



Adjustment of Secondary School Students in Relation to Gender and Types of School

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Abstract

The present study investigates the adjustment of secondary school students in relation to gender and type of school. Adjustment is an important aspect of adolescent development as it influences emotional stability, social relationships, educational performance, and overall personality development. The study aimed to compare emotional, social, educational, and overall adjustment among male and female students as well as government and private school students. The descriptive survey method was employed for conducting the study. A sample of 400 secondary school students from Haryana state was selected through random sampling technique, including students from both government and private schools. The Adjustment Inventory developed by Sinha and Singh (2022 Revised) was used for collecting data. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test were applied for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that no significant differences existed between male and female students and between government and private school students in emotional, social, and overall adjustment. However, significant differences were found in educational adjustment. Female students were better adjusted educationally than male students, and private school students demonstrated better educational adjustment than government school students. The study highlights the importance of providing supportive educational environments and guidance services to improve adjustment among adolescents.

Key Words: Adjustment, Secondary School Students, Gender, Type of School

Introduction

Adjustment is one of the most significant concepts in educational psychology because it plays a vital role in the development of a balanced and successful personality. Human beings continuously interact with their environment and try to maintain harmony between their personal needs and environmental demands. This process of maintaining balance is known as adjustment (Good, 1959). In the educational context, adjustment refers to the ability of students to adapt effectively to school conditions, classroom environment, teachers, peers, academic expectations, and social responsibilities (Shaffer, 1961). Proper adjustment helps students maintain emotional stability, social relationships, and academic efficiency. The period of adolescence is considered one of the most sensitive and challenging stages of human development. Secondary school students pass through rapid physical, emotional, intellectual, and social changes during this stage (Hurlock, 1973). These developmental changes often create confusion, emotional instability, stress, anxiety, and insecurity among adolescents. Students are expected to adjust themselves not only to academic pressures but also to peer



relationships, parental expectations, discipline, competition, and changing social situations. Therefore, adjustment becomes an essential requirement for healthy personality development and academic success (Coleman, 1980). A well-adjusted student is emotionally mature, socially cooperative, academically motivated, and psychologically balanced. Such students can cope effectively with stressful situations and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, poor adjustment may lead to frustration, aggression, anxiety, emotional imbalance, social withdrawal, indiscipline, low academic achievement, and behavioral problems (Crow & Crow, 1962). Maladjustment among students often affects classroom participation, concentration, self-confidence, and overall educational progress. Hence, adjustment is closely associated with educational achievement and social development.

Schools play a very important role in the adjustment process of students. A healthy school environment encourages confidence, discipline, cooperation, social participation, and emotional security among students (Mangal, 2007). Teachers, peers, co-curricular activities, school climate, and teaching methods greatly influence adjustment patterns among adolescents. Students who receive encouragement, acceptance, and support from their school environment are generally better adjusted than those who experience criticism, neglect, or excessive pressure.

Gender is another important variable related to adjustment. Boys and girls differ in emotional expression, social behavior, coping mechanisms, and reactions to stressful situations. Social expectations and cultural practices often influence the adjustment patterns of male and female students (Kaur, 2018). Similarly, type of school also influences student adjustment. Government and private schools differ in terms of infrastructure, educational facilities, classroom environment, discipline, teacher-student interaction, and parental involvement. These differences may affect students' emotional, social, and educational adjustment. In modern education, emphasis is not limited only to academic achievement but also to the emotional and social development of students. Educational institutions are expected to create environments that promote healthy adjustment among learners. Therefore, studying adjustment among secondary school students in relation to gender and type of school is highly important. The findings of such studies can help teachers, counselors, parents, and administrators understand the problems faced by adolescents and provide necessary guidance and support for their overall development.

Review of Literature

Amalu (2017) studied psychological adjustment among adolescents and found that supportive relationships and positive social interactions contributed significantly to better adjustment among students. The study emphasized that emotionally balanced adolescents showed higher adaptability in school situations. Kaur (2018) investigated adjustment among adolescents and found no significant difference between male and female students in overall adjustment. The study concluded that adolescents with higher confidence demonstrated better emotional and social adjustment. Singh and Mathew (2018) examined social and emotional adjustment among secondary school students and reported that positive school experiences improved students' adjustment patterns. The study also highlighted that negative experiences adversely affected



