



Adjustment amongst Adolescents in Context of Some Personality Traits

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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Abstract

The present study intended to compare adjustment of adolescents in terms of their self-concept, self-disclosure and ego-strength respectively. It was hypothesized that respondent children of (i) high self-concept, (ii) high self-disclosure and (iii) high ego-strength groups of adolescents would differ significantly in terms of adjustment as compared to their counterparts. Equal no. of adolescents (No = 50 to each group) were selected to constitute the sample. In this way 100 selected adolescents equally belonging to high (N=50) and low (N=50) self-concept, self-disclosure and ego-strength groups respectively. They were administered Hindi Adaptation of Bell's Adjustment Inventory, Self-concept Scale, Self-disclosure Scale, Ego-strength Scale besides PDS to measure the variables. The obtained data were treated using t-test. The results supported the hypotheses. It was found that adolescents respondents possessing high self-concept, high self-disclosure, high ego-strength all excelled over their counterparts in terms of having sound

adjustment. Thus, it was concluded that adjustment is function of personality traits namely self-concept, self-disclosure and ego-strength respectively. High positive personal traits are conducive to sound adjustment.

Key Words

Adjustment, Personality Traits.

Introduction

Adolescence, typically spanning the ages of 12 to 18, is a developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. It is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, during which individuals navigate various challenges, opportunities, and demands that shape their identity and behavior. One of the most fundamental aspects of this stage is the concept of adjustment, which refers to how individuals respond to and cope with the changes and pressures they face during this time. Adolescents are confronted with the task of adjusting to new roles, relationships, and environments, such as moving to higher educational levels, developing new social connections, and experiencing changes in their family dynamics.

Adjustment, however, does not occur in isolation. It is influenced by a complex interplay of various factors, among which personality traits are particularly significant. Personality traits refer to enduring patterns

of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that define an individual's characteristic responses to situations and interactions. These traits shape how adolescents perceive and handle challenges, both internal (such as emotions and self-esteem) and external (such as academic or social pressures). Understanding the role of personality traits in adolescent adjustment can provide valuable insights into how different individuals cope with the demands of this transitional period.

The relationship between personality traits and adjustment during adolescence is multifaceted. Adolescents with certain personality traits may exhibit a greater ability to adapt and thrive, while others may face difficulties in managing the stressors of this developmental phase. For instance, adolescents who score high on extraversion, which is characterized by sociability, enthusiasm, and assertiveness, may find it easier to form peer relationships and engage in social activities. This could foster a sense of belonging and positive adjustment. Conversely, adolescents who score high on neuroticism, which is marked by emotional instability, anxiety, and moodiness, may struggle with anxiety, depression, or low self-esteem, which can hinder their adjustment to the various challenges they face.

In addition to these broad traits, other personality characteristics, such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness, also play crucial roles in how adolescents manage stress and navigate the changes they encounter. For example, adolescents with high levels of openness to experience tend to be more curious, imaginative, and open-minded. This can facilitate their adjustment to new experiences and perspectives, allowing them to adapt more flexibly to changes in their environment. On the other hand, those with high conscientiousness, characterized by a tendency toward organization, responsibility, and self-discipline, may excel in managing academic or extracurricular pressures, thereby leading to better overall adjustment.

The Big Five Personality Traits, which include extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness, provide a useful framework for understanding how personality influences adolescent adjustment. These traits are thought to be relatively stable over time, though they can still evolve during adolescence. The dynamic nature of adolescence, with its wide-ranging emotional and social challenges, often acts as a crucible in which personality traits are tested and sometimes reshaped.

Beyond the individual traits themselves, the way adolescents perceive and interpret the challenges they face also plays a critical role in their adjustment. An adolescent with a high degree of optimism or a positive outlook may interpret challenges as opportunities for growth, while someone with a more pessimistic perspective might view them as insurmountable obstacles. This perception of events is heavily influenced by both intrinsic personality factors and external circumstances, such as family support, peer relationships, and cultural influences.

Furthermore, the adjustment process is not purely individual—it is also influenced by the social context in which adolescents live. Adolescents are deeply embedded in their social environments, including family dynamics, peer groups, and schools. For example, an adolescent with high agreeableness might experience smoother interactions within these social contexts, facilitating a positive adjustment. In contrast, a less agreeable adolescent may struggle to maintain harmonious relationships, which could hinder their overall well-being and adjustment.

In conclusion, the adjustment of adolescents to the myriad changes they experience is influenced by a combination of internal personality traits and external factors. The Big Five personality traits, along with other factors such as optimism and social support, provide a lens through which we can better understand how adolescents navigate this critical period of their lives. As they face new experiences and develop their identities, the way in which personality traits shape their responses to these challenges can significantly impact their emotional and psychological development. Understanding these dynamics can help educators, parents, and mental health professionals provide the necessary support to help adolescents make the most of this transformative stage in their lives.

