

## Emotional Maturity and Adjustment in First Year Undergraduates of Delhi University: An Empirical Study

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### Abstract

Entering into college is considered a time of stress and adjustment for any youth. The discrepancy between their expectations and the realities of the college contribute to lags in their emotional, academic, social, familial, sexual and health well-being. As a result of which they face difficulties in adjusting to the new college life. The primary purpose of the present study is to explore the relationship between adjustment and emotional maturity of first year undergraduate students. It also aimed at investigating if there exist any gender difference in emotional maturity and adjustment. The sample for the study consisted of 80 first year undergraduates from various colleges of Delhi University. The age ranged between 17-19 years. The sample was selected through incidental sampling technique. They were administered the Global Adjustment Scale (Student Form) by Sanjay Vohra and Emotional Maturity Scale by Singh and Bhargava to measure adjustment and emotional maturity, respectively. The results showed a significant positive correlation between emotional maturity and various dimensions of adjustment (namely, emotional, family, college and social adjustment) at .01 and 0.05 level of significance. Also the t-test showed no significant difference in emotional maturity between the two genders. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference in the adjustment dimensions between boys and girls except for only the dimension of emotional adjustment, where females scored significantly higher than their male counterpart. Finally, few intervention techniques have been suggested along with implications to enable further research.

**Key-words:** Emotional maturity, adjustment, first year, undergraduates

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### Introduction

'Emerging Adulthood' is a term coined by Jeffrey Arnett, which encompasses the stage between ages 18-25 years, where the young are in a transformative stage. This stage begins with an attempt to make a transition from secondary to tertiary education. The freshman year is undoubtedly one of the most stressful adjustment phases of ones' lives. During this time, a major part of adjustment starts and students often face difficulties and lags in adjusting to the new campus life. Many researchers (Eg., Bennett and Okinaka, 1990 and Martha, 2003) reveal that almost all freshmen

face some form of adjustment problems during this transition.

The student dropout rate is gradually multiplying, as seen in a recent study done by Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University which shows that about 3% to 4% of students, who join engineering colleges, dropout each year due to inability to cope up with the academic stress. The academic stress and a number of other variables have been linked to student drop outs and a great proportion of first year students leave universities as a result of adjustment problems. According to Tinto (1987), out of the total 40% of college and university level students who face adjustment difficulties

and fail to get their degrees, 75% of them leave higher learning institutions during their first two years. Successful adjustment during the first year thus seems to be of valid concern to students, parents, university officials and teachers.

Adjustment is defined as the academic, social, and personal-emotional adaptation a student experiences after entry into an institution of higher education. Adjustment difficulties arise when there is a discrepancy between the expectations that the students have and the realities of college life. This was confirmed in a longitudinal study by Jackson et al(2000), where it was found that students who had expectations that were fearful reported more adjustment problem. The complexity of the new experiences they face and the steps to handle them are perceived at times as an overwhelming task to first year students (Lu, 1994). Tinto (1993) proposed three stages that students go through when moving from school to college i.e. separation, transition and incorporation. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) describe this transition as a "culture shock involving significant social and psychological relearning in the face of encounters with new ideas, new teachers and friends with quite varied values and beliefs, new freedoms and opportunities, and new academic, personal and social demands."

Freshmen are faced with a plethora of new and demanding situations, as a result of which most of them may feel incompetent and could face difficulty in coping with and adjusting to the life style in college, which may in turn cause psychological distress including high test anxiety, lower academic self-efficacy and poor time management and use of study resources (Martha, 2003). An emotionally mature child is positive and can make effective adjustments with himself, his family, peers, school/college, society and his culture.

The term Emotional maturity essentially involves right emotional control (Rajakumar & Soundarajan 2007). An emotionally mature person is able to hide his feelings and is not subject to frequent mood changes. When he does express emotion, he does so with moderation, decently and in good order and at the right time and in a proper manner. An emotionally mature person has in his possession almost all types of emotions-positive or negative and is able to express them at the appropriate time in an appropriate degree. A mature individual sees himself in clear perspective and continually involved in the process of seeing himself more integrated. Thus, emotional maturity can be seen as a process in which the personality is continuously striving for a greater sense of emotional healthy- both physiologically and psychologically.

Indian college students also undergo various challenges during their freshmen years. Owing to the dearth of research which assess the adjustment process of students in Indian colleges, present research was carried out

### **Hypotheses**

1. The higher the level of emotional maturity, higher will be the adjustment of the first year undergraduates.
2. There is no significant difference in adjustment levels between males and females.
3. There is no significant difference in emotional maturity between males and females.

### **Methodology**

#### **Participants**

The participants were 80 students first year undergraduate students (male=40, female=40) between age range 17-19 years, selected randomly from various colleges affiliated to the University of Delhi.

