

A Study of Academic Anxiety and School Adjustment among Adolescents

Hardeep Kaur¹, Arashmeet Chawla²

¹Assistant Professor, ²Research Scholar, Dept. of Social Work, Punjabi University, Patiala, India

ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescence is a stage with tremendous pressure and stress. Adolescents are expected to perform at every front, the main one being academics. Academic anxiety is a feeling of being fearful or stressed due to school pressures. School adjustment is a procedure that brings a person's behaviour in compliance with the norms of the school; it comprises academic, social and emotional adjustment. **Aims:** The present study aims to examine the level of academic anxiety and school adjustment among the school going adolescent girls and boys residing in orphanages and ones with their families. The gender differences were also examined. **Methodology:** A total of 60 school going adolescent girls and boys aged 14-18 years residing in orphanages and a controlled group of adolescents living with families matched on the basis of age, gender and school were selected as sample for the study. A self-constructed interview schedule was used to examine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, Academic Anxiety Scale for Children by Singh and Sengupta and Adjustment Inventory for school students by Sinha & Singh were used. **Results & Conclusion:** The results showed that the adolescents residing in orphanages had lower academic anxiety than the ones living with their families and scores of adolescent girls were higher than the boys. The scores on school adjustment showed that the adolescents living with families had significantly better school adjustment than the ones living in the orphanages and overall the girls had lower adjustment level than the boys.

Keywords: Adolescents, orphanages, academic anxiety, school adjustment

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood and is considered to be the period between 10 to 19 years of age. Adolescents account for approximately 17% of the world's population.^[1] Biological, psychological, and social development occur during this crucial phase. The changes and challenges that come in this stage at times result in some common issues, such as depression and anxiety and they have a deep effect throughout adulthood.^[2] Mental distress with respect to anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or unawareness of the possibility of such

failure is academic stress. It is a reflection of how an individual perceives academic frustration, conflict, pressure and anxiety.^[3] Anxiety is an emotional state in which a person experiences tension, lack of self-esteem and self-confidence in their ability to meet the goals or manage their problems.^[4] Some of the common symptoms related to anxiety are sweating, increased heart rate or trembling.^[5] When these symptoms aggravate they can interfere with normal social, occupational, educational functioning and may be considered as a vital component of anxiety disorder.^[6] Some effects of anxiety also include poor social and coping skills, avoidance of social interactions,^[7] loneliness, low self-esteem, perceptions of

Access the Article Online	
DOI: 10.29120/IJPSW.2018.v9.i2.118	Quick Response Code 
Website: www.pswjournal.org	



Address for Correspondence:

Ms. Arashmeet Chawla, Research Scholar, Dept. of Social Work, Punjabi University, Patiala, India
Email: arashmeetkaur@yahoo.com

How to Cite the Article:

Kaur H, Chawla A. A Study of Academic Anxiety and School Adjustment among Adolescents. Indian Journal of Psychiatric Social Work, 2018; 9(2):106-110.

social rejection, and difficulty forming friendships.^[8] Cultural beliefs and practices also have an impact on the manifestation of this universal phenomenon.^[9] It is extensively related to negative effects on children's social, emotional and academic success^[10] and is a commonly found psychological problems in school-aged children and adolescents worldwide is anxiety disorders.^[11] Secondary school children indicate that anxiety contributes significantly to poor academic performance.^[12] Gender differences were also significant with girls showing higher social interaction anxiety than boys.

Adjustment potentials enable the students to deal better with peer pressures, school life and academic challenges. School adjustment is the degree of school acculturation that is needed to optimize the educational fit between students' exclusive characteristics and the distinctive nature of learning environments. It is a process of bringing an individual's behaviour in conformity with the norms of the school setting.^[13] It consists of many different aspects such as academic achievement, school satisfaction, school engagement and can also be envisaged as social-emotional developments touching on attention, activity level, anxiety, conduct problems and learning.^[14] A study by Reddy^[15] on adjustment and problem areas of adolescents in school said that most of the problems concentrated on academic anxiety are followed by anxiety regarding their future.

