



Family Environment and Its Effect on Self Esteem and Adjustment Behaviour among School Children: A Cross Sectional Study from Hubli Taluka, Dharwad, Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Background: Family environment plays a significant role in socio-emotional and educational adjustment in adolescents. In the present scenario, parents are in hurry to improve their standard of living and they have no time to engage in child-bearing activities. Low self-esteem is creating mental and psychosocial problems such as poor academic achievement, inadequate adjustments among the siblings and peers, impaired social functioning, suicide, and substance abuse among adolescents.

Methodology: A School-based cross-sectional study was conducted among adolescents of Hubli taluka. Information was collected by a self-administered questionnaire with components for Systematic assessment of family environment (SAFE), Self-esteem scale, and Adjustment inventory for school students (AISS).

Results: Among 600 adolescents, 85.6% of adolescents had Normal self-esteem, 95% of families were competent, however only 1-7% of the students had an excellent adjustment. Emotional and social adjustment was better compared to Educational adjustment. Adjustment behavior and family environment had a positive association. There was a significant difference in the adjustment scores among low self-esteem and normal self-esteem ($p < 0.001$) and also among discordant and competent families.

Conclusion: The adjustment behavior depends on a better family environment and normal self-esteem. The Family environment has a positive effect on self-esteem as well as adjustment behavior. School mental health services should be initiated.

Keywords: Family environment, self-esteem, adjustment, school students

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are the supreme creation of God endowed with the capacity of thinking, reasoning, and judging.¹ By these virtues, a person can make adequate adjustments with himself and his surroundings when he is born. Humans are just like animals; an animal-like instinct dominates his behavior.¹ It is the education that brings a change in his behavior and helps him change his environment and consequently

a person can make the adequate adjustment by changing his environment.^{1,2}

Family environment plays a significant role in socio-emotional and educational adjustment in adolescents. Shaffer³ (1961) defined "Adjustment as the process by which a living organism maintains a balance between its needs and the circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs." The absence of warmth and love can affect adjustment be-

How to cite this article: Sarvar R, Joshi AR, Bant DD. Family Environment and Its Effect on Self Esteem and Adjustment Behaviour among School Children: A Cross Sectional Study from Hubli Taluka, Dharwad, Karnataka. Natl J Community Med 2022;13(1):1-6. DOI: 10.5455/njcm.20211225044500

Financial Support: None declared

Conflict of Interest: None declared

Date of Submission: 28-10-2021

Date of Acceptance: 09-12-2021

Date of Publication: 31-01-2022

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havior, which may later manifest in terms of dependence, lack of initiative, and responsibility.^{2,3}

The family in general and parents, in particular, are the most important support system for adolescents⁴. The main characteristics of the family are universality, emotional basis, formative influence, nuclear position in social structure, the responsibility of the members, and social regulation.⁵ Well-adjusted parents will fulfill their role properly and provide children with the physical and psychological support they need and this contributes to personality development.^{4,5}

The adolescent period is a time of change when the young person is facing new experiences, the various environment in which they move is likely to face new and unexpected situations and events which the adolescent may never have previously encountered of this, family environment keeps the individual to face this unexpected situation and imparts an influential space in child's development⁵. It also has an influential impact on self-esteem⁴. Rosenberg defines self-esteem as a "favorable or unfavorable attitude towards self".⁶

In the present scenario family interaction and communication are decreasing, and conflict is on the rise. The parents are in hurry to improve their standard of living and hence have no time to engage in the child's rearing activities⁵. This affects the adolescents' personality traits such as self-esteem and adaptability.⁶ Many problems like child abuse, neglect, and exposure to domestic violence are the hidden problems faced by many children.⁷ Thus the importance of adolescent environment during early years is immense for his future development.

It is noted that as family ties are weakening, the incidences of children committing suicide and engaging in undesirable behavior because of low self-esteem and hostility are increasing⁷. It creates mental and psycho-social problems such as poor academic achievement, impaired social functioning, suicidal tendencies, and substance abuse among adolescents.⁸ As School children are very much vulnerable to psychological disturbances,^{2,9} and the need for providing school mental health services and counseling has gained importance in recent years. Student and family-friendly mental health services should be adopted to promote mental health and prevent mental health problems.

The present study helps in the situational analysis of the adjustment disorders and self-esteem issues among school-going adolescents and correlating them with their family environment.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives of this study were to assess the family environment and self-esteem; and adjustment behavior among school children. It also study the association

between the family environment, self-esteem and adjustment behavior.

METHODOLOGY

A school-based cross-sectional study was conducted among school children aged 13-16 years studying in private schools of Hubli taluk under Hubli Dharwad Municipal Corporation Block Education Office (HDMC BEO) during June 2019. All the school children studying in 7th to 10th standard who gave assent for the study were included in the study. The study was approved by Institutional Ethics Committee.

