

Comparison of Adjustment, Ego-strength and Anxiety between Children of Working and Non-Working Women

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ABSTRACT

The study intended to compare children of working and non-working mothers in terms of their adjustment and anxiety. It was hypothesized that (i) There would be significant difference between the children of working and non-working mothers in terms of adjustment. and (ii) ego-strength (iii) the children of working mother would have higher level of anxiety as compared to those children of non-working mothers. For the verification of these hypotheses, the respondents of both the groups were administered Hindi Adaptation of Bell's Adjustment Inventory by Mohsin and Shamshad, Hasan's Ego-strength Scale & Sinha's Manifest Anxiety Scale besides PDS to measure the variables to be compared. The obtained data were analysed using t-test. The obtained t-values were found significant. It was found that children of working mother excelled over their counterpart children group belonging to non-working mother group in terms of having sound adjustment, high ego-strength and high level of anxiety. Thus, hypotheses were retained. The finding relating to sound adjustment on the part of children of working mother group was interpreted on the ground of higher level of positive personal traits grown due to wider exposure leading to enhance their self-confidence and consequently possessing sound mental health. The dominance of children of working mother in terms of stranger ego-strength was interpreted on the ground of greater flexibility in outlook and frequent interaction with external world. More over they possess high need structure dimension including risk-taking attitude along with the danger. Which lead them to face comparatively higher level of anxiety. Thus, working status significantly influence the extent of adjustment, ego-strength as well as level of anxiety amongst children of working and non-working mothers.

Introduction:

The present investigation embodies concepts like adjustment ego-strength and anxiety which need elaboration. The term 'adjustment' has been explained in various ways. The biologists thought of adjustment in terms of adaptation. In 'The origin of Species' he theorised that only the organisms which are most equipped to adopt to the dangers of physical environment would survive and this was called as 'The survival of the fittest'. But in modern times the term adaptation has been replaced by adjustment which now stands for psychological survival in which the psychologists are more

interested, i.e. the subject or their interest is individual's adjustment to social or interpersonal pressure and not only adaptation to physical world (Lazarus, 1978). The process of adjustment is more complex than simple biological adaptation which is comparatively a simple process. Therefore, an adaptive behaviour is not identical to an adjustive behaviour. These two types of behaviour have been differentiated on the basis of tension-reductions and its future consequences. (Kalpan, 1965) has remarked that people may persist for years in adaptive behaviour which brings

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immediate rewards but does not contribute to long term satisfaction. They have little tolerance for emotional stress and use any available means to secure relief. The adjusted person, on the other hand, is capable of delaying immediate relief from anxiety in favours of behaviour patterns which comparatively lead to more constructive and lasting rewards.

Adjustment has also been defined in terms of normality by educationists and statisticians. This approach to adjustment is based on statistical average and not on value judgement. The explanation of adjustment in terms of normality and that of maladjustment in terms of abnormality did not gain much ground among the subsequent thinkers. It is argued that a person may belong to satisfied average, but he may not be well adjusted. Disruptive behaviour is statistically a normal behaviour of one time, but it does not mean that this behaviour be considered as adjustive behaviour (Kisker, 1985). So it follows that any behaviour which is statistically normal cannot be necessarily considered as adjustive behaviour. However, if the norm has been derived from the criteria of adequate behaviour or adjusted behaviour (Maslow and Mittellmann, 1930), normality can serve as an index of adjustment.

Some people relate adjustment to conformity. A conformist who lives according to the norms of the society is generally considered to be a well adjusted person. On the other hand, an individual is considered to be maladjusted or poorly adjusted if he deviates from immediate sociocultural norms even if his deviated action may bring some change in the welfare of society. There is an agreement among the psychologists and sociologists that conformity may be regarded as one of the criteria of good adjustment but this term, however, cannot be synonymous with adjustment.

