



# SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AMONG BOYS AND GIRLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY

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## ABSTRACT

*The main purpose of the present study was to examine school adjustment among secondary school boys and girls in relation to their socio-economic status, parent-child interaction and emotional maturity. It was found that the students having high parent-child interaction have significantly better school adjustment.*

Problems of school adjustment are universal in that all people must face difficult and troubling circumstances of living. The nature of our problems changes from one period of life to another.

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School adjustment does not mean any unhealthy twisting of one's personality through withdrawing from others, evading responsibility or deceiving oneself. (However, much conforms may come there from rather it is understood from the concept of school adjustment that the healthy, energitive participation of responsibility at times to the point of leadership and overall avoidance of any self deception in the school adjustment.) The well adjusted child meets the environment with initiative appropriate to a full sharing with other and optimum development of himself (Walton, 1970, p. 394).

Family happens to be the most significant single influence during human development. One vital factor that determines the quality of child's family life is his relationship with his parents.

Parents' interest in the school has been less common among lower middle. Upper lower socio-economic status have reinforced the values of school to some extent because they expected the school to contribute something for their children.

Parents of academically motivated, achieving children are likely to place a high value on autonomy and independence, rather than dependence and conformity. These parents tend to be democratic and to encourage an active 'give and take' interaction with their children; they exhibit curiosity and a respect for knowledge.

Parental orientation or expectation or attitude towards their children play an important role in the school adjustment of the children. The parental attitude, parent-child interaction and influence should be such that child can develop the ability of making a good school adjustment. The parent orientation should not be too democratic or autocratic. This democratic or autocratic behaviour of the parents affects the concept formation among the children and in turn affect the school adjustment. Parents themselves are influenced by the developing behaviour characteristic of their children.

Success or failure in school adjustment has been found to be related to the child's relationship with his parents and other family members. The position of the child in the family and his interaction with his parents and other members of his family have been found to influence success in later life. The child's reaction to family relationship depends too much on his individual make-up. It is possible generally to show how different situations on the home influences the development of children. The interaction of parent-child affects the school adjustment.

The emotions of the students should be controlled for the harmful effect on the emotional maturity of the child because under influence of the violent emotions, a

child can destabilise the balance. The teacher should guide them properly. The behaviour of the students is more emotional when compared to the adults. Therefore, it is necessary to keep the environment of school good and healthy. The teacher should have an attitude of sympathy towards the children so that their emotional growth may be proper and healthy.

A number of psychologists have chosen to emphasise the functions of emotional maturity in mediating the school adjustment of the individual. According to Allport, emotional maturity is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those physical system that determine his unique adjustment to his environment.

School adjustment is a process of continuous interaction. Both organism and the environment are not static. Hence the process of school adjustment is continuous. To be sure, at times, these changes are so small that an individual's effort to adjust to them seem imperceptible. In fact, this apparent absence of change, rather than the changes themselves may constitute school adjustment problems. The individual become troubled by the sameness, the monotony of his life. He comes to look upon change and the school adjustment thereof as a welcome relief from his colourless existence. A person may feel that he could cope with the challenge of existing and dramatic changes but the monotony gets him down. Hence both change and regularity or sameness demand school adjustment. As ways there is dynamic relationship between the person and his world in this relationship lies the basis for the study of psychology of school adjustment.

There are different areas of adjustment like home adjustment, school adjustment, teachers adjustment and vocational adjustment etc. In the field of school adjustment, there are areas of different adjustment like academic matters, school mates, teachers, school environment and self-adjustment. Another aspect of adjustment is in the area of emotional adjustment, parent adjustment, society adjustment etc. When the adjustment of an individual is referred to the school situation it is termed as school adjustment. Good (1959) defines school adjustment as "the act or process of fitting the school environment to the needs of the pupil".

Many factors viz., intelligence, self-concept, self-esteem, emotional maturity affect the school adjustment of adolescent boys and girls during different stages of their growth in their school situations.

