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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER,
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The problem of adjustment is of gigantic importance for all the people especially to the students who should be helped in developing good adjustment besides the intellectual progress. This study investigates the adjustment problems of the college students in relation to their gender, socioeconomic status and academic achievement. The objectives of the study were; 1. To evaluate the adjustment problems among male and female college students. 2. To evaluate the adjustment among low and high socioeconomic college students. 3. To evaluate the adjustment among low and high academic achievement college students. 4. To evaluate the relationship between adjustment problems and academic achievement. The sample consists of 80 college students 40 male and 40 female from Dehradun district of Uttarakhand. The sample responded to the reliable and valid instrument. Adjustment inventory for college students (AICS) by Sinha and Singh were used to assess the adjustment problems. Socioeconomic status was assessed by socioeconomic status scale developed and standardized by Gyanendra P. Srivastava and marks obtained in 12th class were taken as a measure for academic achievement. Coefficient of correlation and 't' stat was used to test the relationship and significance of difference between the variables. Findings include that college students have average adjustment; there was no significant difference in the adjustment problems of male and female college students. The students having low socio-economic status have more adjustment problems than that of high socio-economic college students. No significant difference was found in adjustment problems of high academic achievement students and low academic achievement students. There exists a negative relationship between adjustment problems and academic achievement.

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INTRODUCTION

Present society is a dynamic society. The needs of human beings are increasing tremendously which needs to be fulfilled. Everybody in the society is in the race of competition. This poses the serious threat to the adjustment of the individuals particularly to the adolescents/ college students. The problem of adjustment is a crucial problem of the modern world. This problem is a matter of such pervasive concerns that books, articles, magazines, scientific journals etc. dealing with adjustment problems are appearing more repeatedly. The age of adolescence is more vulnerable to most of the psychological problems/ social problems. College students, in a transitional period from late adolescence to early adulthood, meet quite a few new and ever-complicated surroundings which they have never encountered before. They experience a wide variety of difficulties in making satisfactory adjustments to college life. Personality problems are frequently precipitated in college students by stresses met in attempted adjustments to

perplexing situations. The term adjustment in this study mostly refers to the degree of capacity by which an individual tries to cope with inner tensions, needs, conflicts, frustration and is simultaneously able to bring coordination between his inner demands and those imposed by the outer world. A well-adjusted child is one who does not get affected adversely by the interactions such as conflicts, emotions etc., and whose personality development goes through a healthy course of socialization (Sangeeta *et al.*, 2012).

Adjustment to college involves a variety of demands differing in kind and degree and requiring lot of coping responses or adjustments. It's not only academics with which the students are concerned; they are equally affected by the social and emotional changes. According to Arkoff (1968), the definition of college adjustment reflects on how much an individual achieves through it and its effect on his personal growth. In terms of how adjusted he is also depends on his capability of getting grades and eventually achieving the degree. Tinto (1993) has proposed three stages that students move through from school to college i.e. separation, transition and incorporation. According to Astins (1999) theory of involvement, a highly involved student is one who, for

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example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students. Adjustment difficulties arise from the differences between the expectations of the students and realities of college life. The student is required intellectually to meet adult standards while his emotional life is still that of adolescents. As a result, we find students who are morbidly sensitive or anxious or mostly or timid or egocentric or suggestible or seclusive, who require delicate handling if their intellectual potentialities are to be brought out, for a maximum of intellectual achievement is not likely to occur where emotional conflicts are present (Blanton, 1925).

Despite the importance of a college education for increased earnings, meaningful employment, and subsequent quality-of-life (Carnevale and Desrochers, 2003), nearly one in four undergraduate students leave college before completing their second academic year (Hamilton and Hamilton, 2006). First-year (i.e., freshmen-level) and second-year (i.e., sophomore-level) undergraduate students are therefore, most at-risk for college-related adjustment problems. This has prompted counseling and education professionals to focus attention on the research subject of stress, coping, and college adjustment, particularly among first-year and second-year undergraduate students (e.g., Baker, 2003; Pierceall and Keim, 2007; Saber, Mohmoud, Staten, Hall, and Lennie, 2012; Sharkin, 2004). This poses the serious threats to the adjustment problems among the adolescents. So this is the need of an hour to highlight the adjustment problems of adolescents so that the remedial approaches may be taken to curb their problems.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Sangeeta and Chirag (2012) in their study found that the college students of low socio economic status and low academic achievement have more adjustment problems than the students of high socio economic status and high academic achievement. Female college students have more adjustment problems than their male counter parts. Surekha (2008) in her study found that student of private schools are better adjusted than students of government schools. The students of private schools are better than students of government schools in academic achievement. There is a negative relationship between the students' adjustment & academic achievement. Enochs and Roland (2006) examined the relationship between living environment, gender, overall adjustment to college and social adjustment in freshmen's academic and overall adjustments. The study found that boys had significantly higher overall adjustment levels than girls regardless of living environment.

