

Rigidity, Adjustment and Youth Problems in Adolescents : A correlational Study

Ritu Madhu Anand** Ritu****

Abstract

Adolescence is a crucial stage in a person's life in which he faces several problems related to physical health, mental health, behavioural problems, psycho-socio problems etc. The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between rigidity, adjustment and youth problems in adolescents. Sample for the study consisted of 150 adolescents. The scales Dimensions of Rigidity, Bell Adjustment Inventory (revised student form) and Youth Problem Inventory were administered on adolescents. The data were analysed by using Pearson Product Moment method of correlation. Results indicate that there are significant positive relationships between rigidity & adjustment and between adjustment & youth problems. But no significant relationship has been found between rigidity and youth problems.

Keywords: *Rigidity, Adjustment, Youth Problems, Adolescents.*

*About Authors : * & **Department of Psychology, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, Haryana
***District Child Protection Officer, Bhiwani, Haryana*

Introduction

Adolescence is a period marked by significant psychosocial transformations that occur amid rapid pubertal growth, including identity formation, individuation from parents, and the establishment of intimate friendships. Adolescence is a time of new challenges and new opportunities. Some adolescents do not negotiate these challenges positively and develop personal and social problems which lead towards various psycho-socio and behavioural problems. The image of adolescence is a time of storm, stress and strains intense, moody and preoccupation with the self, which has permeated both professional and lay perspectives of this developmental period. The problems of adolescents are quite serious. They are confused and anxious regarding the biological, psychological and social challenges they have confronted. The difficulties include emotional problems like sudden mood changes, irritability, irresponsible behaviors, depression etc. serious enough to justify special treatment.

Human life may be viewed as a long process of adjustment and personal satisfaction. Happiness depends to a great extent upon whether one succeeds or fails in this process of adapting oneself to the environment. One often encounters situations where, ones well established patterns of behavior have to be abandoned or changed. If one fails to change one's behaviour or response set when external conditions demand it, one cannot adapt efficiently oneself to the ever changing social situations. Flexibility seems not only an advantage but necessary for the process of adjustment. Rigidity refers to inflexibility or resistance to change. Rigidity has a number of specific meanings depending on the field of application. In psychology rigidity refers to an obstacle to problem solving which arises from over-dependence on prior experience, which makes it difficult for a person with experiences in a specific problem domain to recognize novel situation and strategies. Werner (1946) stated that rigidity is a multiform rather than a uniform trait. He discriminated two types of rigidity i.e.

subnormal rigidity and abnormal rigidity. Subnormal rigidity is observed in feeble minded persons of familial (endogenous) type. It is assumed that this kind of rigidity is mainly the result of differentiation of mental functions. A person, who is subnormally rigid, fails to solve problems because he over-simplifies them. Abnormal rigidity is found mainly in mentally defected persons of brain injured (exogenous) type. This type of rigidity is said to be the result of lack of integration and lack of coherence. Term rigidity includes preservation, conservation, dogmatism, analytic, intolerance of ambiguity and compulsiveness. Flexibility, liability, tolerance of ambiguity and to some degree creativity has served as labels for tendencies contrasted with rigidity.

Anxious children have been found to over interpret ambiguous situation as threatening but react avoidant rather than aggressive solution to threat (Barret, Rapee, Dads and Ryan, 1996). Ainsworth (1958) have discussed rigidity as related to stress not related to degree of defensiveness in general life but adjustment can be influenced by the rigidity. Stroschal and Wilson (1999) explored that when people receive help with adopting the acceptance, they become more flexible in making their way in the world. Rather than focusing on feeling good, they focus on acting in the service of their values.

Life is the constant effort of a living thing to adjust to its surrounding. Adjustment is a dynamic process and is achieved through the reactions an individual develops to the changes in the surrounding. The term 'adjustment' broadly refers to manage environmental and internal demands and conflicts among demands. The term 'adjustment' used interchangeably with the concepts such as mastery, defence, coping and adaptation. Hamburg and Adams (1967) defined adjustment as 'collection of necessary data and making use of them when challenged'.

An adjusted person manages his/her life and has self-confidence. He/she uses his/her own value judgments, seeks the solution of his/her problems about himself/herself and can make his/her own decisions without expecting other people's decisions (Corey, 1982; Alver1998). Maladjustment, on the other hand, means unhappiness for the individuals; decreased productivity and waste of labor force source for the society (Kurc 1990; Koksall, 1997).

