



SEX DIFFERENCES ON ADJUSTMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM OF ADOLESCENTS OF CONVICTED AND NON-CONVICTED PARENTS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adjustment and self-esteem is found to be associated with psychological well being of an individual. Adjustment is an adaptive process, which includes relation to a variety of demands or pressures upon an individual. Self-esteem is the way one feels about oneself, including the degree to which one possess self respect and self acceptance. Of all the phases in the developmental trajectory, adolescence bridges the mutual relationship between parents and others like peers or the closest partners. The present study was conducted to study the sex differences on adjustment and self-esteem among the adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents of Kathmandu, Nepal. The sample of the study consisted of 240 adolescents comprising 120 males and 120 females. Among 120 males, 60 belonged to the convicted parents and rest 60 belonged to non-convicted parents and same was the ratio in case of females as well. Instrument used for the data collection was The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS), Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES) and Self report questionnaire. The sex differences in the adjustment and self-esteem showed that females were well adjusted ($M = 23.12$, $SD = 6.23$) than males ($M = 21.42$, $SD = 6.87$) which was statistically significant $t(238) = 2.02$, $P(0.04) < 0.05$ and males had higher self-esteem ($M = 18.58$, $SD = 3.72$) than that of females ($M = 17.07$, $SD = 3.72$) that was statistically significant $t(238) = -0.36$, $P(0.02) < 0.05$. Also, negative relationship was found between the adjustment and self-esteem and value of Pearson's correlation was found to be -0.36 .

KEYWORDS: Adjustment, Self-esteem, Adolescents, Conviction.

INTRODUCTION

Adjustment is the adaptive process that plays vital role in building up the self-esteem of an individuals. It can be defined as the social, psychological, and biological developmental accomplishments persons are expected to reach at certain stages of life.^[1] Adolescents are in transition from the dependency of childhood to the independence and responsibility of early adulthood. Proper parental role is always sought for having great impact upon the self esteem and adjustment. Parents are thought to be the first teachers and they are internalized in an individual. Many researches has shown that the parents and the quality of their relationship among the children has the great impact in the the way they adjust themselves and develop the self-esteem. Parents who are approving, responsive and nurturing are likely to build high levels of self-esteem, where as disapproving, unresponsive and uninterested parents may break down self-esteem levels of children.^[2]

Every person has his/her own sense of evaluation about him/her. Self-esteem is referred to as an overall evaluation of one's worth or value as a person.^[3]

Self-esteem and adjustment been associated with the way children have been grown up to be adolescent and the way they have shared and learnt different things together. In adolescence the link between parenting style, adjustment and self-esteem is quite strong.^[4] Peer relationship also plays the vital role to promote both social and cognitive development which is the indicators of positive adjustment.^[5] Considering this, people who experience peer rejection are predisposed to undergo a broad variety of adjustment problems during adolescence and into adulthood.^[6] Contrary to this, people who are well received by and hold positions of status among their peers are candidates for positive adjustment. So, familial relationship and relationship with peers is very crucial for the proper adjustment and self-esteem. But regarding the children and adolescents of the convicted parents, when parents go to prison, most of them continue to live with relatives^[7] and they have to face to different problems because of their parental conviction and the stigma that exists in the society. At times they have no one who will provide them with their needs as a result they will have limited financial resources. Moreover,

children and adolescents show higher stress levels and fewer coping resources compared to adults.^[8] Thus, it leads to improper adjustment and low self-esteem. The present study is focused in exploring the sex differences in the self-esteem and adjustment of adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents.

METHOD

Two hundred and forty adolescents (120 males and 120 females) belonging to the convicted and non-convicted parents studying in eight different schools of Kathmandu valley were taken using purposive random sampling. Out of those 120 males, 60 belonged to the non-convicted parents and 60 belonged to convicted parents and the same is the ratio in females as well. After taking consent, proper instructions was given and respondents were provided with the testing materials.

The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS), an Indian test, designed by A.K.P Sinha and R.P Singh was used to measure adjustment of the adolescents. This inventory seeks to assess the adjustment of secondary school students (age group 14 to 18 years) in the three areas of adjustment- emotional, social and educational domains. The inventory consists of 60 items, 20 items for each area of adjustment. For any answer indicative of good adjustment a score of zero is given, otherwise a score of one is awarded. The total score on adjustment is obtained by summing the individual domain scores that indicates the general adjustment status. Scores greater than 11 on the emotional domain indicates unstable emotions while low scores indicate stable emotions. Individuals with scores greater than 11, on the social adjustment domain indicate that they are submissive and revering. Scores greater than 11 or above on the educational domain indicate that adolescents are poorly adjusted with their curricular and co-curricular programs while low scores indicative that they have interest in school programs. The split half reliability is 0.95, the test

retest reliability is 0.93 and the K-R formula reliability was found to be 0.94. Validity coefficients were determined for each item by the biserial correlation method significant level being .001.