In addition to that there are a number of social factors like socio-economic status, size of the family, attitudes and expectations of the parents, the teachers attitude sociometric status in a class affect their school adjustment.

There are not many studies available which have attempted to examine the school adjustment in school in relation to their emotional maturity, parent-child interaction, socio-economic status, gender, type of school and standard as a process.

The objectives of the present research are as follows:

## Objectives of the Study

1. To examine whether there is any significant difference in the dimensions of school adjustments of boys and girls.
2. To examine whether there is any significant difference in the dimensions of school adjustment of students studying in government and private schools.
3. To examine whether there is any significant difference in the dimensions of school adjustment of students with varying levels of parent-child interaction.
4. To examine whether there is any significant difference in the dimensions of school adjustment of students with different levels of different dimensions of emotional maturity.

Among the studies reviewed, perhaps no study has investigated the effect of all the variables namely parent-child interaction, emotional maturity, gender and type of schools on the dimensions of school adjustment of secondary school students studying in VIII, IX and X standards. Therefore, the present research is of great significance.

## Operational Definition of School Adjustment

School adjustment is a difficult term to define. Adjustment is nothing but fitting into or adapting to an environment.

School adjustment has different dimensions according to Nirmal Kumar Bhagia (1964). The main aspects of school life are : 1) academic matters, 2) school mates, 3) teachers, 4) school organisation or environment in general and 5) self.

They are coded as A,G, S, T and P respectively. The inventory furnishes information about the student's adjustment to various aspects of school life in terms of about the school.

Academic matters in school adjustment indicated how far a pupil is satisfied with his studies, subjects and class work, feels confident, serious and successful in school work; and is free from the fear of the tests and examination. This is about academic matters.

**School mates** in school adjustment indicated how far a pupil like his mates, feels happy in their company and enjoys relationship; experience approval and popularity among mates gets into the social interaction by forming friendship and being cooperative.

**School Organisation** in school adjustment indicated how far a pupil is satisfied with school administration and general environment facilities and conforms to schools; likes miscellaneous administrative conditions, feels interested and participates in co-curricular activities and experiences attachment with the school.

**School Teachers** in school adjustment indicated how far a pupil like the teachers of his school, their teaching, treatment and personality, experience their approval.

**Self** of school adjustment indicates how far a pupil is satisfied from his self at school. Feels free from disturbed state of mind, worries, sadness, inadequacies, personal handicaps, immoralities, undue aggressions and conformity, possesses personal qualities like regularity, punctuality, resourcefulness, responsibility etc.

In the present study, school adjustment was represented by the total score on the school adjustment inventory developed by N.K. Bhagia. As per the author of the inventory, the school adjustment is measured as related to various aspects of life in terms of their characteristic behaviour and feeling in and about the school.

Higher scores indicate a higher level of school adjustment. Lower scores on the other hand, indicate poor school adjustment.

The next term that needs to be defined is Emotional Maturity.

## Operational Definition of Emotional Maturity

The emotional maturity has five sub-components:

1. Emotional Instability
2. Emotional Regression

3. Social Maladjustment
4. Personality Disintegration
5. Lack of Independence

**1. Emotional Instability :** This is an immaturity syndrome exhibiting a lack of capacity to dispose off problems, irritability, needing a constant help for one's day to day work, stubbornness and temper tantrums.

**2. Emotional Regression :** Emotional Regression is a group of factors representing such syndromes as feeling of inferiority, restlessness, hostility, aggressiveness and self-centredness.

**3. Social Maladjustment :** Social maladjustment is expressed by an individual through his lack of social adaptability, expression on hatredness, seclusive but boasting, uttering of falsehood and lies and also shirking of responsibility.

**4. Personality Disintegration :** This syndrome of personality disintegration includes reactions, phobias formation, rationalisation, pessimism, immorality. Such a person suffers from inferiority and reacts to environment through aggressiveness, destruction and distorted sense of reality. Such a person shows varied degree of neuroticism.