Youth is very important period in the life of man. This period is usually concomitant with problems as they "struggle" to fit themselves into society. The word "problem" does not necessary imply that youth is to be assumed to be a period in which stress and storms predominant: it can be a period marked by good health and high achievement. Nevertheless difficult decision and adjustment face young people in today's society. Many youths may not be sufficiently mature to cope with such problems. They go in undesirable directions such as delinquency, drugs, vandalism and stealing etc. moreover, they compensate for their feelings by striking out against society, revolting against adult authority. These problems are invariably compounded by peer pressure where by young people are faced either consciously or unconsciously to become involved in those antisocial activities by people of their own age groups. The present study was designed to examine the relationship between rigidity, adjustment and youth problems in adolescents.

Objectives:

- To study the relationship between rigidity and adjustment.
- To study the relationship between rigidity and youth problems.
- To study the relationship between adjustment and youth problems.

Hypotheses:

- There would be positive relationship between rigidity and adjustment.

- There would be positive relationship between rigidity and youth problems.
- There would be positive relationship between adjustment and youth problems.

Method

Sample: A sample of 150 adolescents studying in 11th and 12th class of government schools of Rohtak district within the age range of 16 to 18 years was selected for the present study.

Tools:

- **Dimensions of Rigidity Scale (Dr. N.K. Chadha, 1986):** It consists of 75 statements and is used in research for measuring the behavioural consequences. The dimensions of this scale are intellectual rigidity, emotional rigidity, dispositional rigidity, social rigidity, behavioural rigidity, perceptual and creative rigidity. The scale has reliability (test-retest reliability .94 and split half reliability .71) and the validity coefficient is .68.
- **Bell Adjustment Inventory (Revised Student form) (Hugh M. Bell, 1962):** It consists of 160 statements divided into five measures of adjustment i.e. home adjustment, health adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and occupational adjustment. The reliability of the test is .80.

- **Youth Problem Inventory (M. Verma):** It consists of 80 statement divided into four areas of youth problems i.e., family problems, school problems, social problems and personal & over sensitivity problems. The reliability coefficient of the entire inventory was .80.

Procedure:

The adolescents were informed about the purpose of the study in detail after making them comfortable and a rapport was established by simply asking few relevant questions about them. This was done in order to make the subjects feel comfortable, so that subjects may not feel conscious and should give true response about their feelings. The Rigidity Scale, Bell Adjustment Inventory and Youth Problem Inventory were administered after giving instructions to adolescents for all the tests separately. After administering the tests scoring was done manually.

Data Analysis: Data was analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation for studying the relationship between rigidity, adjustment and youth problems.

Results and Discussion:

Table 1: Showing correlation between rigidity, adjustment and youth problems

Variables	Home Adjust ment	Health Adjust ment	Social Adjustment	Emotional Adjustment	Occupational Adjustment	Overall Adjustment	Youth Problem
Intellectual Rigidity	.062	.176*	.090	.134	.123	.123	.191*
Emotional Rigidity	.127	.232**	.086	.027	.202*	.159*	.032
Dispositional Rigidity	.183*	.218**	.125	.228**	.148	.229**	.183*
Social Rigidity	.075	.004	-.071	-.007	-.036	-.044	-.012
Behavioural Rigidity	.091	.148	-.073	.194*	.103	.112	.102
Perceptual Rigidity	-.020	-.054	-.127	.179*	-.030	-.015	.018
Creative Rigidity	.216**	.160	.251**	.249**	.268**	.286**	.085
Overall Rigidity	.238**	.292**	.006	.273**	.244**	.293**	.130
Youth Problem	.131	.210**	.044	.167*	.080	.197*	--

**p<.01, *p<.05

The table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient of rigidity and its dimensions, adjustment and its measures and youth problems. The table 1 reveals that there is a positive correlation between rigidity and adjustment which indicates that higher the score, higher would be rigid behaviour of the subject and higher the score of adjustment, the adjustment would be poor. Bem (1981) found a positive relationship that children who remain rigid for longer may miss out opportunities to develop certain skills associated with the opposite sex that may be beneficial for adjustment.

