

## **'Family Environment and Adjustment among Young Adults'**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The topic of this research paper was family environment and adjustment among young adults. Family environment can be explained as a pattern where the actions of all individuals of the family are connected. Adjustment is defined as the attempts of a person to maintain a synchronized relation between the necessities of self and the pressures of the surroundings. In this paper theoretical basis for the connection between family environment and creativity, anxiety, eating disorders and suicidal tendencies is explained. The paper also talks about the importance of family environment. In this paper, types of adjustment, adjustment mechanism, characteristics of adjustment are also discussed. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the association between family environment and adjustment. Ten researches exploring the relation between family environment and adjustment have also been reviewed. Most of the researches establish a relation between family environment and adjustment. The research was conducted on a sample of individuals belonging to the age group of 18 to 21 years. The tools used for the research were family environment scale by Bhatia and Chadha and Bell Adjustment inventory (adult form). The results of this study have showed that all the dimensions of family environment scale are i.e. cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, independence, active-recreational orientation, organization and control are positively correlated with home, health, emotional and social adjustment. In conclusion it has been seen that family environment has an impact on adjustment of an individual.

Key words:- adjustment, family environment, family environment scale, Bell adjustment inventory

## INTRODUCTION

Family environment and adjustment play an important role in all the spheres of an individual's life for example academic, social, health etc. family environment has been found to play an important role in the adjustment of people. An individual with a warm and affectionate family environment will have good adjustment in all spheres of life whereas an individual with a negative family environment will have a poor adjustment. In simple words family environment is the atmosphere that prevails in a person's family. Family environment is very important as it is functional in development of a child's personality, attitude etc. family environment has also been found to play role in the development of suicidal tendencies in an individual. A positive family environment inspires and nourishes creativity in individuals. Adjustment is defined as the process through which a person responds to the demands of the environment laid on him. Adjustment starts with need, moves ahead when that need cannot be satisfied, uses actions to satisfy the need and ends with the state in which need is fulfilled or at least reduced.

### **Family environment:**

The definition of family environment says that "it includes all the circumstances and social conditions within a particular family." Family environment is regarded as an arrangement where the connections and the actions of every individual belonging to the family are dependent on each other. There is an effect of the family environment in which a person is brought on him. In the initial years of life, family environment plays the most crucial role in the development of the person. In the social, psychological, and other aspects of life, family environment has an influence. Many researches show that individuals who are brought in a family environment where parents give independence to the child in every aspect of life whether psychological, social or physical are more productive and well to do in their lives (Olsson et al. 1999; Madhu and Matla, 2004; Powell, 2006; Lee et al. 2006 and Deepshikha and Bhanot, 2011).

### **Importance of Family Environment:**

A family environment marked by a sense of belongingness and concern, resulting from strong connections between individuals of the family, make an essential contribution in developing

children's attitude, thought process and personality. In a stimulating family environment, child is able to work on herself and to enhance their capacities and strengths.

In a family environment marked by ignorance, the children develop a negative attitude and their personality development is hindered. In such a family environment, the individual loses a sense of belongingness and love and this also has a negative impact on their education. Such individuals feel ignored and lonely, which reduces their self-esteem.

A positive family environment stimulates the positive development of a child's intelligence. It has been found that a child with average intelligence could perform really well if he is brought up in a positive and stimulating family environment. On the contrary, research has also shown that a child with even high level of intelligence may not perform well if he has been not brought up in stimulating environment

In a positive family environment, individuals are raised in a way where they grow up to contribute to the community and the society. Such individuals develop a sense of responsibility and contribution.

In a positive family environment, where the individual gets love and support from parents and family members, there the individual develops a positive self- concept and has self-confidence that is he is confident about himself/herself.

### **Factors effecting Family Environment:**

- **Family Cohesion:** a very important factor governing family environment is family cohesion. Family cohesion is explained as the emotional connections and relations among individuals belonging to a family. This concept was given by Mary E. Richmond in 1917. Richmond talked about the importance of cohesion in family environment. It has been observed that too little or too much of cohesiveness both are not good for a good family environment. So, an adequate level of cohesiveness is important for a positive family environment.
- **Family Conflict:** another important factor affecting family environment is conflicts occurring in family. Family conflict can be defined as the operating disagreement among individuals belonging to a family. Since in a family, members can have different opinions

and attitudes hence conflicts are inevitable in a family and some kind of conflicts between family members are also very essential for the proper development of a family.