Fregussion and Woodward (2000) found that children of low socio-economic families are at risk from a variety of adjustment problems. Schoon (2000) found that social origins show a small but significant influence on consequent behavioral adjustment. Social adversity has an indirect influence on adult adjustment. The findings of the study revealed that socio-economic position and circumstances affect behavior adjustment during childhood and adolescence. Mishra and Singh (1998) concluded that the students belonging to low and high socioeconomic status significantly differ in social

adjustment. Pooranchand (1994) founded a significant difference between high and low achieving students in familial, social and emotional areas of adjustment. Sood (1992) found no significant relationship between achievement and adjustment. Cooper (1952) used the MPCL to study the adjustment problems of 173 Negro undergraduate students at Indiana University. The findings indicated that "Adjustment to College student" was the most critical area of problems for all students, while in home and Family, was the least critical among eleven problem areas.

Objectives

- To evaluate the adjustment problems among male and female college students.
- To evaluate the adjustment among low and high socioeconomic college students.
- To evaluate the adjustment among low and high academic achievement college students.
- To evaluate the relationship between adjustment problems and academic achievement.
- Hypotheses:
- There would be the adjustment problems among the college students.
- There would be a significant difference in the adjustment problems of high socio-economic status and low socio-economic status college students.
- There would be a significant difference in the adjustment problems of male and female college students.
- There would be a significant difference in the adjustment problems of high academic achievement and low academic achievement college students.
- There would be no significant relationship between academic achievement and adjustment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample: Initially a sample of 100 undergraduate students was taken from different colleges of Dehradun city. Out of them, 40 students of high socio- economic status and 40 students of low socio-economic status were selected making a final sample to 80 students.

Sampling and Design: For the present study the subjects were selected by the quota sampling method. 2x2x2 factorial design was used in the study.

Variables

- Independent variable – Gender, Socio Economic Status, Academic Achievement.
- Dependent variable – Adjustment problems.

Tools: For the present investigation following tools were for the collection of data:

- Adjustment Inventory for College Students (AICS) by Dr. A.K.P. Sinha and Dr. R.P. Singh. It measures adjustment in five areas namely – (i) Home, (ii) Health, (iii) Social, (iv) Emotional and (v) Educational. It contains 102 items out of which area of Home contains 16 items; area of

Health contains 15 items, Social 19 items, Emotional 31 and Educational 21 items. The criterion for adjustment of students is based on scores gained by students in inventory.

- Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS) developed by Gyanendra P. Srivastava was used in the present study for measuring SES. It contains 40 items and cover five dimensions- educational, occupational, income, cultural living or cultural standard and social participation components.
- The scores obtained in Board examination of 12th class were taken as the measure of academic achievement
- STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE: The obtained data was analyzed by using t- test and product moment correlation of coefficient.

RESULTS

Table 1. The mean and its remarks/category of the college students upon the six adjustment areas

S.No.	Adjustment Area	Mean Scores	Remarks
1	Home	5.51	Average
2	Health	6.31	Average
3	Social	8.01	Average
4	Emotional	11.78	Average
5	Education	8.91	Average
	Total	39.6	Average

From the above table it is evident that the college students have an average level of adjustment in all the six dimensions. The adjustment problems are higher in the emotional level while as lowest in the home dimension. The mean scores fall in the average level both in dimension wise as well as in total.

Table 2. The mean, SD, df and t stat for adjustment level of high and low socio –economic status

	Socio economic status		t	df
	High SES (N = 40)	Low SES (N = 40)		
Adjustment Problems	29.63 (11.33)	36.90 (12.90)	3.62**	38 in Significant

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means

From the above table it is evident that the mean for adjustment problems of low socio -economic status students is higher than that of the students of higher socio-economic status. The table also shows that the calculated value of 't' high and low socio-economic status students is higher than that of the table value.

Table 3. The mean, SD and t stat for adjustment level of male and female college students

	GENDER		t	df
	MALE (N = 40)	FEMALE (N = 40)		
Adjustment Problems	40 (36.27)	40 (35.35)	0.37	38 in Significant

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means

Hence the t value is significant at 0.01 level which indicates that there is a significant difference in the adjustment problems

of high and low socio- economic college students. Table 3 shows the mean, SD and t stat for adjustment level of male and female college students. From the table 3 it is evident that there is no difference in the mean scores of adjustment problems among male and female college students. It is clear from the table that t value is insignificant. Hence there is no significant difference in the adjustment problems of male and female college students.