Sample size: the prevalence of good adjustment behavior among girls was obtained from a study by Vandana Chauhan⁵ conducted in the Durg district of Chhattisgarh, with $p=55\%$, $q=1-p$, At a 95% confidence interval and an error rate of 0.04. The sample size was calculated using the formula: $N = \frac{1.96^2 pq}{d^2}$

The sample size came out to be 595 which were rounded off to 600.

Permission to conduct the study in Private schools of the Dharwad district was obtained from the Deputy Director of Public Instruction, Block Education Office, and List of Schools under HDMC BEO office was obtained from the BEO office. Schools and students were selected by systematic random sampling. Out of 44 private schools, 10 schools were selected. The permission was taken from the school principal, each school was visited and from each class, 20 students, 10 boys, 10 girls were selected. The need and importance of the study were explained to the students, the informed assent was taken, the information was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Predesigned pretested semi-structured standard questionnaire was used. The following information was collected: a. General information, b. Family environment by Systematic assessment of family environment score. C. Self-esteem among school children by Rosenberg self-esteem scale, d. Adjustment behavior by Adjustment inventory for school students. The data collected was entered in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using SPSS software version 21. Appropriate descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for analysis.

Systematic Assessment of Family Environment Scale¹⁰: The Systemic Assessment of the Family Environment (SAFE) self-report instrument was developed by Dr. Lynelle C. Yingling in 1991. The Scale is designed to assess the 2 factors: a) The organizational structure of the family; and b) Interactional Process of the family. The families were classified as follows:

- Competent: strong organizational structure + strong interactional processes
- Discordant: strong organizational structure + weak interactional processes
- Disoriented: weak organizational structure + strong interactional processes

d) Chaotic: weak organizational structure + weak interactional processes

Rosenberg self-esteem scale⁶: Developed by Rosenberg M in 1965, a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A higher score indicates higher self-esteem.

Adjustment inventory for school students¹¹: Adjustment inventory of School Children developed by A.K.P. Sinha and R.P. Singh (1971). This inventory measures adjustment behavior in 3 aspects: emotional, social, and educational along with the total adjustment. The inventory includes 20 items in each area of adjustment with a total of 60 items. A higher score indicates unstable adjustment.

RESULTS

General information: The study was conducted among 600 students of private schools of Dharwad district studying in class 7th to 10th standard. The study included an equal number of girls and boys. The majority of the students (68%) stayed in nuclear families. About 16.5% of the students did not have any siblings. (Table 1)

Self-esteem: The mean self-esteem score was 19.11 ± 3.61 SD, with a minimum score of 9 and a maximum of 30. About 13.5% of the children had low self-esteem. Self-esteem scores were higher among girls when compared to boys.

Family Environment: Mean organizational score was 26.52 ± 4.16 , and interaction score was 27.13 ± 2.57 and the total mean SAFE score was 53.65 ± 5.86 . About 95% of the families were competent and 5% of the families were disoriented.

Adjustment behavior among school students: The majority of the students reported Average Emotional

(37.3%), Social (39%), and educational adjustment (38.2%). About 5.2% of the students reported very unsatisfactory emotional adjustment behavior. (Fig 1) Adjustment behavior was better among girls compared to boys and self-esteem was significantly high among girls when compared to the boys. (Table 2)

Association between the Adjustment scores and self-esteem and family environment scores: Total family environment scores were negatively associated with emotional and educational adjustment scores ($P < 0.05$). The emotional, social and educational adjustment was negatively correlated with the self-esteem scores with $p < 0.05$, which indicates that adjustment behavior is one of the important factors determining the self-esteem among the students. (Table 3)

Association between the family environment and Self-esteem: Organizational, interactional, and total family environment score was significantly correlated with the self-esteem scores, positive correlation was obtained with $p < 0.001$. (Table 4)

Table 1: General Information about the study participants

Variables	Participants (%)
Gender	
Boys	300 (50)
Girls	300 (50)
Type of family	
Nuclear family	408 (68)
Joint/ three-generation family	192 (32)
Class	
7th standard	60 (10)
8th standard	200 (33.3)
9th standard	200 (33.3)
10th standard	140 (23.3)
Sibling	
Brother	224 (37.3)
Sister	174 (29)
None	99 (16.5)
Both	103 (17.2)