emotional adjustment. Nongbri (2019) conducted a study on adjustment among secondary school students and found no significant difference between class IX and class X students. However, significant differences were observed between male and female students in adjustment levels. Kaur and Gupta (2019) studied adjustment among secondary school students and found that students differed significantly in home, social, and emotional adjustment. The study emphasized the importance of supportive surroundings for better student adjustment. Devi and Sharma (2021) reported that the level of adjustment among secondary school students was average. The study found significant gender differences in emotional adjustment, while no significant differences were observed in other dimensions of adjustment. Kumar (2021) investigated adjustment problems among higher secondary students and found that students with better coping abilities experienced fewer adjustment difficulties in educational and social settings. Mathew (2022) studied social adjustment among secondary school students and found significant differences between boys and girls in social adjustment. The study indicated that female students showed comparatively better social adjustment. Sarvar, Joshi, and Bant (2022) observed that students demonstrated better emotional and social adjustment than educational adjustment. The study highlighted that adjustment behavior plays an important role in academic success and interpersonal relationships. Devi and Kusum (2023) examined adjustment patterns among government and private school students and found moderate significant differences between boys and girls as well as between students of different school types. Talluri (2023) conducted a study on social adjustment among students and found no significant difference in social adjustment levels. The study emphasized that peer relationships and classroom participation improve adjustment. Shalayiding, Meng, Wang, Sailike, and Jiang (2024) investigated school adjustment among adolescents and found significant gender-based differences in emotional and educational adjustment among students. Zhang, Gu, Zeng, and Yi (2025) observed that students with better school adaptation showed improved emotional stability and academic adjustment. The study concluded that adjustment plays a crucial role in adolescent well-being.

The review of related literature reveals that adjustment is an important aspect of adolescent development and educational success. Most of the studies indicate that emotional, social, and educational adjustment significantly influence students' behavior, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships. Several studies reported significant differences in adjustment with respect to gender and type of school, while some studies found no significant differences among students. Overall, the reviewed studies highlight that positive school experiences, supportive surroundings, resilience, and effective coping abilities contribute greatly toward better adjustment among secondary school students.

Need and Significance of the Study

Adjustment is essential for the balanced growth and development of adolescents. Secondary school students experience rapid developmental changes and face several academic, emotional, and social challenges during adolescence. Proper adjustment enables students to cope effectively with these challenges and maintain emotional balance, social harmony, and academic progress. Poor adjustment may result in anxiety, frustration, behavioral problems,

indiscipline, and low academic achievement. The present study is significant because it focuses specifically on adjustment among secondary school students in relation to gender and type of school. Boys and girls differ in emotional responses, behavior, and social interaction, which may influence their adjustment patterns. Similarly, students studying in government and private schools experience different educational environments, facilities, discipline, and academic expectations, which may affect their adjustment. The findings of the study may help teachers, school administrators, parents, and counselors identify adjustment problems among adolescents and provide proper guidance and counseling services. The study may also contribute to the improvement of school climate and educational practices aimed at promoting healthy adjustment among students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study and compare adjustment of male and female secondary school students.
2. To study and compare adjustment of secondary school students studying in government and private schools.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in adjustment between male and female secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference in adjustment between government and private secondary school students.

Methodology

The descriptive survey method was used in the present study. The population consisted of students studying in secondary schools of Haryana state. Four zones were selected randomly, and one district from each selected zone was chosen through a random sampling technique. A sample of 400 students, including boys and girls from government and private schools, was selected.

Tool Used

The Adjustment Inventory (Revised) developed by Sinha and Singh (2022) was used for collecting data. Mean, standard deviation, and t-test were employed for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

To compare adjustment (along with its dimensions) with respect to gender and type of school, mean, standard deviation, and ‘t’-test were used to analyze the data presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Adjustment (with dimensions) in Relation to Gender

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Emotional Adjustment	Male	200	19.95	8.312	0.750 ^{NS}
	Female	200	19.33	8.453	
Social Adjustment	Male	200	19.37	9.741	1.833 ^{NS}
	Female	200	21.16	9.776	
Educational Adjustment	Male	200	17.95	7.994	3.621 ^{**}
	Female	200	15.10	7.738	
	Male	200	57.24	20.496	0.806 ^{NS}

Overall Adjustment	Female	200	55.58	20.562	
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** Significant at 0.01 level; NS = Not Significant

Note: Low mean score shows better adjustment.