Table 4. The mean, SD, SEM and t stat for academic achievement of high and low socio-economic college students

	Socio economic status		t	df
	High SES (N = 40)	Low SES (N = 40)		
Academic achievement	40.475 (6.32)	40.775 (5.64)	0.5561	38 in Significant

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means

From the Table 4 it is evident that there is no difference in the mean scores on academic achievement of high and low socio-economic college students. It is also evident from the table that t value is insignificant. Hence there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of high and low socio-economic college students.

Table 5. The correlation between Adjustment and academic achievement

Variables	N	Df	R
Adjustment	80	78	
Academic achievement	80	78	-0.033

Table 5 shows the correlation between the adjustment level and academic achievement. From the table 5 it is evident that there exists the negative correlation between the adjustment problems and academic achievement of college students the value of $r = -0.033$.

DISCUSSION

Every individual attempts to adjust to physical needs such as hunger and thirst and protection from danger. Unless a person is not able to adjust himself to the environment, he/she cannot develop his/her wholesome personality. The problem of adjustment is a vital problem of the modern world especially among the youth or adolescents. From the Table 1 it is evident that college students have an average level of adjustment problems. In all the five dimensions of adjustment I.e. home, health, social, emotional and educational. The total mean scores for all the five dimensions is 39.6 which fall in the average level of adjustment problems. In the dimension wise the highest adjustment problems faced by the college students are in the emotional dimension. The mean scores for the emotional dimension were 11.78 which fall in the average level. In the educational dimension the mean scores were 8.91 which also fall in the average category of adjustment problems. This signifies that the college students have adjustment problems in their education but they are lesser than that of the emotional dimension. After the emotional and educational dimensions the college students face the

adjustment problems in the social dimension. The mean scores for the social dimension were 8.01 which also fall in the average level. The mean scores for the adjustment problems in the health dimension were 6.31 that are lesser than that of emotional, educational and social dimensions. In the dimension wise the least adjustment problems faced by the college students are in the home dimension. The mean score were 5.51 which also fall in the average category. Similar results were found by Cooper (1952) that least adjustment problems are found in home and family dimension among the undergraduate students.

From table 2 it is evident that the mean scores for high socio-economic status students was 29.63 and SD= 11.33 and for low socio-economic status students the mean scores was 36.90 and SD= 12.90. The 't' stat was 3.25 which was significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the hypothesis was accepted which clarifies that students of low socio-economic status had more adjustment problems than that of the high socio-economic status students. Similar results were found by Schoon (2000) that the socio-economic position and circumstances affect behavior adjustment during childhood and adolescence. Sangeeta and Chirag (2012) also found that the college students of low socio economic status and low academic achievement have more adjustment problems than the students of high socio economic status and high academic achievement. It was also hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the adjustment problems of male and female college students. The mean for the male college students was 40 and for females it was also 40 which signify that there is no significant difference in the mean scores for male and female college students. The SD for males was 36.29 and for females it was 35.35. The same score were put to 't' test the value of 0.37 was obtained which was insignificant at both the levels of significance so the alternate hypothesis was rejected which signify that there was no significant difference in the adjustment problems among male and female college students.

Table 4 shows the mean scores for the high and low socio-economic status college students in their academic achievement. The mean scores for academic achievement of high socio-economic status students were 40.475 and for low socio-economic status students were 40.775. The SD was 6.32 and 5.64 the same numbers were put to 't' test the value of 0.556 was obtained which was insignificant at both the levels of significance i.e., 0.05 and 0.01. Hence it was concluded that the hypothesis was rejected which specify that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of low and high socio-economic status college students. It was also hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between adjustment problems and the academic achievement of college students. From the table 5 it was evident that the correlation between the adjustment problems and the academic achievement of college students by Pearson's product moment method was -0.033. The results signify that there is a negative correlation between the adjustment problems and academic achievement. The higher the adjustment problems the lower would be the academic achievement. Similar results were found by Sangeeta and Chirag (2012), Surekha (2008) that there exists a negative correlation between academic

achievement and adjustment problems among college students. Sood (1992) also found that there is no significant relationship between academic achievement and adjustment problems.

Conclusion

The present study had been conducted on global adjustment problems of college student. The results reveal that the college students have an average level of adjustment problems. It is evident that college life became increasingly harassing and a variety of perplexities were encountered by college students. In general, problems in regard to general, effective study and adjustment to college work were most frequently perceived and reported by subjects. Special orientation programs, guest lectures, counselling and interventions should be provided to the college students so as to increase the academic achievement and decrease the adjustment problems of the college students.

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