and relaxed; Scheduled caste students possessed poor social self-concept whereas high caste students in comparison to their scheduled caste counterparts possessed better social self-concept. There was also evidence that the recent immigrants were less socioemotionally adjusted than were other Ss in a study on Academic achievement and socioemotional adjustment among Chinese conducted by Sue & Zane (1985) [26]. The above studies indicate that the maladjustment has been seen among black college going women, Adivasi students, and immigrants.

The present study indicates the presence of inadequate adjustment among the urban female students in comparison to rural female students. The results clearly indicates that the rural students have average adjustment whereas urban students have unsatisfactory adjustment. There is a significant difference between urban and rural area on different areas of Adjustment Scale.

Conclusions

- On adjustment inventory for college students, Overall the rural female students have average adjustment where as urban female students have unsatisfactory adjustment.
- The 't' scores and the significance values indicate that there is a significant difference between urban and rural

area on different areas of Adjustment Scale. Hence the hypothesis stated that there will be a significant difference in Adjustment between rural and urban female college students is accepted.

- The results indicate that on home adjustment the urban females are significantly not well adjusted when compared to rural students.
- Related to health adjustment though both the groups have adequate health, the rural female students have significantly much better health when compared to the urban students.
- With regard to social adjustment urban females are significantly showing more aggressive behaviour when compared to rural students.
- On emotional adjustment urban females are significantly indicating unstable emotion when compared to rural students.
- On education adjustment urban females are significantly indicating poor educational adjustment when compared to rural students.

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