**5. Lack of Independence :** A person who lacks emotional independence shows parasitic dependence on other; he is egoistic and objective interests. People think of him as an unreliable person.

## Operational Definition of Parent-Child Interaction

In the pre-school child-parent behaviour is not unidimensional. It does not consist simply of variations along a single axis. Two major dimensions that consistently emerge in such theoretical schemes are acceptance-rejection (warmth-hostility) and control autonomy. In this study it refers to the extent of mutual understanding, cooperation and closeness between parent and children.

The term parent involves father, mother or any relative who is the head of the family on whom the child depends. It is the most important duty of the parents to coordinate their work for the harmonious development of the child. Parents need to know the various experiences that the child has at school in order to guide him properly at home. Thus the parents will see that their child attends school regularly, devotes sometimes for studies at home and encourages the child to progress in school. This incidentally facilitates parent-child interaction.

## Variables of the Study

In the present study, School Adjustment among students of secondary schools boys and girls in relation to their socio-economic status, parent-child interaction and emotional maturity.

1. In the present study the dependent variable is school adjustment in its different dimensions.
2. Independent variables of the study are the following:
  - a) Gender
  - b) Socio-Economic Status
  - c) Parent-Child Interaction
  - d) Emotional Maturity

## Major Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the school adjustment of boys and girls of secondary schools of Tumkur town.
2. There is no significant difference in the school adjustment of students of secondary schools with varying levels of socio-economic status.
3. There is no significant difference in the school adjustment of students of secondary schools with varying levels of parent-child interaction.
4. There is no significant difference in the school adjustment of students of secondary schools with varying levels of emotional maturity.
  - i) There is no significant difference in the school adjustment students of secondary schools with varying levels of emotional instability.
  - ii) There is no significant difference in the school adjustment students of secondary schools with varying levels of Emotional Peregession.
  - iii) There is no significant difference in the school adjustment students of secondary schools with varying levels of social maladjustment.

- iv) There is no significant difference in the school adjustment students of secondary schools with varying levels of Personality Disintegration.
- v) There is no significant difference in the school adjustment students of secondary schools with varying levels of Lack of Independence.

The above major hypotheses were tested in terms of the five dimensions of school adjustment.

The population of the present study includes the students who will enrol to 8th, 9th and 10th standards in different schools both composite and independent secondary schools of Tumkur Town.

The researcher had employed the proportionate stratified random sampling technique to draw the sample. The stratification was on the gender, type of school management and standard in which the student is studying.

Proportionate stratification indicates that the sample includes 150 students studying in VIII standard, 150 students studying in IX standard and 150 students studying in X standard. The sample also includes 225 boys, 225 girls, 75 students selected from government schools and 375 students selected from private schools. Totally 450 students were selected for the study.

## Tools used for the Research

To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, data was collected with the help of a few tools. The tools used for this were School Adjustment Scale by Bhagia (1964), Parent-Child Interaction Scale by Dr. S.V. Kale, Emotional Maturity Scale by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava (1979) and Socio-Economic Status scale by Dr. S.P. Puranik (1999).

## School Adjustment Inventory

For measuring adjustment of school students i.e., secondary school students, a tool by Nirmal Kumar Bhagia (originally in Hindi, 1964) was translated to English by B.G. Sudha (1992) was used in the study.

The inventory consists of 165 items distributed under five categories covering all the main aspects of school life viz., (1) Academic Matters, (2) School Mates, (3) Teachers, (4) School Organisation or Environment in general and (5) self. They are

coded as A, S, G, T, and P respectively. The inventory furnished information about the student's adjustment to various aspects of school life in terms of their characteristic behaviour and feelings in and about the school. There is no time limit. But it has been found however that 40 to 45 minutes are usually sufficient to complete the inventory.

Each item has three response modes, viz., 'Yes', 'No' '?. For positive items it was scored as Yes=2, No=1, ?=0. For negative items it was scored as Yes=1, No=2, ?=0. Thus the scores would range from 0 to 330.