It is only a form of adjustment; whether adjustment achieved by conforming behaviour is good or bad depends upon the circumstances under which it takes place. From a psychological point of view adjustment implies not more

conformity but a harmonious relationship between an individual and the present society. Torgerson and Adams, 1954 have remarked that a person can achieve adjustment either by adapting his behaviour to the requirements of a situation or by changing the situation to meet his personality needs. An individual who totally conforms and submerges himself in his group norms and does not build his own internal strength and independent individuality is trying to find easy means of safe existence and it is a play to escape from freedom. Such a person miserably fails when they are put into a competitive environment where there is demand upon his potentialities for survival. On the other hand, a person who completely disengages himself from his group norms becomes out of balance and his adjustment in his group comes in danger (Fromm, 1941). Therefore, neither total subordination of individuality to the group nor complete disengagement from society can be helpful in adjustment. 'Rather a selective development of one's potentialities along culturally approved lines can be considered as a necessary component of adjustment' (Hussain et al., 1996).

It can be concluded that definitions of good adjustments cannot be restricted only to conforming behaviour. The mental hygienists take a more subjective view of adjustment process and consider it to be the need for a person adjusting to himself, understanding his strength and limitations, facing reality and achieving harmony within himself. The mental hygienists give emphasis on the achievement of self-acceptance, freedom from internal conflict, self-realisation and developing a unifying set of values which make life purposeful and meaningful.

Clinical physiologists consider an organised behaviour to be adjustive behaviour and therefore freedom from fears, obsessions, phobias, hostilities, complexes and other psychological symptoms are the criteria against which adjustment can be evaluated.

Counselling psychologists who deal with persons suffering from some psychological

problems and maladjustment, endeavour to bridge the gap between the individual's real self and ideal self. It means that maladjustment is taken to be a scheme between the individual's real self and the ideal self.

Personality psychologists have given a very comprehensive concept of adjustment. Some of them have defined adjustment on the basis of self-concept of the individual which should be in accord with reality. He may define self-concept as the total psychological view that the individual has of himself in relation to the environment or it is an organisation of self-meaning or ways of seeing oneself. Maladjustment takes place when individual's psychological view regarding himself is in discord with reality. A well adjusted person has essentially positive attitude towards self and others and he has feeling of dignity and integrity, worth and self-actualization (Combs & Syngg, 1959). Thus, adjustment is a process by this process the individual tries to bring a harmonious, stable and satisfying relationship with his environment, i.e., by this process the individual alters his impulses and responses to fit the demands of his environment, (iii) By this process the individuals tries to satisfy his needs and desires in accordance with environmental demands on the one hand, and his abilities and limitations on the other, (iv) A good adjustment always aims at long-term satisfaction instead of satisfying an immediate intense needs. (Hussain, 1996; Symonds (1951) postulated six criteria of ego-strength, which are the indicators of the relative strength of the ego in dealing with the internal or external equilibrium. These are : (i) tolerance of external threat, (ii) dealing with quilt feelings, (iii) capacity for affective repression, (iv) balance of rigidity and flexibility, (e) planning and control, and (vi) self-esteem.

Anxiety is also an important dependent variable in the present study. Peter Stratton and Nicky Hayes (1991) viewed anxiety as a stressful state resulting from the anticipation of danger. Anxiety has a physiological component, a cognitive component, particularly in narrowing attention and

a subjective experience of discomfort. Each of these components may help they person deal effectively with clearly recognized, real and immediate dangers, but can be damaging both psychologically and physically when the anxiety persists, as in occupational stress or unresolved unconscious conflicts. Reber et al. (2009) defined anxiety as a vague, unpleasant emotional state with qualities of apprehension, dread, distress and uneasiness. Anxiety is often distinguished from fear is that an anxiety state is often object less, where as fear has a specific object, person, or even to be feared with.

Kumari (2007) found that reminiscence is the function of level of aspiration and adjustment. Kumari (2008) found that deprivation significantly influence anxiety and adjustment. Mohan and Latha (2005) found that family environment significantly influence adjustment and academic achievement. Nawendu (2008) found significant difference in adjustment patterns between working and non-working women. Patel (2009) reported that reminiscence is the function of anxiety and adjustment. Poonam (2009) reported that reminiscence is the function of self-concept anxiety and adjustment. Prasad (2008) found that parental style and social support significantly influence adjustment patterns. Further, ego-strength has been found linked with perceptual defense (Prasad 2009), community affiliation (Saxena, 2000). The foregoing references indicate that children of working and non-working women have not been studied in context of anxiety and adjustment. This justifies under taking of the present study.