- Emotional expressiveness: it can be defined as the degree to which individuals in a family can perform actions openly and can show their emotions without any hesitation. Emotional expressiveness is very important because family environments where individuals are allowed to express their emotions develop better and such family environments are more positive.
- Independence: it can be explained as the degree to which members of a family are supported to take their individual differences and are sufficient in their own selves. Independence in the family to some extent is good but too much independence is also harmful for a positive family environment.
- Family organization; it can be defined as the degree to which a pattern or a structure is prevalent in a society. some sort of organization is important for a family because if there will be no organization in the family then the family would be disintegrated. In a disintegrated family, the family environment will not be positive and stimulating.
- Control in a family: it can be referred to as the norms that are set in every family and the processes that govern a family. Control in a family is important because it somehow bonds the individuals together.
- Intellectual-cultural orientation: it is the degree to which members in a family get involved in cultural and mind diverting activities. In a family recreation is also very important because if there is no recreation then the family environment gets dull and boring.

### **Adjustment:**

In the field of psychology, adjustment is explained as the procedure in the behavioral domain by means of which all living creatures continue with a state of homeostasis between the demands of the surrounding and their own necessities. The procedure of adjustment begins when some kind of necessity is felt and ends when that necessity is fulfilled. One example of the process of adjustment can be when an individual is hungry, such a physical state is created where the individual searches for food in order to end this physical state. As soon as

the individual has food, the aroused physical state ends and state of homeostasis is achieved.

Adjustment is sometimes also defined as the degree to which the personality of a person operates in an effective way in the environment. It is the synchronized relation between a living organism and his/her surrounding.

Another definition for adjustment, says that it is the response to the appeals and forces of the surrounding that are laid on the person. The appeals may be generated inwards or outwards.

The procedure of adjustment includes four aspects:

- A necessity which takes the role of an intense continuous stimulus.
- A condition where the necessity is not satisfied.
- This necessity is accompanied with actions in search of objects that could satisfy the necessity.
- Some sort of reaction that ends or in part decreases the necessity and somehow makes adjustment over.

As there is physical adjustment in the same way there is culture based and society based adjustment. Most individuals make efforts to be well adjusted to the social conditions around them and to have the necessities of belongingness and love satisfied by means of the connections and relations that they have. In social adjustment, individuals fulfill their necessities with the help of other individuals. One advantage of social adjustment is that it enhances the connections and relations of individuals with other people of the society.

### **Young Adults:**

World Health Organization (WHO) states that an adult is an individual who is more than nineteen years of age unless the law of a country describes the individual to be an adult at a younger age.

The criteria for young people laid down by world health organization is individuals lying between fifteen to twenty four years of age.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sianko, Hedge and McDonnell (2019) conducted a research to find the alterations that exist in adjustment when people are exposed to a family environment which is marked by violence. The sample of the research consisted of 580 teenagers and the people who looked after them. The tool used in the research were self-report questionnaires. It was seen in the results that 68.8% of the sample had faced violence in the family. The sample was divided into groups of people who were nicely adjusted, averagely adjusted and trying to adjust. It was seen that family environment is an important factor in adjustment and it is family adjustment that produces alterations in adjustment. It was also seen through the results that the three groups of teenagers were discriminated on the basis of support received in family, concern of caregivers etc.

Amalu (2017) did a research in which she hypothesized that environment of a family and self-esteem are precursors of adjustment. The sample consisted of 128 teenagers who belonged to separated families. The tools used in the research were Rosenberg self-esteem scale, psychological adjustment questionnaire and family environment scale. It was seen that family environment has an impact on adjustment of individuals.