Adolescents, who have emotional ties with their family based on trust, are affected less by the problems and thus reduces the concerns related to life. Family environment plays a significant role in a socio-emotional and educational adjustment in adolescent girls.^[16] The institutionalized ones with no families are often referred to as orphans or destitute children, who are in need of care and protection. They are left helpless, abandoned or neglected due to social, economic and personal reasons of their parents. Due to the absence of warmth

parental love, these children may face problems of adjustment, which may later be manifested in terms of dependence, lack of initiative and responsibility.^[17] Sometimes differences were found among orphans in their intellectual level when compared to non-orphans and non-orphans were found to have better adjustment than the orphans.^[18] Institutionalized children had a higher level of emotional problems than those who were under home-based care.^[19] At this juncture, the present study aims to examine the level of academic anxiety and school adjustment among the school going adolescent girls and boys residing in orphanages and ones with their families.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling: In the present study purposive sampling technique has been followed to select the school going adolescent girls and boys living in orphanages and the ones living with their families in the district of Ludhiana and Amritsar, Punjab between the age group of 14-18 years which were present at the time of data collection. In total, there were sixty adolescents. The thirty adolescent (15 girls and 15 boys) were taken from orphanages and a controlled group of thirty adolescents (15 girls and 15 boys) living with families matched on the basis of age, gender and school were selected as sample for the study.

Tools: A self-constructed Interview schedule was used to study the socio-demographic profile of the adolescents living with families and the ones in orphanages. The Academic Anxiety Scale for Children^[20] of 20 items, meant for school students (age 13 to 16 years) has been used to measure academic anxiety and also the Adjustment Inventory for School Students^[21] which has three areas of adjustment: Emotional, Social and Educational. This scale has 60 questions which indicate significant problems of adjustment of school students in three areas. The responses to the questions are to in 'Yes' and 'No'. A minimum score which a respondent can have in each area of adjustment is one and the maximum score

is twenty. The lower score in each area indicates better adjustment.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic Profile of Adolescents in Orphanages and Families

The findings on socio-demographic profile indicate that majority (80%) of the girls and boys living in orphanages were found to be in the age-group 14-15 years whereas the majority of the adolescents living with their families belonged to the age-group of 15-16 years. Maximum girls (80%) and boys (70%) living with their families were found to be studying in class XI-XIIth. Whereas the majority of the adolescent girls (70%) and boys (60%) residing in orphanages were found to be in the class IX-Xth. The parents of the majority of the girls and boys living with their families were found to be alive whereas the ones living in orphanages 50% of girls and boys parents are found to be alive. The results showed that out of the total sample of the girls and boys in orphanages, more than half (60%) had been staying in orphanages for the last 1-5 years, 15% have been staying since 6-10 years and 25% since 11-15 years. The living status of the parents of girls and boys before being admitted to orphanage indicated that 30% adolescents were in the orphanage due to the death of both parents, whereas half (50%) of the adolescents were there, because either their parents were missing or else, one of the parents had died and the rest of children’s (20%) parents were either divorced or extremely poor.

Academic Anxiety among the Adolescents

Table 1 A showed the scores of the academic anxiety of adolescents living in orphanages and with their families. The t-test was used to compare the score of academic anxiety. The mean values of academic anxiety obtained by adolescents living in orphanages were 10.1 and for those adolescents living with families was 12.2 and significant difference in academic anxiety amongst both the groups (t= -2.89*, p=0.01) was found. Fig-I depicts the anxiety level of adolescents living in

orphanages and the ones living with their families.

Table 1A: Level of Academic Anxiety

Variables	Mean	SD	t value	P value
Adolescents in Orphanages	10.1	2.7	-2.89*	0.01
Adolescents in Families	12.2	2.9		

Fig-(I)

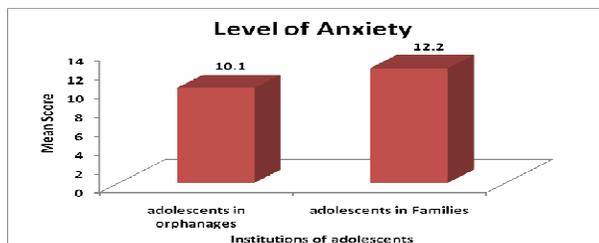


Table 1 B: Gender Differences in Academic Anxiety

Variables	Adolescents	Mean	SD	t value	P value
Orphanages	Girls	11.27	1.98	2.48*	0.01
	Boys	8.93	3.06		
Families	Girls	13.47	2.10	2.52*	0.01
	Boys	11	3.16		

The results of table 1 B indicate that there is a significant difference in the academic anxiety of adolescent girls and boys living in orphanages and with their families. The mean values of academic anxiety obtained by girls and boys living in orphanages were 11.27 and 8.93 whereas the mean scores of the ones living with their families were 13.47 and 11. The t-value for both the adolescents was significant at 0.01.