Self esteem was measured by using 10 item Rosenberg's Self Esteem scale developed by Rosenberg (1965). Each item must be responded in 4 point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). The scale has five positive (1, 3, 4, 7, 10) and five negative (2, 5, 6, 8, 9) statements. Score 3 is given for strongly agree, 2 for agree, 1 for disagree and 0 for disagree responses. Score is reversed for negative statements and score of self esteem is found by summing of the scores. Maximum obtainable score is 30 and higher score indicates better self-esteem. The RSE demonstrates a Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of .92, indicating excellent internal consistency. Test-retest reliability over a period of 2 weeks reveals correlations of .85 and .88, indicating excellent stability. The RSE demonstrates concurrent, predictive and construct validity. The RSE correlates significantly with other measures of self-esteem, including the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory.

Taking the language barrier in concern, both of these scales were translated to Nepali language in consultation with professionals from Psychology background and the translated version of the scale was used in the present research. A self report questionnaire prepared with the proper consultation with the professionals from the psychology background was also used as the data collection tool. It contained six questions related to their family and familial relationship. The respondents were supposed to give their subjective answer to the questions. The objective of the questionnaire was to understand their attitude towards their parents. Particularly, in case of adolescents of convicted parents, it aimed at finding out the effects of conviction on them.

RESULTS

Table no-1: Respondent Type and general adjustment of males.

Respondent Type	General adjustment of males					Total
	Excellent	Good	Average	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	
Adolescents of convicted parents	---	4	16	29	11	60
		3.3%	13.3%	24.2%	9.2%	50%
Adolescents of non-convicted parents	---	3	28	22	7	60
		2.5%	23.3%	18.3%	5.8%	50%
Total	---	7	44	51	18	120
		5.8%	36.7%	42.5%	15%	100%

Table no-2 Respondent Type and general adjustment of females.

Respondent Type	General adjustment of females					Total
	Excellent	Good	Average	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	
Adolescents of convicted parents	---	7	16	30	7	60
		5.8%	13.3%	25%	5.8%	50%
Adolescents of non-convicted parents	---	11	36	11	2	60
		9.2%	30%	9.2%	1.7%	50%
Total	---	18	52	41	9	120
		15%	43.3%	34.2%	7.5%	100%

Above table 1&2 shows the general adjustment of male and female adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents. Male adolescents of non-convicted parents are found to be good at adjustment rather than that of adolescents of convicted parents. None of the male adolescents under study had excellent general adjustment. Majority of adolescents of convicted parents

had unsatisfactory general adjustment (24.2%) contrary to this greater percent of adolescents of non-convicted parents had average general adjustment (23.3%) where as 13.3% of females adolescents of convicted parents had average adjustment which is more than 10% in case of female adolescents of non-convicted parents.

Table no-3: Sex differences in adjustment of the respondent.

Sex of the respondent	Adjustment					Total
	Excellent	Good	Average	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	
Males	---	7	44	51	18	120
		2.9%	18.3%	21.3%	7.5%	50%
Females	---	18	52	41	9	120
		7.5%	21.7%	17.1%	3.8%	50%
Total	---	25	96	92	27	240
		10.4%	40%	38.3%	11.3%	100%

The table no-3 shows the sex differences in the adjustment of overall respondent. The sex differences in general adjustment of the respondents irrespective of their family background showed that females are better adjusted than males. Majority of males (21.3 %) had

unsatisfactory general adjustment in contrast 21.7 % of females had average general adjustment. 2.9% females had good general adjustment where as 7.5% of males had good general adjustment.

Table no-4 Respondent Type and self-esteem of males.

Respondent Type	Self-esteem of males			Total
	Low	Average	High	
Adolescents of convicted parents	30	29	1	60
	25%	24.2%	.8%	50%
Adolescents of non-convicted parents	11	48	1	60
	9.2%	40%	.8%	50%
Total	41	77	2	120
	34.2%	64.2%	1.7%	100%

Table no-5 Respondent Type and self-esteem of females.

Respondent Type	Self-esteem of females			Total
	Low	Average	High	
Adolescents of convicted parents	25	34	1	60
	20.8%	28.3%	.8%	50%
Adolescents of non-convicted parents	23	35	2	60
	19.2%	29.2%	1.6%	50%
Total	48	69	3	120
	40%	57.5%	2.5%	100%

Above tables 4 & 5 shows the self-esteem of male and female adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents. 25 % of males adolescents of convicted parents had low self-esteem which is more than half in case of adolescents of non-convicted parents (9.2 %). Majoriiry of male adolescents of non-convicted parents (40 %) had average self-esteem where as it is just 24.2 % in adolescents of convicted ones. Results regarding the self-

esteem of the females showed no great differences, the family backgrounds were different, though. No significant difference in the average and high self-esteem of females adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents was observed. 28.3 % of female adolescents of convicted parents had average self-esteem and it is 29.2% in case of female adolescents of non-convicted parents.

Table no-6: Sex differences in the self-esteem of respondents.