Table 1 presents the comparative analysis of emotional, social, educational, and overall adjustment among male and female secondary school students. The findings indicate that the mean score of emotional adjustment for male students is 19.95 and for female students is 19.33. The calculated 't' value of 0.750 is not significant, indicating that male and female students do not differ significantly in emotional adjustment. In social adjustment, the mean score of male students is 19.37 while that of female students is 21.16. The obtained 't' value of 1.833 is not significant, which indicates that both male and female students exhibit similar levels of social adjustment. With regard to educational adjustment, the mean score of male students is 17.95 whereas the mean score of female students is 15.10. The computed 't' value of 3.621 is significant at the 0.01 level. Since lower mean score indicates better adjustment, female students are found to be better adjusted educationally than male students. In overall adjustment, the mean score of male students is 57.24 and that of female students is 55.58. The obtained 't' value of 0.806 is not significant, indicating that there is no significant difference in the overall adjustment of male and female secondary school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected only in the educational dimension of adjustment and accepted in emotional, social, and overall adjustment.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Adjustment (with dimensions) in Relation to Types of School

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Emotional Adjustment	Government	200	19.83	7.777	0.453 ^{NS}
	Private	200	19.45	8.955	
Social Adjustment	Government	200	20.23	9.605	0.070 ^{NS}
	Private	200	20.30	9.990	
Educational Adjustment	Government	200	18.08	7.485	3.980**
	Private	200	14.96	8.181	
Overall Adjustment	Government	200	58.12	19.759	1.664 ^{NS}
	Private	200	54.71	21.166	

** Significant at 0.01 level; NS = Not Significant

Note: Low mean score shows better adjustment.

Table 2 presents the comparative analysis of emotional, social, educational, and overall adjustment among secondary school students studying in government and private schools. The findings reveal that the mean score of emotional adjustment for government school students is 19.83 whereas the mean score for private school students is 19.45. The calculated 't' value of 0.453 is not significant, which indicates that there is no significant difference in emotional adjustment between government and private school students. In social adjustment, the mean score of government school students is 20.23 while that of private school students is 20.30. The



obtained 't' value of 0.070 is not significant, indicating that both groups of students exhibit similar levels of social adjustment. Regarding educational adjustment, the mean score of government school students is 18.08 whereas the mean score of private school students is 14.96. The computed 't' value of 3.980 is significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Since lower mean score indicates better adjustment, private school students are found to be better adjusted educationally than government school students. In overall adjustment, the mean score of government school students is 58.12 and for private school students it is 54.71. The calculated 't' value of 1.664 is not significant, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in overall adjustment between government and private school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected only in educational adjustment and accepted in emotional, social, and overall adjustment.

Findings

The analysis of adjustment among secondary school students in relation to gender revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students in emotional adjustment, social adjustment, and overall adjustment. Both groups exhibited almost similar levels of adjustment in these dimensions. However, a significant difference was observed in educational adjustment. Female students obtained a lower mean score compared to male students, indicating that female students were better adjusted educationally than male students. Thus, gender did not significantly influence emotional, social, and overall adjustment, but it significantly affected educational adjustment.

The analysis of adjustment in relation to type of school showed that there was no significant difference between government and private school students in emotional adjustment, social adjustment, and overall adjustment. Students of both school types demonstrated almost similar levels of adjustment in these areas. However, a significant difference was found in educational adjustment. Private school students obtained lower mean scores than government school students, indicating better educational adjustment among private school students. Therefore, type of school significantly influenced educational adjustment but did not significantly affect emotional, social, and overall adjustment.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that adjustment is an important aspect of adolescent development and educational life. The findings indicate that secondary school students generally exhibit similar levels of emotional, social, and overall adjustment irrespective of gender and type of school. This suggests that adolescents experience similar emotional and social challenges during secondary education and are able to adapt in comparable ways.

However, differences were found in educational adjustment. Female students were found to be better adjusted educationally than male students, possibly due to greater discipline, academic involvement, and seriousness toward studies. Similarly, private school students demonstrated better educational adjustment compared to government school students, which may be due to better educational facilities, learning environment, supervision, and academic support available in private schools. Overall, the study highlights that while gender and type of school do not

greatly influence emotional and social adjustment, they do play an important role in educational adjustment among secondary school students.

Implications of the Study

The findings of the study have important educational and psychological implications. Teachers, school administrators, and parents should pay greater attention to the educational adjustment of students, especially male students and government school students who showed comparatively lower educational adjustment. Schools should provide supportive academic environments, proper guidance, counseling services, and motivation programs to improve educational adjustment among students.

The study also emphasizes the importance of creating emotionally supportive and socially healthy school environments for all students. Guidance and counseling services should be strengthened in schools to help students cope with academic stress and adjustment difficulties. Teachers should adopt student-centered teaching methods and encourage active participation, cooperation, and confidence among learners.

The findings may also help educational planners and policymakers improve school conditions, especially in government schools, by enhancing infrastructure, academic support systems, and counseling facilities to promote better adjustment among adolescents.

Conclusion

Adjustment is an important aspect of adolescent development and educational success. The review of literature indicates that emotional, social, and educational adjustment significantly influence the overall personality and academic progress of secondary school students. Gender and type of school affect adjustment patterns to some extent. The present study may help educators, counselors, and parents understand adjustment difficulties among adolescents and provide effective support systems for their healthy development.

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