Scoring of the items would give score for each category separately and the combined score of all the categories would represent the total school adjustment score of an individual. Higher score indicates high level of adjustment.

## Validity

As the items selected were based on the aspects of school life of students, viz., academic matters, school mates, teachers, school organisation or environment in general and self, students adjustment to various aspects of school life meant for secondary school study, the content validity for the tool is presumed to be present.

## Reliability

The index of reliability was computed by Nagarathnamma (193) for the School Adjustment Inventory by using the technique of the test-retest method with a gap of one month on a sample of 30 students and it was found to be 0.82. Therefore, the scale was found to be reliable.

Nagaraja (2001) has also found the test-retest reliability coefficient for the dimensions of school adjustment inventory in Kannada version on a sample of 30 students with a time gap of 50 days. The coefficients varied from 0.59 to 0.75.

## Emotional Maturity Scale

The Emotional Maturity Scale was originally in Hindi by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava (1979). The investigator has made use of the translated into English version of the same tool by Dr. B.G. Sudha and B.S. Satyanarayana. This scale consists of 48 items.

The scale measures the following five components of emotional maturity:

1. Emotional Instability (Measure by items 1 to 10)
2. Emotional Regression (Measure by items 11 to 20)
3. Social Maladjustment (Measure by items 21 to 30)
4. Personality Disintegration (Measure by items 31 to 40)
5. Lack of Independence (Measure by items 41 to 48)

Emotional maturity scale is a self reporting five point scale. The five point are "Very much", "Much", "Undecided", "Probably", and "Never" for each of the items. Items of the scale are in question from demanding information for each in any of the five options mentioned. The responses would be scored as follows: 5 points for "very much", 4 points for "much", 3 points for "undecided", 2 points for "probably" and 1 point for "never".

**Reliability of the Scale :** The test-retest reliability coefficient for the test on a sample of 150 with an interval of six months was found to be 0.75.

The internal consistency was determined by the method of computing coefficient of correlation between the area score and the total scores. The obtained coefficient was (n=98)

1. Emotional Instability and total score 0.75
2. Emotional Regression and total score 0.63
3. Social maladjustment and total score 0.58
4. Personality Disintegration and total score 0.86
5. Lack of Independence and total score 0.42

The reliability coefficient for the different areas by (1) test-retest method (N=30) with an interval of five weeks ranged from 0.23 to 0.63, (2) reliability by split half method (N=33) was also found out by Padmini ranged from 0.39 to 0.79 (1980) and also (3) Nagaraja (2001) has established the test-retest reliability coefficient for the Kannada version on a sample of 30 students with a time gap of 15 days which ranged from 0.40 to 0.58.

**Validity of the Scale :** The scale was validated against the external criteria, namely, that area of the Adjustment Inventory for college students (Singh A.K. and Singh R.P) and the obtained coefficient of correlation was 0.64 (N=46).

Quartile points were computed for grouping the students.

## Socio-Economic Status Scale

To measure the socio-economic status of pupils in the present study, a scale developed by Dr. S.D. Puranik (1999) (Urban) was used for aspects pertaining to (a) education, (b) occupation and (c) income of head of the family. The weightages are given below. Since the scale has three variables, the socio-economic status of person is determined by total scores of all the three variables and therefore in the present study education, occupation and monthly income of a person are understood as the indices of socio-economic status.

## Parent-Child Interaction Scale

This tool was constructed and standardised by Dr. S.V. Kale. It consists of 28 items in English. It assesses the extent of active interaction between parents and children which may help cognitive development and school adjustment of children. It has no time limit and with method of summated as 0 to 3.

The reliability was computed by split-half method and it was found to be 0.98 (Spearman-Brown formula).

**Validity :** The item-criterion correlation ranges between 0.72 and 0.44.

The original tool was for the sample parents, since the same was modified to student's sample, the reliability of the scale was established i.e., and test-retest and split-half reliability, it was found to be 0.42 and 0.61 respectively.