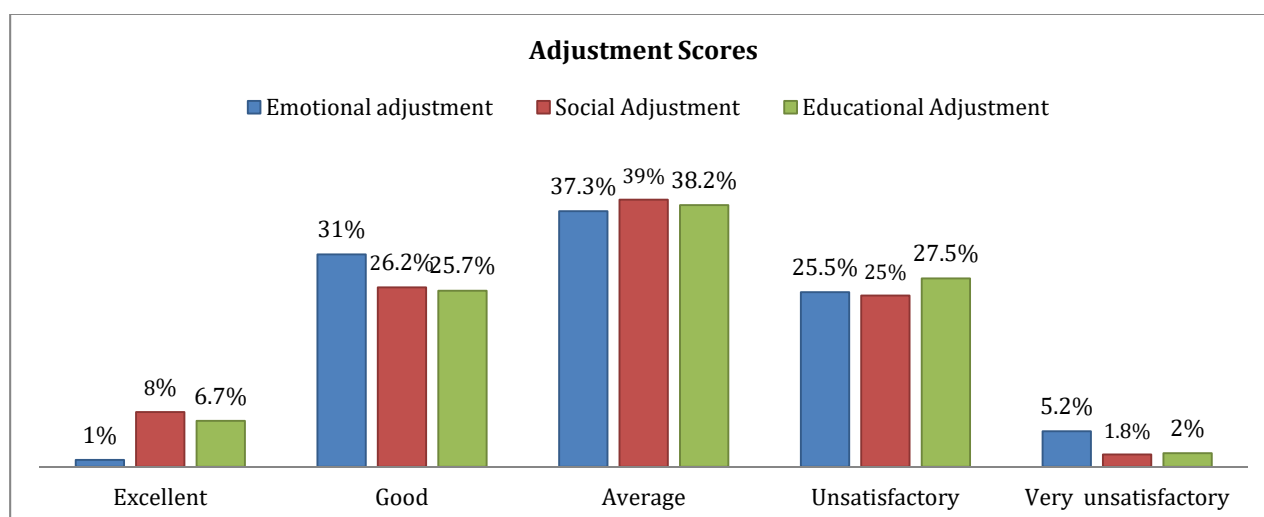


Fig 1: Adjustment behavior among school students

Table 2: Association between the gender and Adjustment scores, self-esteem scores, and SAFE Scores (Independent T-test)

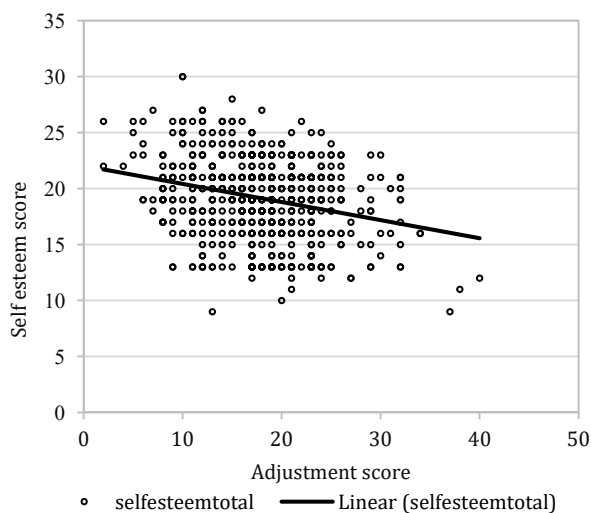
	Gender (Mean ± SD)		T	P-value
	Boys	Girls		
Emotional adjustment scores	6.40 ±2.81	6.23 ±2.62	0.752	0.452
Social adjustment scores	5.80 ±2.60	5.66 ±2.26	0.686	0.493
Educational adjustment scores	6.10 ±2.62	5.90 ±2.33	0.988	0.324
Total adjustment scores	18.30 ±6.16	17.80 ±5.44	1.061	0.289
Self-esteem scores	18.79 ±3.40	19.42 ±3.78	-2.158	0.031*
Organizational scores of SAFE	26.36 ±4.203	26.69 ±4.12	-0.962	0.337
Interactional scores of SAFE	26.86 ±2.76	27.39 ±2.34	-2.536	0.011*
Total systematic assessment of family environment scores	53.221 ±6.012	54.078 ±5.6	-1.793	0.073

* p<0.05: significant

Table 3: Correlation between the Adjustment scores, self-esteem, and family environment scores

	Emotional adjustment		Social adjustment		Educational adjustment		Total adjustment Behavior	
	CC	P-value	CC	P-value	CC	P-value	CC	P-value
Age	0.039	0.334	0.002	0.962	0.051	0.216	0.073	0.072
Total SAFE score	-0.129*	0.002	0.001	0.988	-0.110*	0.007	-0.118*	0.004
Organizational score of Family environment	-0.105*	0.01	0.026	0.519	-0.065	0.114	-0.062	0.129
Interactional score of Family environment	-0.124*	0.002	-0.041	0.313	-0.147*	0.0003	-0.168*	0.00004
Self-esteem total score	-0.217*	<0.0001	-0.117*	0.004	-0.261*	<0.0001	-0.259*	<0.0001

