

A Study of Security-Insecurity Feelings among Adolescents in Relation to Gender and Socio-Economic Status

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the significant differences in the security-insecurity scores of adolescent boys and girls belonging to high socio-economic status and low socio-economic status. There were three objectives of the present study (1) to study the main effect of "gender" on the security-insecurity feelings, (2) to study the impact of "socio-economic status" on security-insecurity feelings, (3) to examine whether or not there is an interactional effect of "gender and socio-economic status" on the security and insecurity feelings, taken as criterion. To achieve these objectives a 2x2 factorial design in which each variable varying two ways was used in the present study. There were four groups (namely; male and female, high socio-economic status and low-economic status) each consisted 100 subjects. Socio-Economic Status Scale developed by Aggarwal, Bhasin, Sharma, Chhabra, Aggarwal and Rajoura (2005) were administered on large sample of subjects to form two groups of subjects. Shah Security-Insecurity Scale (SISS) developed by Beena Shah (2010) was administered on these four groups of subjects. The data so obtained were tabulated group wise and analysed by analysis of variance. The result clearly demonstrated that girls showed more insecure feelings than boys; adolescents of low socio-economic status were more insecure than those of the high socio-economic status. The findings were discussed in the light of existing findings.

Keywords: Socio-Economic Status, Feelings of Security-Insecurity, Gender, Adolescence

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Introduction

Security –Insecurity are two factors which to a great extent determine the personality of adolescent. Security is a state of mind in which one is willing to accept the consequences of one's behaviour. According to Maslow (1942), the security feelings are syndrome. In other words, the term security is the generalized label for many more specific feelings which overlap and intertwines and which are all functions of the another. The word security and insecurity is intended as a label for this peculiar aspect of the wholeness that may be discerned in the multicplicity of particular symptom with which the concept is used with psychological flavor. William E. Blatz defined security as "a state of mind which is willing to accept the consequences of one's behaviour" (Blatz, 1967).

He considered that "all aspects of an individual's behaviour in all areas of life can be interpreted in terms of security.

Modern psychologists have shown that the most important factor for an adolescent's healthy development is love, affection and sense of security which is further dependent on the attitude of parents towards their children (Bossard & Boll, 1954). Children's security-insecurity therefore will likely show some continuity into late adolescence. Patterns of continuity have been found in security of attachment (Thompson & Limber, 1990) and self confident and self efficacious children (Bandura, 1997)

The concept of security-insecurity is classified into two kinds. Objective or social security/insecurity and subjective or psychic

security/insecurity. These two states, through closely interrelated, are not interdependent. Social security implies the provision of bodily needs, satisfactory social contacts and a stable social order. Subjective or psychic security, on the other hand, may be defined as a mental easiness or stability and it may exist despite a substantial lack of almost everything and constitutes a secure environment. Conversely, objective insecurity implies unsatisfactory social contacts and lack of satisfaction of bodily needs and unstable social order. Subjective or psychic insecurity denotes mental discomfort or mental instability.

Characteristics of Security-Insecurity

Insecurity: Produces fear, worry and anxiety, restlessness, fatigue, insomnia, indecisiveness, avoidance of others and depression.

Security: Produces boldness and a sound mind, rest, peace, and joy, decisiveness, love, confidence, fellowship, thanksgiving and praise.

Park (2007) gives several forms of practical security: financial, physical, social, interpersonal, & emotional. When the desirable conditions are missing, we become insecure: When our income is uncertain and our savings small, we might experience economic or financial insecurity. When the conditions protecting our health and safety are absent, we might worry about catching diseases or being physically hurt. We might become socially insecure if we lose our friends. If our personal relationships are unstable—or even non-existent—we might feel threatened by interpersonal insecurity. And when our inner selves become unstable, we feel emotionally and psychologically insecure.

There is an irrefutable, logical argument for viewing gender as a credible security issue, one that threatens the quality of life (and often life itself) of an overwhelmingly large number of people in any population. This is especially critical given that a woman is vulnerable to violence throughout her life, from before birth to old age.