### Research Design

The present study is a correlation research where the dependent variable is the level of adjustment of freshmen and their emotional maturity is the independent variable. Psychological questionnaires were used to assess the relationship between them.

### Measures

Global Adjustment Scale (Student Form) by Sanjay Vohra(1994) was used for measuring the adjustment levels. It consists of 120 items measuring 6 dimensions. Emotional maturity was measured using the Emotional Maturity Scale prepared by Singh and Bhargava (1988) which consists of 48 items measuring five broad factors of emotional maturity. Both the measures use a reverse scoring process, where higher the score lesser is the adjustment/emotional maturity.

### Results

**TABLE 1.1:** Shows the correlation of adjustment and emotional maturity in the first year undergraduates (N=80)

Adjustment Dimensions	Overall Emotional Maturity ( r )	Significance
Overall Adjustment	0.455**	P<0.01
Emotional Adjustment	0.362**	P<0.01
Family Adjustment	0.461**	P<0.01
Health Adjustment	0.217	NS
College Adjustment	0.435**	P<0.01
Sexual Adjustment	0.211	NS
Social Adjustment	0.231*	P<0.05

(df=78)(\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01)

**TABLE 1.2:** Shows the means, standard deviations & t-values in adjustment between males and females.

AREAS	GENDER	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	t-values
Emotional Adjustment	Male (40)	17.22	22.37	-3.69**
	Female (40)	22.37	17.22	
Family Adjustment	Male (40)	11.90	5.92	0.49
	Female (40)	11.82	7.60	
Health Adjustment	Male (40)	12.27	4.48	0.215
	Female (40)	12	6.78	
College Adjustment	Male (40)	13.50	5.87	-0.839
	Female (40)	14.55	5.52	
Sexual Adjustment	Male (40)	12.10	4.99	-0.715
	Female (40)	12.90	5	
Social Adjustment	Male (40)	16.70	6.87	-0.425
	Female (40)	17.37	7.34	

*(df=78)(\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01)*

**TABLE 1.3:** Shows the means, standard deviations and t-values in Emotional Maturity dimensions between males and females

AREAS	GENDER	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	t-values
Emotional Stability	Male (40)	25.07	6.77	-0.36
	Female (40)	25.02	5.54	
Emotional Progression	Male (40)	23.22	5.78	0.147
	Female (40)	23.42	6.39	
Social Adjustment	Male (40)	24.45	6.40	-1.632
	Female (40)	22.42	4.53	
Personality Integration	Male (40)	20.72	5.97	-0.980
	Female (40)	19.47	5.42	
Independence	Male (40)	19.35	4.56	-1.852
	Female (40)	17.47	4.49	
Overall Emotional Maturity	Male (40)	115.32	24.89	-1.386
	Female (40)	108.125	21.89	

(df=78)

### Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between the overall adjustment of first year undergraduates as well as their scores on the six adjustment dimensions i.e. Emotional, Family, Health, College, Sexual and Social, in relation to their emotional maturity. It was found that there was a significant positive relationship between emotional maturity and adjustment at .01 level of significance. Thus, the findings are in line with the first hypothesis. This indicates that the higher the level of emotional maturity, higher will be the adjustment of the first year undergraduates. This result is

supported by Mahmoudi (2012) study on the adjustment level of the 160 female post graduate students of Yasouj city where a positive correlation was obtained between emotional maturity and overall adjustment.

For the second hypotheses, which aimed to investigate the gender difference on adjustment, the mean scores of males and females were compared and t-values were calculated. The higher scores on adjustment indicates that the person has a lower adjustment. Based on the result from the present study, it was found that there was no significant difference between males and females participants on the

dimensions of adjustment though the mean value obtained for female students was slightly higher than the male students except for the dimension of emotional adjustment where the male students scored significantly higher than the females. Hence the second hypothesis stands partially proved. Support for our result can be found in a study by Houston and Marzolf (1944) on 40 entering freshmen of Illinois State Normal University where it was found that no sex difference exists in the adjustment problems they face.

The third hypotheses aimed to address the gender differences in the emotional maturity of first year undergraduates. The findings indicated in Table 1.3 show that females scored higher on emotional maturity as compared to their male counterparts. Support for our result can be found in researches which show that girls mature faster than boys. They internalise their emotions more rapidly and are highly positive in expression (e.g. Chaplin, 2006). However the results show that there is no significant gender difference in emotional maturity. This result is supported by a study done by Wagde & Ganaie (2013) on 60 students pursuing rehabilitation studies where no significant difference was found in the level of emotional maturity among the students with respect to their gender. Results showed no significant gender difference on factors of emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration and independence. Therefore, it can be concluded that emotional maturity and adjustment go hand in hand. Also it's not necessary that emotional maturity and adjustment would vary significantly amongst male and female students. There are other aspects like culture, upbringing, socialization and even one's personal experiences which to a great extent determine the levels of maturity and adjustment in individuals.

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