The investigation translated the scale into Kannada version and also found out the validity and reliability of the Kannada version of the scale. The content reliability established by giving it to judges viz., psychologists, sociologists and educationists to see the consult translation and relevance of words. Therefore the consort validity was established.

The test-retest reliability coefficient was established on a sample of 30 students with a time gap of 15 days and the reliability was found to be 0.56. Therefore the scale was found to be valid and reliable.

## Methodology

The technique of t-test was used for testing the hypothesis.

Table 1: Table showing the number, means, standard deviations and t-values of differences in the means of the dimensions of School Adjustment scores of boys and girls, students studying in private and government schools and students having low and high levels of parent-child interaction

	Dimensions of School Adjustment														
	Academic Matters			School Mates			School Teachers			School Organisation			Self		
	M	SD	t-value	M	SD	t-value	M	SD	t-value	M	SD	t-value	M	SD	t-value
<b>Sex</b>															
Boys (N=225)	52.85	9.69		53.82	9.78		55.12	9.98		52.30	9.99		52.62	10.28	
Girls (N=225)	54.39	9.4	1.71 (NS)	56.62	9.02	3.16(NS)	53.89	9.87	1.31(NS)	53.73	9.62	1.55(NS)	53.70	9.76	1.14(NS)
<b>Type of School</b>															
Private (N=375)	53.03	9.62		54.14	9.41		53.95	10.01		52.34	9.83		52.45	9.97	
Govt. (N=75)	56.56	8.77	3.13**	57.64	9.10	3.02**	57.27	9.13	2.82**	56.41	9.14	3.48**	56.73	9.60	3.50**
<b>Parent-Child Interaction</b>															
Low (N=120)	43.11	8.06		44.39	8.68		43.46	8.41		41.87	8.52		42.79	8.28	
High (N=121)	60.64	4.54	20.78**	61.22	4.05	19.26**	60.98	5.88	18.73**	60.08	4.59	20.63**	59.36	7.69	16.09**

\*\* p less than 0.01

**Table 2: Table showing the number, means, standard deviations and t-values of differences in the means of the dimensions of School Adjustment scores of student having different dimensions of emotional maturity.**

Emotional Maturity	Dimensions of School Adjustment														
	Academic Matters			School Mates			School Teachers			School Organisation			Self		
	M	SD	t-value	M	SD	t-value	M	SD	t-value	M	SD	t-value	M	SD	t-value
<b>Emotional Instability</b> High (N=91) Low (N=71)	49.67	10.18		51.39	10.55		50.85	10.85		50.01	10.82		50.80	10.63	
	56.84	7.38	5.20**	57.17	6.98	4.43**	57.38	6.68	4.70**	54.85	7.73	3.32**	54.35	7.65	2.47**
<b>Emotional Regression</b> High (N=129) Low (N=118)	49.29	10.47		50.69	10.49		50.31	11.07		48.95	11.31		49.84	10.68	
	57.21	5.94	7.39**	57.90	6.32	6.61**	57.59	6.36	6.40**	55.70	6.95	5.70**	54.70	9.47	2.96**
<b>Social Maladjustment</b> High (N=138) Low (N=100)	50.68	10.48		52.20	10.58		51.88	10.67		50.30	10.85		51.17	9.99	
	56.77	6.70	5.46**	57.40	7.05	4.55**	56.39	8.28	3.67**	55.54	7.14	4.49**	56.29	6.54	4.77**
<b>Personality Disintegration</b> High (N=124) Low (N=113)	52.48	9.94		53.70	9.97		53.77	10.39		51.60	10.52		51.44	11.42	
	54.80	8.78	1.91(NS)	55.73	8.90	1.66(NS)	56.03	8.87	1.81(NS)	54.38	9.46	2.14*	54.66	9.13	2.41*
<b>Lack of Independence</b> High (N=104) Low (N=102)	49.97	10.87		50.92	11.21		51.19	11.36		49.40	11.32		49.59	11.08	
	56.63	7.98	5.02**	57.27	7.57	4.77**	56.59	8.79	3.82**	55.66	7.85	4.62**	55.67	7.66	4.58**

\*\* p less than 0.05; \* p less than 0.01

## Findings and Conclusions

The main purpose of the present study was to examine the school adjustment among students of secondary school boys and girls in relation to their socio-economic status, parent-child interaction, emotional maturity, standard, sex and type of school. The school adjustment was measured in terms of five dimensions.