Rehman and Singh (2015) conducted a research with the purpose of understanding the impact of type of family environment on adjustment in affective, social and academic spheres. It was a cross sectional study. The sample of the research consisted of 80 boys and 80 girls each belonging to the age group of 14 to 18 years. The sample was categorized in groups of individuals belonging to joint or nuclear families. It was seen that individuals belonging to a joint family were better adjusted and that females were more adjusted than males. Overall it was found that type of family environment plays a role in adjustment.

Rodriguez, Donenberg, Emerson, Wilson, Brown and Houck (2014) conducted a research to find the connection between family environment, coping (adjustment) and mental health. The sample of the research included 417 teenagers between the age of 13 to 20 years suffering from some mental problems. The results showed that when the quality of family environment is not good then the individual is not able to adjust and cope with the demands of his surroundings which may lead to poorer mental health.

Sahu and Singh (2014) conducted a research with the purpose of investigating the connection between family environment and adjustment. The purpose of this study was also to find the alterations caused by gender in family environment and adjustment. The sample of the research conducted of 50 young males and females who lived in Moradabad, a small district in Uttar Pradesh. The tools used in the study were family relationship scale and Singh and Sinha's adjustment inventory. The findings showed that the adults had a good quality of environment prevailing in their family and they were well adjusted. Findings also indicated that alterations caused by gender also exist in family environment and in adjustment. A positive association was established between family environment and adjustment which shows that if family environment is positive and supportive then the individual is well adjusted.

Ramaprabou (2014) conducted a study to get a detailed analysis of the relation that exists between family environment and adjustment patterns. The sample of the study included 70 teenagers enrolled in bachelors programme. The tools used were adjustment inventory by Sinha and Singh and family environment scale by Bhatia and Chaddha. The results of the research showed that an impact is laid on adjustment patterns by family environment.

Sbicigo, Burges, Dalbosco (2012) conducted a research to find the connection between quality of environment prevailing in a family and the adjustment in psychological domain. The aim of the research was to find the connection between family environment (assessed by organization, cohesion, conflict and support) and precursors of adjustment in psychological domain such as self-worth, self-efficacy etc. the sample of the research consisted of 656 adolescents of 12 to 18 years of age. The tools used in the study were general perceived self-efficacy scale, family environment questionnaire and Rosenberg self-esteem scale. It was found by the results that a precursor to adjustment in psychological domain is family environment. It was also shown by this research that good and active family connections are essential for showing emotions during teenage years.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To study the relationship between family environment and adjustment of young adults.
- To investigate gender differences in adjustment and family environment among young adults.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

### **Method:**

It was a correlational study. Data analysis was done using SPSS. Correlation was taken out to find the relationship between the two variables. T-test was taken out to study the gender differences in adjustment and family environment among young adults.

### **Sample:**

The sample consisted of 60 undergraduate students, studying in Amity University. Among the 60 undergraduate students, 30 were males and 30 were females. The individuals belonged to the age group 18 to 21 years. Simple Random Sampling technique was used for selecting the sample.

### **Research Tools:**

For the study two research tools were used namely:-

- Family environment scale:- Bhatia and Chadha in 1993 developed the family environment scale. The family environment scale by Moos (1974) serves as the basis for this scale. This scale includes three dimensions lent from the original family environment scale by Moos. The three dimensions contain sub-dimensions. The three dimensions of the family environment scale are relationship dimension, personal growth dimension, and system maintenance dimension.

The scoring of the scale is on a five point likert rating scale. the higher the score the better is the family environment. Some items are positively scored and some items are negatively scored. Reliability of the sub-dimensions of family environment scale was calculated using split-half method. The reliability coefficients were 0.92, 0.88, 0.84, 0.86, 0.70, 0.48, 0.75, 0.48 for cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and caring, independence, active-recreational orientation, organization and control respectively. The reliability of the entire family environment scale was calculated using Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula which was 0.95. For family environment scale both the content and face validity were taken out.

- Bell Adjustment Inventory (Adult form):- the bell adjustment inventory was devised by Hugh M. Bell. The adult form of bell adjustment inventory includes five dimensions. These five dimensions are home adjustment, health adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and occupational adjustment. The reliability of dimensions was calculated by correlating the alternate items. The reliability coefficients were 0.91, 0.81, 0.88, 0.91 and 0.85 for home adjustment, health adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and occupational adjustment respectively. The reliability of the entire test were calculated by using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula which was 0.94. The validity of the inventory was calculated in the following way. The upper and lower 15% items were differentiated and only those items which were clearly different were included in the inventory.