Without securing women from things that threaten their survival and from the threat of violence, you can have no meaningful security studies or policy. A problem-solving, people-oriented, nuanced and holistic approach is what is required if the pursuit of security is to have meaning in the everyday lives of ordinary women — and men (Rajagopalan, 2004). How a society confronts the issue of security against women goes to the heart of how women experience security.

It also includes insecurity arising from violence within the household, by the community, and, sometimes, even the state against women, children and the minorities. . . . The ultimate concern of human security is with people's daily lives and the fear of their disruption by societal injustice or natural calamities' (Mahbubul Haq Human Development Centre, 2000).

This paper argues that gender is insidious form of insecurity for women around the world and determines whether a girl goes to school, when a woman goes to work, whether and when she leaves her home to buy groceries and whether she uses public transport to travel around a city. For the purposes of this paper, feeling of insecurity is therefore a feeling of anxiety and fear, an anticipation of violence, a palpable lack of a sense of security, whether in a specific physical space or because of a particular individual or community.

Conceptually, human security has expanded the boundaries of our understanding of security, to include security of income, employment, food, health, education and environment. The rapid pace of globalization has not alleviated the scope and rate of poverty in developing regions. If anything, poverty and its adverse human security effects is becoming more pervasive. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), approximately 1 billion go hungry every day, and about 1 billion are illiterate (United Nations Development Programme, 1997). This is quite reasonable to assume that socio-economic status is likely affects the individual feelings of security. The present study is undertaken to ascertain the factors influencing the security-insecurity feelings among adolescence.

Objectives

- To study the main effect of 'socio-economic status' on the Security- Insecurity feelings, taken as criterion.
- To study the main effect of 'gender' on Security-Insecurity feelings, taken as criterion.
- To study the interactional effect of 'socio-economic status & gender' on the Security- Insecurity feelings, taken as criterion.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that the female feel more insecure than the male.

It was hypothesized that the adolescents of high SES feel more insecure than the low SES.

Method

Design: A 2X2 factorial design factorial design in which two variables socio-economic status and gender each varying two ways was used in the present study. A sample of 400 subjects was used half of them were male and remaining half were female. Similarly Socio-economic status (SES) was divided into two groups i.e. high socio-economic status and low socio-economic status subjects. In this way four groups of subjects have been formed. In order to form above mentioned four groups of subjects Socio-Economic Status Scale and Security-Insecurity Scale were administered on all these four groups of subjects.

Sample : A total sample consisted of 400 adolescent students studying in XI and XII standards were selected randomly, drawn from Aligarh Muslim University.

Tools: Following tools were used in present study:

1. **Socio-Economic Status Scale:** The socio-economic status (SES) scale was developed by Aggarwal, Bhasin, Sharma, Chhabra, Aggarwal and Rajoura (2005) was used to measure socio-economic status of the subjects. The scale is applicable for both

urban and rural families and among all sections of the society. This scale consisted of 22 items. Cronbach's alpha was found 0.784 and validity was found 0.533 which is significant at 0.01 level.

2. Shah Security-Insecurity Scale (SISS):

The scale was developed by Beena Shah (2010) was used to measure level of security and insecurity of the individual consisting of 75 items. The split half reliability was found to be 0.79 for male, 0.70 for female, 0.81 for urban and 0.74 for rural students. Thus the reliability was found highly satisfactory. Validity was found to be 0.79 which is highly significant

Procedure

In order to collect the data, random sampling technique was used, the scales were distributed individually to the subjects. A good rapport was established with the respondents before requesting them to fill up questionnaires. Subjects were assured about the confidentiality of their responses and were requested to extend their cooperation. Finally, the questionnaires were collected from all the respondents, scoring was done. The data thus, obtained were tabulated group-wise and were statistically analyzed with the help of analysis of variance (ANOVA) to draw necessary inferences.

Results

Table 1: Showing Mean of Security-Insecurity Scores Obtained by Four Groups of Subjects on Security-Insecurity Scale.