Objectives:

The study intends to make a comparison between children of working and non-working mother in terms of adjustment, ego-strength and anxiety.

Hypotheses

- (1) There would be significant difference between the children of working mothers and those of non-working mothers in terms of adjustment.
- (2) There would be significant difference between

children of working and non-working mothers in terms of their ego-strength.

- (3) The children of working mothers would have higher level of anxiety as compared to those children of non-working mothers.

Method of Study

Sample Used

An incidental-cum-purposive sample consisting of 480 respondents of undergraduate classes of Patna University and Magadh University, located in central areas of patna town were selected. The selected respondents were equal

in number in respect of SES and urban-rural inhabitation.

Tools Used

- (1) A PDS was used to seek the personal information about the respondents.
- (2) Hindi Adaptation of Bell's Adjustment Inventory by Mohsin and Shamshad was used to measure patterns of adjustment.
- (3) Hasan's Ego-strength Scale was used to measure ego-strength of the respondents.
- (4) Sinha Manifest Anxiety Scale was used to measure anxiety of the responding.

Results and Interpretations

Table-1

Comparison between the means of children of working and the non-working mothers in terms of their adjustment.

Subjects	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-ratio	df	p
Children of Working Mothers	240	70.54	7.95	0.51	9.24	478	<.01
Children of Non-working Mothers	240	75.16	7.58	0.49			

The results displayed by table-01 clearly indicated the significant effect of working non-working status of mothers on adjustment of children respondents. It is clear from the table that children belonging to working mother possess a smaller mean (Mean = 70.54). Then children of non-working mother (M = 75.16). The difference between the means was found significant (t = 9.24, df = 478; p < .01). Thus hypothesize no. (1), stating that there would be significant difference between children of working and non-working mothers in terms of adjustment, was fully retained. This finding might be interpreted on the ground of higher level of self-concept, ego-strength, self-disclosures, self-actualization etc. on the part of children belonging to working status of their mothers than their children respondents belonging to non-working status.

Table-2

Comparison between the means of children of working and the non-working mothers in terms of anxiety.

Subjects	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-ratio	df	p
Children of Working Mothers	240	60.33	7.43	0.48	4.01	478	<.01
Children of Non-working Mothers	240	57.56	7.69	0.50			

The results displayed by table-(2) it is clear that children respondents of working mothers excelled over the children of non-working mothers mothers in terms fo anxiety. The respondents children of working mothers having mean score as 60.33 excelled over th e respondents children of non working

mothers with mean value as (Mean = 57.56) in terms of anxiety. The difference between the means was found significant ($t = 4.01$; $df = 478$; $p < .01$). Thus, hypothesis no. (2) stating that children respondent of working mothers would have high level of anxiety as compared to children respondents of non-working mothers, was fully retained. The

finding might be interpreted on the ground that children of working mother possess higher level of need structure including higher degree of need for achievement, higher level of aspiration, higher risk-taking attitudes etc. leading to higher level of anxiety in them as compared to their counterpart respondents children of non-working mothers.

Table-3

Comparison between the means of children of working and the non-working mothers in terms of their ego-strength.

Subjects	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-ratio	df	p
Children of Working Mothers	240	22.94	7.49	0.48	11.86	478	<.01
Children of Non-working Mothers	240	15.11	6.97	0.45			

The results in table-(3) showed significant difference between the children of working and the children of non-working mothers in terms of ego-strength while the children of working mothers with a mean value of (Mean = 22.94) have been found having higher level of ego-strength, the non-working mothers with a mean value of (Mean = 15.11) have been found having lower level of ego-strength. The difference between the two means is highly significant ($t = 11.86$; $df = 478$; $p < .01$). Thus the hypothesis no. (3) is retained. The finding might be interpreted in terms of higher educational level, greater flexibility in outlooks and frequent interaction with the external worlds on the part of the children of working mothers as compared to the children of non-working mothers.

Conclusions:

1. The children respondents of working mother excelled over children of non-working mother in terms of adjustment.
2. The children of working mother excelled over the children of non-working mother in terms of ego-strength trait of personality.
3. The children respondents of working were found superior to the children of non-working mother in terms of level of anxiety.

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