## RESULTS:-

	Cohesion	Home	Health	Emotional	Social	Expressiveness	Conflict	Acceptance	Independence	Recreation	Organization	Control
Cohesion	X	.622**	.422**	.322*	.283*	.780**	.665**	.783**	.645**	.773**	.137	.569**
Home		X	.679**	.613**	.430**	.657**	.586**	.615**	.490**	.565**	.088	.342**
Health			X	.64**	.451**	.384**	.458**	.423**	.390**	.401**	.147	.195
Emotional				X	.562**	.325*	.269*	.302*	.337**	.295*	.022	.133
Social					X	.288*	.145	.302*	.129	.243	.036	.207
Expressiveness						X	.679**	.797**	.722**	.666**	.054	.380**
Conflict							X	.610**	.510**	.583**	.091	.417**
Acceptance								X	.721**	.697**	.167	.450**
Independence									X	.702**	.170	.382**
Recreation										X	.194	.471**
Organization											X	.064
Control												X

\*\*=  $p < 0.01$

\*=  $p < 0.05$

Table number 1 shows the correlation between the different dimensions of family environment scale and bell adjustment inventory. The above table shows that the relationship between

cohesion and home adjustment and cohesion and health adjustment was significant at 0.01 level and the relationship between cohesion and emotional adjustment and cohesion and social adjustment was significant at 0.05 level. The relationship between expressiveness and home adjustment and expressiveness and health adjustment was significant at 0.01 level and the relationship between expressiveness and emotional adjustment and social was significant at 0.05 level. the relationship between conflict and home adjustment and conflict and health adjustment was significant at 0.01 level and the relationship between conflict and emotional adjustment was significant at 0.05 level. the relationship between acceptance and home adjustment and acceptance and health adjustment was significant at 0.01 level and relationship between acceptance and emotional adjustment and acceptance and social adjustment was significant at 0.05 level. the relationship between independence and home adjustment, independence and health adjustment and independence and emotional adjustment was significant at 0.01 level. the relationship between active-recreational orientation and home adjustment and active-recreational orientation and health adjustment was significant at 0.01 level and the relationship between active-recreational orientation and emotional adjustment was significant at 0.05 level. the relationship between control and home adjustment was significant at 0.01 level.

<b>Table No. 2 showing gender differences between the dimensions of adjustment inventory</b>						
		N	Mean	SD	t-value	S-value
Home	Male	30	12.50	7.29	-2.129	.038*
	Female	30	8.70	6.50		
Health	Male	30	11.66	7.35	-1.831	.072
	Female	30	8.70	4.96		
Emotional	Male	30	12.76	7.14	.641	.524
	Female	30	13.93	6.94		
Social	Male	30	12.63	4.44	.026	.980
	Female	30	12.66	5.51		

\*\*=  $p < 0.01$

\*=  $p < 0.05$

The above table shows that there exists no significant difference between males and females in health, emotional and social adjustment. However there was a significant difference between males and females on the dimension of home. The difference was significant at 0.05 level. the significant difference showed that males are more adjusted in their home as compared to females. The reason for this could be that males get more attention and love in their families and for them the home remains same but females have another home before marriage and have to move to separate home after marriage because of which they may be less adjusted than males on the dimension of home.

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	s-value
Cohesion	Male	30	51.16	8.65	1.654	.104
	Female	30	54.93	8.99		
Expressiveness	Male	30	32.06	6.28	1.836	.072
	Female	30	34.86	5.50		
Conflict	Male	30	42.33	6.80	1.435	.157
	Female	30	45.20	8.56		
Acceptance	Male	30	44.30	7.25	3.166	.002**
	Female	30	50.33	7.49		
Independence	Male	30	30.76	6.58	2.101	.041*
	Female	30	33.66	3.71		
Recreation	Male	30	29.70	4.61	2.427	.018*
	Female	30	32.63	4.74		
Organization	Male	30	8.70	1.31	1.030	.311
	Female	30	10.76	10.91		
Control	Male	30	14.30	1.93	.783	.437
	Female	30	14.86	3.46		