Groups	Male	Female	Mean
High SES	48.12	32.06	40.09
Low SES	30.26	18.62	24.44
Mean of the means	39.19	25.34	

Table 2: Showing F-Ratios

Source of variation	df	Sum of squares	Mean of square	F-value
Gender	1	9591.12	9591.12	66.99*
SES	1	12246.12	12246.12	85.83*
Gender x SES	1	122.10	122.10	0.85
Error	196	28061.50	143.17	
Total	199	50142.95		

*significant at .01 level

F-ratios for gender variation is 66.99 (ref. table 2), which is significant at .01 level. The result shows that male and female subjects differ with respect to security-insecurity feelings. It is found in table 1 that mean of the means for male groups of subjects is 39.19 and the mean of the means for female groups of subjects is 25.34. Since mean of the means for male groups of subjects is higher than the mean of the means for female groups of subjects, it is, therefore, safely be concluded that male subjects differ from female subjects with respect to feelings of security-insecurity.

As shown in table 2, F-ratio for SES is 85.83 which is also significant at 0.01 level. The findings suggest that high SES subjects and lowSES subjects differ with respect to feeling of security-insecurity. In table 1 we find that mean of the means for high SES group is 40.09 and the mean of the means of low SES group is 24.44. Since the means of the means of high SES

subjects is markedly higher than the mean of the means of low SES subjects, it can safely be concluded that high SES subjects are more secure than low SES subjects.

F-ratio for interaction between SES and gender, as shown in table 2 is 0.85, which is insignificant. The result suggests that there is no interactional effect of SES and gender on feelings of security-insecurity.

Discussion

The main findings of the present research are; (1)Male and female subjects differ with respect to feelings of security-insecurity; (2)high SES subjects and low SES subjects differ with respect to feelings of security-insecurity;(3) there is no interactional effect of gender andSES on feelings of security-insecurity.

The present research indicates that male and female subjects differ with respect to

security-insecurity feelings. Our finding suggest that adolescent female show more insecurity feelings than adolescent male which is consistent with the findings obtained by Seligson (2005); Raina & Bhan (2013). It may be due to the reason that usually the parents indulge in the discrimination policy towards their female child. Girls' success in any field is underestimated and that they are not given encouragement and recognition to achieve success in a particular field. Parents overprotect their daughters and this makes them dependent for the whole life. Women often use avoidance tactics to stay safe; don't walk far distances alone, avoid the 'bush' where robbers might hide. As result females develop the feelings of insecurity. In the context of a developing nation there is a lot of talk about how women participate at all levels of government, including on security issues. It is equally important for females, how they can gain influence over authorities play a strong role in women's security, as long as the state is perceived to leave gaps in the protection of its people.

Further it is depicted high SES subjects and low SES subjects differ with respect to feelings of security-insecurity, means, SES influence the individuals feelings of security-insecurity. A considerable body of cross-sectional and longitudinal evidence has been indicating that socio-economic status (SES) influences feelings of security-insecurity. Our finding is indirectly related with the contention made by (Block et al., 2009; Lohman et al., 2009; Gundersen et al., 2011; Moore & Cunningham, 2012) that low-income families, may face high levels of stress due to the financial and emotional pressures of food insecurity, low-wage work, lack of access to health care, paying bills, so develop feelings of insecurity. Therefore it may conclude that they feel insecure due to increase level of stress in their minds. This finding is also consistent with the findings

of Seligson (2005) i.e., those with higher incomes feel more secure than those of lower incomes; as shown in our finding that high SES subjects are more secure than and low SES subjects. Finally it has been found that there is no interactional effect of socio-economic status and gender on feelings of security-insecurity.

Conclusion

The results of present investigation indicate that male adolescents are more secure than female adolescent with respect to feelings of security-insecurity. High SES adolescent are more secure than and low SES adolescent. There is no interactional effect of socio-economic status and gender on feelings of security-insecurity.

Suggestions

To provide the security to female adolescents, male and female should be treated equally in the family and discrimination between the children on the behalf of the gender should not prevail in the social system. In the same way to provide the security to low SES adolescents, financial and emotional support should be given to the low SES subjects.

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