School Adjustment among the Adolescents

Table 2A showed the scores of school adjustment of adolescents living in orphanages and the ones with their families. The t-test was used to compare the score of school adjustment. The mean values of school adjustment obtained by adolescents living in orphanages were 18.06 and for those adolescents living with families was 14.93 and the t value was 2.68* which were significant at 0.01. Fig-II depicts the school adjustment level of adolescents living in orphanages and the ones with families.

Table 2 A: Level of School Adjustment

Variables	Mean	SD	t value	P value
Adolescents in Orphanages	18.06	4.69	2.68*	0.01
Adolescents in Families	14.96	4.23		

Fig-(II)

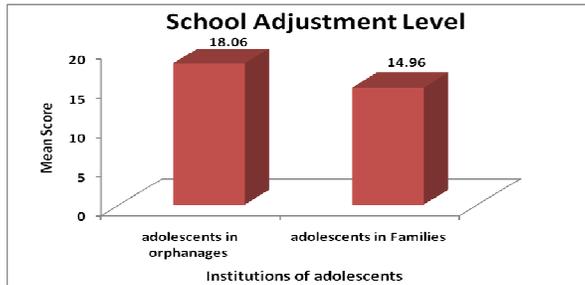


Table: 2B Gender Differences in School Adjustment

Variables	Adolescents	Mean	SD	t value	p-value
Orphanages	Girls	20.53	2.6	3.34*	0.01
	Boys	15.6	5.0		
Families	Girls	17.06	3.8	3.09*	0.01
	Boys	12.86	3.6		

The table 2B showed significant differences in adolescent girls and boys with regard to their school adjustment. The t-test was used to compare the score of school adjustment of adolescent girls and boys of Secondary Schools. The mean values of school adjustment obtained by girls and boys living in orphanages were 20.53 and 15.6 whereas the mean scores of the ones living with their families were 17.06 and 12.86. The t-value for the adolescents living in orphanages was 3.34* and the t-value for the ones living with their families were 3.09* which were significant at 0.01.

DISCUSSIONS

In the present study, the adolescents living in orphanages were found to have low academic anxiety than the ones living with their families. A previous study^[22] aimed to identify the relationship between depressive states, anxiety states, characteristics of the situation at school, and fear of social evaluation in orphaned children on 123 orphans and non-orphans. The findings

highlighted that the percentage of children with a high level of depression, anxiety, and social anxiety was higher in the group of orphaned children than in the group of children living with their families. The study thus concluded that orphans have higher levels of anxiety and stress than do children living in the family.

In the present study, the school adjustment of adolescents living in the families was significantly higher than the adolescents living in the orphanages. Similarly, a study^[23] on the adjustment of institutionalized children revealed that the majority of the institutional children had unsatisfactory social, emotional and educational adjustment. Similarly study^[24] highlighted that significant differences are found in emotional, social and composite adjustment of adolescents living in foster homes and biological families whereas no significant differences are found in educational adjustment level of adolescents living in orphanages and families.

In the present study, the scores on academic anxiety showed that adolescent girls had higher anxiety than the adolescent boys. Similar has documented in a study^[25] that girls, on the whole, had more incidences and intensity of academic anxiety as compared to boys. While exploring gender differences in academic anxiety, the previous study^[26] also reported that academic anxiety plays an important role at the secondary level of education because this is the threshold of future education. Girls particularly are highly tensed at this stage because on one hand, they want to secure good percentage for getting admission for their future education and on the other hand, they also want to prove themselves better than boys in this highly competitive age.

CONCLUSION

The results indicated that the academic anxiety among the adolescents living in the families was higher than the ones living in the orphanages and the gender differences showed that the girls had higher academic anxiety than the boys. This showed that the adolescents living with their families are

maybe under more pressure from their parents to achieve better scores and perform better in schools and that can be one of the possible reasons for having higher academic anxiety than the ones living in the orphanages. Further results showed that the school adjustment of adolescents living in the families was higher than the ones living in the orphanages and the girls had low adjustment level than the boys which itself suggests that orphanages need to create a near home-like environment to give them optimal opportunity to grow.

REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. Adolescent development. Maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health . [Internet]. Who.int. 2015 [cited 12 March 2018]. Available from: http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/dev/en/
2. Patton GC, Viner R. Pubertal transitions in health. *Lancet* 2007; 369(9567):1130-9.
3. Bisht AR. A study of stress in relation to school climate and academic achievement (age group 13-17). Unpublished doctoral thesis, Education, Kumaon University; 1980.
4. Xie HB. A comparative analysis of anxiety among adolescents. *The Guide of Science & Education* 2013; 14: 54.
5. Beesdo K, Knappe S, Pine DS. Anxiety and anxiety disorders in children and adolescents: developmental issues and implications for DSM-V. *Psychiatr Clin North Am.* 2009; 32(3): 483-524.
6. American Psychological Association. 2015 Annual Report: A supplement to *American Psychologist*. 2016; 71(5): 1-48.
7. Albano AM., Chorpita BF, Barlow DH. Childhood anxiety disorders, *Child psychopathology* 2003; 279-329.
8. Bokhorst K, Goossens FA, de Ruyter PA. Early detection of social anxiety: Reliability and validity of a teacher questionnaire for the identification of social anxiety in young children. *Soc Behav Pers* 2001; 29: 787-98.
9. Good BJ, Kleinman AM. Culture and anxiety: Cross-cultural evidence for the patterning of anxiety disorder, *Anxiety and anxiety disorders* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 1985; 297-323.
10. Essau CA, Conradt J, Petermann F. Frequency, comorbidity and psychosocial impairment of anxiety disorders in German adolescents. *J Anxiety Disord* 2000; 14: 263-79.
11. Costello EJ, Egger HL, Angold A. Developmental Epidemiology of Anxiety disorders. In Costello EJ, Egger HL, Angold A, Ollendick TH, March JS. *Phobic and Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents: A Clinician's Guide to Effective Psychosocial and Pharmacological Interventions*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2004: 61-91.
12. Angela I, Frank-Briggs, EAD, Alikor. Anxiety disorder amongst Secondary School children in an urban city in Nigeria. *Internat. J. Biomedical Sci* 2010; 6:246-51.
13. Agbakwuru C, Agbakwuru GA. Improving intellectual functioning and school adjustment of children through Bilingual education. *The Educational Psychologist*. 2012; 6(1):183-7.
14. Winga M, Agak J, Ayere A. Mildred. The Relationship among School Adjustment, Gender and Academic Achievement amongst Secondary School Students in Kisumu District Kenya. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 2011; 2 (6): 493-7.
15. Reddy AVR. Problems of concern for many of the school going adolescents. *Indian Psychological Review* 1989; 18(1-4): 71-4.
16. Deepshikha, Bahnot S. Role of family environment on socio-emotional adjustment of adolescent girls in rural areas of eastern Uttar Pradesh. *J Psychol* 2011; 2: 53-56.
17. Bowlby J, Watterborn. *Child care and growth of love*. London penguin Books; 1957. 12-65.
18. Sheikh, K. A Study of the Adjustment Problems of the Students at Plus Two Levels. *The Progress of Education* 1978; 4(9): 232-33.
19. Padmaja B, Agarwal S. Psychosocial problems and well being in institutionalized and non-institutionalized children. *IOSR-JHSS* 2014; 19(10):59-64.
20. Singh A.K., Sengupta A. *Manual for academic anxiety scale for children*, Agra: National Psychological Corporation; 2013.
21. Sinha AKP, Singh RP. *Manual for adjustment Inventory for school students*, Agra: National Psychological Corporation; 1980.
22. Tamara V. Avakyan, Svetlana V. Volikova. *Social Anxiety in Children. Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* 2014; 7(1): 74-82.
23. Hunshal SC, Gaonkar VA study on adjustment of institutionalized children. *KJAS* 2008; 21(4): 548-52.
24. Dhyani A, Singh RA. Study of adjustment level of adolescents from foster home and biological families. *Stud Home Com Sci* 2013; 7(1): 7-12.
25. Trivedi K, Bhansali R. Is Academic Anxiety Gender Specific? *J. Social Science* 2008; 17(1):1-3.
26. Sahukar G. Academic anxiety of rural and urban adolescent girls in relation to their socio-economic status. *International Referred Res. J* 2011; 33: 36-38.

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of interest: None

Ethical Clearance: Taken

Received on: 04-06-2018

Revised on: 10-07-2018

Accepted on: 12-07-2018

Published on: 12-07-2018