\*\*=  $p < 0.01$

\*=  $p < 0.05$

The above table shows that no significant difference exists between males and females in cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, organization and control. However significant difference existed between males and females on the dimensions of acceptance, independence, and active recreation orientation. The difference between males and females on acceptance dimension was significant at 0.01 level. This means women are more accepting of the other family members of their family. This may be because the evolution theory says that women are nurture hence they are more caring and loving and accepting. The difference between males and females on independence dimension was significant at 0.05 level. This means women are giving more independence the reason for this could be that with education and awareness, now parents raise both their sons and daughters in the same way. The difference between males and females on active recreation orientation dimension was significant at 0.05 level. This means women are higher on active recreation orientation the reason for this could be that women spend more time at home and are also more social hence they interact with neighbors more.

## **DISCUSSION:-**

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the association between family environment and adjustment. The results showed that there existed a positive correlation between cohesion and home adjustment, health adjustment, emotional adjustment and social adjustment which meant that the better would be the cohesion in a family, the better would be the home, health, emotional and social adjustment of an individual. Some of the reasons for this could be that when people of family are connected to each other the members of the family are happy and optimistic and their well-being is good because of which they are not only better adjusted with in their house but their social adjustment is also good.

There existed a positive correlation between expressiveness and home, health, social and emotional adjustment which also showed that better expressiveness of a family leads to better home, health, social and emotional adjustment. This may be because when there is freedom in a family to share emotions and thoughts there is no piling up of these emotions or thoughts of an individual because of which these people are not maladjusted with their own emotions and thoughts and are able to adapt in house, health, emotional and social domains as well. When

people of a family are allowed to share their feelings there is no discrepancy between their real selves and ideal selves because of which they are adjusted in all other domains as well.

Another interesting finding from the study was that a positive correlation was found between between conflict and home, health, emotional and social adjustment which means that the more conflict or disagreement in a family, the better is the home, health, emotional and social adjustment. The reason for this may be that when there are conflicts and disagreements in a family then the individuals of the family are equipped to adjust to all other situations since the people of such family are already aware of challenging situations and hence they look at all negative situations as a challenge rather than as a threat hence they are more adjusted in home, health, emotional and social domains.

There existed a positive correlation between acceptance and home, health, emotional and social adjustment which meant the more acceptance in a family, the more adjusted the family members are in home, social, health, and emotional adjustment. Positive correlation was found between independence and home, health, emotional, social adjustment which meant the greater the freedom in a family, the more was adjustment in home, health, emotional, social adjustment. Also, there existed a positive correlation between active recreational orientation and home, health, social and emotional adjustment which meant that when people engage more with their neighbors and community members their home, health, emotional and social adjustment is good.

The results showed that there existed no significant difference between males and females in the dimensions of family environment scale which were cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, independence, active recreational orientation, organization and control. The reason for this could be that the sample on which the study was conducted were all graduates studying from a premium university because of which there would be no possible difference in their upbringing on the basis of gender. The results also showed that there was no significant difference between males and females in home, health, social and emotional adjustment. The reason for this could be that education has made the perspectives of males and females almost the same because of which they most of the times have similar ways of adjustment and also because as proved in the study that family environment has an impact on adjustment and since there is no significant difference between the family environment of males and females hence there is no significant difference between males and females in adjustment in social, emotional,

health and home domains. Overall, it was found that family environment does have a strong impact on the adjustment of young adults.

## Conclusion

This study reviewed the theories and concepts related to family environment and adjustment. The criteria for classifying young adults was also stated. In the study, various researches have been quoted proving the impact of family environment on adjustment and also investigating the role of other variables. The results of this study have showed that all the dimensions of family environment scale are i.e. cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, independence, active-recreational orientation, organization and control are positively correlated with home, health, emotional and social adjustment. Overall, family environment has a strong impact on all four kinds of adjustment i.e. home, health, emotional and social adjustment. The better the family environment the better is the adjustment.

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