Sex of the respondent	Self-esteem			Total
	Low	Average	High	
Male	41	77	2	120
	17.1%	32.1%	.8%	50%
Female	45	72	3	120
	18.8%	30%	1.2%	50%
Total	86	149	5	240
	35.8%	62.1%	2.1%	100%

Table no-6 shows the sex differences in the self-esteem of respondents irrespective of the family background. Greater percent of females had low self-esteem than that of males. The trend is same in high self-esteem. 1.2 % of

females had high self-esteem where as it was just 0.8 % in males. 32.1% of males had average self-esteem which is lower in females by 2.1%.

Table No-7 Self-esteem and general adjustment of Adolescents males and females

t-test for equality of means					
	Sex	Mean	Std. Deviation	P value	t value
General adjustment of the Respondent	Male	21.42	6.87	.04	2.01
	Female	23.12	6.23		
Self-esteem of the Respondent	Male	18.58	4.14	.02	-.36
	Female	17.07	3.72		

The independent sample t-test conducted showed that males scored lower in general adjustment ($M = 21.42$, $SD = 6.87$) than females ($M = 23.12$, $SD = 6.23$) which was statistically significant $t(238) = 2.02$, $P(0.04) < 0.05$ which means that females are better in general adjustment than males. Unlike the sex difference in the adjustment, the self-esteem of males is greater ($M = 18.58$, $SD = 3.72$) than the self-esteem of females ($M = 17.07$, $SD = 3.72$) that was statistically significant $t(238) = -0.36$, $P(0.02) < 0.05$, indicating that males have high self-esteem than that of females.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The result showed significant difference in the adjustment of adolescent males and females. Among the adolescents of convicted parents females are good at general adjustment than males. The sex differences in the adjustment of overall sample also showed the same result that females are better adjusted than males. This finding of present research on sex difference in the adjustment corresponds with the findings of previous researches^[9-11] which showed that females are well adjusted than males. The reason behind it may be due to the differences in how males and female react and adjust to certain day to day experiences and how they are socialized. Females

are found to be having good adaptability and have different roles to play in different stages of their life and they are good at sharing their problems with their parents, friends or whoever are their dear ones on the contrary males don't tend to ventilate themselves and share their problems with others.

The result on gender differences in self-esteem showed that males had higher self-esteem than females. The difference was statistically significant indicating that males have high self-esteem than that of females. The specific finding of present study corresponds with the previous researches^[12,13], that illustrated boys having greater self-esteem than that of girls but it does not correspond with the previous research conducted by Acharya & Deshmukh^[14] in 2012 which indicated girls having greater self-esteem as compared to boys. Yet, some other researchers^[15,16] found no gender differences in the self-esteem. So, self-esteem and gender is always found to be having inconsistent result and most studies have demonstrated that self-esteem decreases more sharply in adolescent girls than in adolescent boys.^[17] It may be due to the orientation of the society towards the gender in which an individual is living. Given this finding, much attention has been directed at determining the reason behind the lower self-esteem of females in comparison to males. Factors that affect females' self-esteem include adjustment to the onset of puberty, methods of coping^[18], less attention in the classroom, feelings of inadequacy at maths and science^[19], physical appearance, overall support system and feelings of competency.^[20] The best predictor of self-esteem for females, however, is interaction and relationship with their mothers.^[21] Additionally, positive aspects of interactions such as intimacy, acceptance, and nurturance are related to higher self-esteem.^[22] Moreover, adolescence and puberty bring a variety of physical, social and emotional changes. There is evidence that the body changes that occur during puberty for females can be more of a struggle than for boys.^[23] When boys go through puberty, their increase in body size results in a physique closer to the muscular male cultural ideal, and so puberty is a more positive experience for boys than for girls^[23] which may be the reason underlying the low self-esteem of the females.

Present study showed the negative correlation between adjustment and self-esteem of the adolescents. The specific finding of the present study contradicts the study conducted by Friedlander et al^[24] in 2007 which indicated that increased global, academic, and social self-esteem leads to the increased academic and social adjustment and another research conducted by DuBois et al.^[25] in 1998 indicating higher global self-esteem being associated with more favorable scores on most measures of adjustment.

The self-report questionnaire that was provided to the samples to check the attitudes towards their parents and their availability and the effects of parental conviction to

the adolescents of convicted parents showed that the parental conviction is one of the most negative remarkable events in their life which they don't want to talk and let other people be aware about it. Moreover, the female adolescents expressed the conviction of their parents as being one of the reasons behind losing their home resulting in difficulty in the general adjustment. In addition, they clearly stated that the stigma that prevails in Nepalese society always lags them behind to live with pride in the society where they were born. The problem that they need to face in the school and in the society for having their parents been imprisoned was always unbearable for them. Many of the male adolescents stated that after their imprisonment they had the great pressure for being not able to fulfill their basic needs since there was the economic crisis in their family and in some of their cases they completely lost their house as there was none to take care of them and their relatives refused to take care of them. Most of the male adolescents stated that they would be rejected of being taken care than their sisters. So, it can be predicted to be the cause of the significant difference in the adjustment and self-esteem of male and female adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents. Yet, it calls for the further researches for the conclusion to be made.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the present study is females are well adjusted than males and males had high self-esteem than that of females irrespective of different family backgrounds. There is negative correlation between adjustment and self-esteem of the mid-adolescents.

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