Review of Literature

Roberts, S. B., & Jackson, T. L.⁹ (2008) investigated the role of personality traits in academic performance among adolescents. It finds that traits like conscientiousness and openness to experience correlate with higher academic achievement, while neuroticism and extraversion appear to have weaker links. The authors conclude that personality traits influence not only academic outcomes but also the adjustment process in school environments, suggesting that conscientious adolescents tend to experience smoother transitions into academic life. Matthews, G., & Deary, I. J.⁶ (2011) focused on the role of extraversion and neuroticism in social adjustment during adolescence. The study demonstrates that adolescents with high extraversion tend to form and maintain positive social relationships, leading to better social adjustment. In contrast, those with high neuroticism often experience difficulties in social interactions, which can result in social anxiety and loneliness, thereby hampering their adjustment to social challenges. Mroczek, D. K., & Spiro, A.⁸ (2003) examined the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes in adolescence. It finds that high neuroticism is a strong predictor of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression during adolescence. Meanwhile, traits like agreeableness and openness are linked to better psychological well-being and greater resilience in the face of stress, indicating that these traits promote healthier coping mechanisms. Caspi, A., & Roberts, B. W.¹ (2001) explored how personality traits evolve during adolescence and how these changes influence overall life adjustment. Their research underscores that stability in personality traits, such as conscientiousness, is linked with positive adjustment in areas such as career success, social relationships, and emotional well-being. The study highlights that adolescence is a critical period for the development and solidification of traits that shape long-term adjustment outcomes. Lau, S., & Lee, A.⁴ (2010) explored how the Big Five personality traits impact adolescents' experience of academic stress. The results suggest that adolescents high in conscientiousness and openness tend to manage academic stress better, while those high in neuroticism are more likely to experience stress and burnout. The study highlights the importance of personality in helping adolescents develop effective coping strategies for academic challenges. Steinberg, L., & Monahan, K. C.¹¹ (2007) examined how personality traits influence adolescents' susceptibility to peer pressure. The research indicates that adolescents with high agreeableness and extraversion are more likely to conform to peer influences, whereas those with high openness may resist peer pressure, favoring independent thinking. The study emphasizes the role of personality in navigating social dynamics during adolescence. Compas, B. E., & Reeslund, K. L.² (2009) discussed how personality traits affect adolescents' coping mechanisms in response to stress. Extraversion and openness are linked to more adaptive coping strategies, such as seeking social support and engaging in problem-solving, while neuroticism is associated with less adaptive coping, such as rumination and avoidance. The authors argue that understanding personality traits can help clinicians tailor interventions for adolescents dealing with stress. Laursen, B., & Collins, W. A.⁵ (2009) explored how personality traits influence adolescents' ability to adjust to family changes, such as parental divorce. It finds that high neuroticism can exacerbate difficulties during these transitions, leading to maladjustment. In contrast, adolescents who score high on conscientiousness and agreeableness are better equipped to adapt and maintain stable emotional well-being through challenging family dynamics. Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P.⁷ (2004) investigated the intersection of emotional intelligence and personality traits in adolescents. They find that personality traits like agreeableness and extraversion, when coupled with high emotional intelligence, contribute significantly to positive emotional adjustment. These adolescents tend to navigate interpersonal challenges more effectively, suggesting that emotional intelligence enhances the adaptability of personality traits. Eisenberg, N., & Spinrad, T. L.³ (2004) examined how parent-child interactions influence the development of personality traits and, in turn, affect adolescents' adjustment. It shows that adolescents with supportive, responsive parenting tend to develop traits like agreeableness and conscientiousness, which are linked to better emotional regulation and social adjustment. Conversely, adolescents with less supportive parenting may struggle with traits like neuroticism, leading to difficulties in coping with life stressors. Schwartz, S. J., & Zamboanga, B. L.¹⁰ (2008) focused on how cultural context shapes personality traits and adolescent adjustment. It suggests that adolescents from

collectivist cultures, where traits like agreeableness and conscientiousness are highly valued, tend to have better social and emotional adjustment. In contrast, adolescents from individualistic cultures, where traits like extraversion and openness are emphasized, may experience challenges related to social conformity but excel in independent thinking and personal goal achievement.

These reviews illustrate that adolescent adjustment is heavily influenced by personality traits, and the way individuals cope with challenges such as academic pressure, social dynamics, and family changes varies depending on their personality characteristics. Further research is needed to better understand the complex interplay between these traits and adolescent development, with an emphasis on creating supportive environments to foster positive adjustment. Further, it is clear that adjustment among adolescents has not been studied in context of self-concept, self-disclosure and ego-strength especially in Patna (Bihar). So, the study is undertaken.

Objective

The study intends to compare adolescents adjustment in terms of self-concept, self-disclosure and ego-strength.