The analysis have revealed some interesting findings. With regard to sex, it was found that girls have significantly better school adjustment in the dimension of 'school mates' than the boys. The other dimensions of school adjustment did not significantly differ. This is also supported by the findings of the researches (Bharathi, 1984; Gangadeep, 1986; Khan, 1976; Smith, 1990; Sunitha, 1986; Srivastava, 1989) whereas this trend was not supported by the other researcher Sarswat (1982).

In regard to socio-economic status, it was found that the students belonging to high socio-economic status have significantly better school adjustment in all its dimensions than the students belonging to low socio-economic status. This is supported by the findings of the researchers (Mott, 1972; Gangadeep, 1986; Sudha, 1982; Singh, 1980; Gayathri, 1983; Bhaduri, 1971; Sharma, 1980; Agarwal, 1981). This is not supported by the findings of the researches (Singh, 1979; Gupta, 1980).

In respect of parent-child interaction it was found that the students having high parent-child interaction have significantly better school adjustment in all its dimensions than the students having low parent-child interaction. This is supported by the findings of the researchers (Khan, 1976; Sharma, 1988) whereas this trend was not supported by the researcher Rawal (1984).

With regard to the five dimensions of emotional maturity concerned, the following conclusions were drawn.

- i) Students having low emotional instability have significantly better school adjustment in all its dimensions than the students having high emotional instability.
- ii) Students having low emotional regression have significantly better school adjustment in all its dimensions than the students having high emotional regression.
- iii) Students having low social maladjustment have significantly better school adjustment in all its dimensions than the students having high social maladjustment.

- iv) Students having low personality disintegration have significantly better school adjustment in only two dimensions viz., "school organisation" and "self" than the students having high personality disintegration. The other groups did significantly differ.
- v) Students having low lack of independence have significantly better school adjustment in all its dimensions than the students having high lack of independence.

The relation of emotional maturity and school adjustment is also supported by the findings of the researchers (Sunitha, 1986; Motto, 1972; Pandit, 1985; Khan, 1976; Sunitha, 1986; Sarswat, 1982; Sudha, 1982) whereas this was not supported by the findings of the research (Rawal, 1984).

Generally it can be concluded that the students of secondary schools have better school adjustment in Tumkur town.

## Educational Implications

The development of emotionally mature behaviour in a student is the goal of education. In arranging the total school programme, school administration must take into consideration the significance of the basic emotional needs. There is also an increased need for early recognition and identification of emotional disturbance to help in better school adjustment.

Many children are discouraged about their ability to perform satisfactorily in school work. This discouragement is usually reflected in accompanying misbehaviour. The teacher should be continually aware of his role in helping to shape the child's concept of self as an adjustment and particularly as a school adjustment.

The teacher should utilize all available techniques to assist each child to feel adequate at appropriate levels in school adjustment. It becomes increasingly evident that the child must be encouraged to make the most important discovery of all, himself and that the school must participate in the development of self understanding. Facilitating the child's ability to draw upon his feelings, should be part of the educational experience. These children can be provided with some minimum standards in caring for self and school adjustment. Poor self-concepts, lack of confidence, in mastery of the environment usually accompany deficiency in the child's school performances.

Adequate service of expert consultants and psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers and visiting teachers should be provided.

There should be a comprehensive programme which is broad enough in enhancing adjustment to meet the varying needs of the school.

There should be provision for continuous evaluation of school adjustment programme.