CC: Correlation Co-efficient, *p<0.05: significant

**Figure 2: Scatter Plot Showing the Association between Adjustment Score and Self Esteem Score****Table 4: Correlation between the family environment scores and Self-esteem scores**

	Self-esteem scores	
	Pearson Correlation	P value
Organizational scores of SAFE	0.244*	<0.0001
Interactional scores of SAFE	0.165*	<0.001
Total SAFE score	0.246*	<0.0001

* p<0.05: significant

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted among the school-going children of Dharwad district between the age

groups of 13-16 years consisting of an equal number of girls and boys.

95 percent of families were competent out of which 10.5 percent had low self-esteem and in disorientated families, 70 percent of study participants had low self-esteem when compared to the study done by Suman Singh¹ in Haryana revealed that 29 percent had low self-esteem incompetent family and 53.4 Percent in disorientated families.

In the present study, self-esteem was correlated with the family environment, similar findings were seen in a study conducted by Suman Singh¹ in Haryana, Positive and significant relationship was found between the self-esteem of students and the family environment. The family environment is one of the important factors for the development of self-esteem.

The self-esteem was high among those with competent families compared to discordant families which signify the importance of the family environment for the growth and behavior of an adolescent. And the family environment is also important in the adjustment behavior, a good family environment is very important in shaping the children for better adjustment and learning humanitarian values.

The mean emotional adjustment score was high among males (6.40 ± 2.80) when compared to females (6.23 ± 2.61), the mean social adjustment score in males (5.80 ± 2.604) and among females (5.66 ± 2.363), and educational adjustment in males (6.10 ± 2.62), females (5.90 ± 2.332).

Similar results were obtained in a study conducted by Dr. Kompal Wadhawan⁸ in Panchkula where girls are more adjusted when compared to girls.

In the present study, self-esteem was significantly high among girls when compared to boys; this may be because of better adjustment behavior among girls, which is in contrast to the study conducted by Aditi Bansal¹² in Bathinda and Arti Bakhshi¹³ in Jammu where the self-esteem was high among boys.

The interactional score of Systematic assessment of family environment was high among the girls, girls usually have good interaction with the family members and siblings which in turn has impact on adjustment behavior among girls.

In the present study adjustment behavior was associated with the family environment and also self-esteem. Students with good or competent families had a better adjustment and also good self-esteem. Students with disoriented families had a lower adjustment and low self-esteem.

This is similar to a study conducted by Neha Madan¹⁴ in Delhi where positive association was found between family environment and adjustment among adolescents

In a study conducted by Neha Madan¹⁴ in Delhi the adjustment levels were significantly different among girls and boys, similar results were obtained in the present study the adjustment scores were different among girls and boys with girls having good adjustment (not statistically significant).

Good family environment characterized by love, support, affection towards each other, responsiveness and involvement of each member in the child rearing^{13,14}, quality family time results in the better self-esteem as well as good emotional and social adjustment among the adolescents, encouraging the adolescents in curricular and extracurricular activities improves the educational adjustment.

In the present study, organizational structure of the family was negatively associated with the emotional adjustment among the adolescents, good organization of the family with parents, grandparents, and siblings have better adjustment and so with the interactional process in the family, Interactional score was significantly associated with the emotional and educational adjustment Self-esteem was significantly associated with emotional, social and educational adjustment scores.

CONCLUSION

Majority of students had competent families and majority of the adolescents had average adjustment behavior. About one sixth of the students had low self-esteem. Family environment played an important role in determining the self-esteem and adjustment behavior among the school going adolescents. Good family environment was associated with stable adjustment behavior and good self-esteem. Poor family environment is associated with poor adjustment and

low self-esteem. Self-esteem was associated with the gender.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Suitable measures should be undertaken to improve their family environment. School mental health services should be initiated at the schools to address the adjustment problem among them and to improve their self-esteem. Teacher-parent-student interaction and counseling sessions should be conducted, if needed the help of a psychiatrist and psychologist training can be provided to the teachers and parents so that they can identify these problems at the earliest. Spending Quality time with all the family members, weekend outings, psychological support, and appreciation for the children by the family members is needed to address the adjustment behavior. Further Studies are needed to identify and address the adjustment problems and interventions and Innovations for the promotion mental health of adolescents.

LIMITATIONS

Information about the Academic performance was not obtained, Parent's education and occupation data were incomplete so excluded from the analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors and the institute is thankful for the DDPI, BEO, HDMC, Hubli, and Principals of all the schools

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