Hypotheses

- (1) The high self-concept group of adolescents would show sound adjustment than the adolescents belonging to low self-concept group.
- (2) The high self-disclosure group of adolescents would show better adjustment than the adolescents belonging to low self-disclosure group.
- (3) The high ego-strength group of adolescents would show better adjustment while the low of ego-strength group would show poor adjustment.

Method of Study

Sample

The sample comprised of 100 adolescents selected from among + 2 high schools of Patna based on purposive sampling. The respondents were matched other than the study condition so far as practicable.

Research Tools

- (1) Bell's Adjustment Inventory, Hindi adaptation, by Mohsin and Shamshad was to measure adjustment of the respondents.
- (2) Mohsin's self-concept scale was used to measure self-concept of the respondents.
- (3) Self-disclosure Scale by DE and Singh's was used to measure self-disclosure of the respondents.

Results and Interpretations

Table 01: Adjustment between high and low self-concept groups of adolescents

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	P
Self-concept	High	50	54.61	4.29	9.23	98	<.01
	Low	50	62.36	4.12			

Table-01 presents a comparison of adjustment scores between adolescents with high and low self-concept. The mean adjustment score of the high self-concept group is 54.61 (SD = 4.29), whereas adolescents with low self-concept obtained a higher mean score of 62.36 (SD = 4.12). The obtained t-value (t = 9.23) with 98 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the .01 level. This result indicates a significant difference in adjustment between adolescents with high and low self-concept. The lower mean score of the high self-concept group suggests that adolescents with a positive self-concept are better adjusted than those with low self-concept. Hence, the null hypothesis stating that there is no difference in adjustment between high and low self-concept groups is rejected. Adolescents with a high self-concept excel in home, health, social, emotional,

and overall adjustment because they possess a strong and positive sense of identity, self-worth, and confidence. This empowers them to form healthier relationships, handle family dynamics constructively, maintain better health behaviors, navigate social situations with ease, and regulate their emotions effectively. Their positive self-view acts as a psychological buffer against stress, enabling balanced and adaptive responses across various life domains.

Table 02: Adjustment between high and low self-disclosure groups of adolescents

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	P
Self-disclosure	High	50	46.64	4.02	8.00	98	<.01
	Low	50	53.20	4.17			

Table-02 reveals the comparison of adjustment between adolescents belonging to high and low self-disclosure groups. The adolescents with high self-disclosure obtained a mean adjustment score of 46.64 (SD = 4.02), while those with low self-disclosure showed a higher mean score of 53.20 (SD = 4.17). The calculated t-value is 8.00 with 98 degrees of freedom, which is statistically significant at the .01 level. The findings signify a significant difference in adjustment between high and low self-disclosure groups. Lower adjustment scores among adolescents with higher self-disclosure indicate that openness and willingness to share feelings are associated with better psychological adjustment. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Adolescents with high self-disclosure excel in home, health, social, emotional, and overall adjustment because they openly share their thoughts and feelings, fostering better communication and stronger relationships with family, peers, and mentors. This openness reduces internal stress, enhances emotional clarity, and invites support during challenges. As a result, they develop healthier coping mechanisms, better conflict resolution skills, and a deeper sense of belonging all of which contribute to improved adjustment across life domains.

Table 03: Adjustment between high and low ego-strength groups of adolescents

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	P
Ego-strength	High	50	11.25	3.27	5.80	98	<.01
	Low	50	14.96	3.14			

Table-03 depicts the comparison of adjustment between adolescents with high and low ego-strength. The mean adjustment score of the high ego-strength group is 11.25 (SD = 3.27), whereas the low ego-strength group has a higher mean score of 14.96 (SD = 3.14). The obtained t-value of 5.80 with 98 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the .01 level. This result shows a significant difference in adjustment based on ego-strength. Adolescents with higher ego-strength demonstrate better adjustment as compared to their low ego-strength counterparts. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Adolescents with high ego strength excel in home, health, social, emotional, and overall adjustment because they possess greater psychological resilience, self-control, and a stable sense of identity. This inner strength allows them to handle family dynamics, health challenges, peer relationships, and emotional ups and downs more effectively. Their capacity for realistic self-appraisal, problem-solving, and emotional regulation enables them to adapt positively across different life domains, leading to better overall adjustment.

Conclusions

- (i) The high self-concept group of respondents was found sound adjustment than the low self-concept group of respondents. Thus, high self-concept is conducive to sound adjustment among adolescents.
- (ii) The high self-disclosure group of respondents showed adjustment as compared to the low self-disclosure group of adolescents. Thus, high self-disclosure is conducive to sound adjustment..

- (iii) The high ego-strength group of respondents showed adjustment as compared to the low ego-strength group of adolescents. Thus, ego-strength is conducive to sound adjustment found positively and significantly related.

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