The first dimension of rigidity i.e. intellectual rigidity was found to be positively correlated ($r=.176$, $p<.05$) with health adjustment which posits that adolescents with high rigid intellectual behaviour have unsatisfactory health adjustment. Similarly, emotional rigidity was found to be positively correlated with health adjustment ($r=.232$, $p<.01$), which shows that adolescents with high emotional rigidity have poor health adjustment. Also, emotional rigidity was found to be positively correlated with occupational adjustment ($r=.202$, $p<.05$) which posits that emotional rigid adolescents have poor relationship with colleagues & boss and are not financially satisfied. The findings reveals that dispositional rigidity was positively correlated with home adjustment ($r=.183$, $p<.05$), health adjustment ($r=.218$, $p<.05$) and emotional adjustment ($r=.228$, $p<.01$) which posits that adolescents who have dispositional rigidity are tend to be unsatisfactorily adjusted to their home surroundings, unsatisfactory health adjustment and tend to be emotionally unstable. However, behavioural rigidity was found to be positively correlated with emotional adjustment ($r=.194$, $p<.05$) which states that behavioural rigid adolescents are tend to be emotionally unstable. It was found that perceptual rigidity was

positively correlated with emotional adjustment ($r=.179$, $p<.05$) which indicates that adolescents with perceptual rigidity are tend to be emotionally unstable. Although, creative rigidity which means not able to think about a thing or problem from many different angles and to show stereotype in ideas was found to be positively correlated with home adjustment ($r=.216$, $p<.05$), social adjustment ($r=.251$, $p<.01$), emotional adjustment ($r=.249$, $p<.01$) and occupational adjustment ($r=.268$, $p<.01$), which indicates that adolescents with creative rigidity are tend to be unsatisfactorily adjusted to their home surroundings, submissive & retiring in their social contacts, emotionally unstable, have poor relationship with colleagues & boss and are not satisfied with their occupation.

The correlation coefficient of overall rigidity with home adjustment ($r=.238$, $p<.01$), health adjustment ($r=.292$, $p<.01$), emotional adjustment ($r=.273$, $p<.01$) and occupational adjustment ($r=.244$, $p<.01$) were found to be positively significant. On the other hand, the correlation coefficient of overall adjustment with emotional rigidity ($r=.159$, $p<.05$), dispositional rigidity ($r=.229$, $p<.01$), and creative rigidity ($r=.286$, $p<.01$) were found to be positively significant respectively. The results shows that overall rigidity and overall adjustment are positively correlated ($r=.293$, $p<.01$) with each other which indicates that higher the rigid behaviour, the poorer will be the adjustment. Thus, the first hypothesis which stated that rigidity and adjustment would be significantly correlated is verified.

The correlation between rigidity and youth problems shows that the youth problems found to be positively correlated with intellectual rigidity ($r=.191$, $p<.05$) and dispositional rigidity ($r=.183$, $p<.05$) which indicates that adolescents having youth problems (i.e. family problems, school problems, social problems and personal

problems) believes in setting high standards for oneself & striving for the best and they have very definite & rigid habits or ideas. They also hold extreme attitudes (positive or negative) regarding persons, things, problems etc. But it was found that there is no significant correlation between overall rigidity and youth problems. Thus, the second hypothesis is not verified.

Further, the correlation between adjustment and youth problems shows that youth problems found to be positively correlated with health adjustment ($r=.210$, $p<.01$) and emotional adjustment ($r=.167$, $p<.05$) which posits that adolescents having youth problems have unsatisfactory health adjustment and tend to be emotionally unstable. The results shows that there is significant positive correlation between overall adjustment and youth problems ($r=.197$, $p<.05$). The positive correlation shows that the higher the youth problems higher will be the adjustment problems. Therefore, the third hypothesis which stated that adjustment and youth problems would be significantly correlated is verified.

Limitations and Recommendations:

The study provides an insight into various problems being faced by the adolescents. The findings cannot be generalized as the sample was taken from only one district using simple random sampling technique. The results are limited to the information obtained from the questionnaires only. A longitudinal study may help in better understanding of the adolescence related issues as these changes are ongoing due to physical and psychological development. A strong need is felt in terms of providing of community based care to the adolescents in various spheres of life. Adolescents should be provided with a congenial atmosphere at home, society and in school to take decisions and also give their opinions. As the frustration due to problems could get expressed through various

antisocial activities, a strong need of community based care is being felt for youth. This study can also help in devising various intervention programs which could be a problem specific. Findings could also be helpful for, researchers, policy makers, teachers and other school professionals to understand their students and can deal with them effectively. Government should provide every avenue for the betterment of the adolescents.

References:

- Ainsworth, L. H. (1958). **Rigidity**, insecurity, and stress. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. 56, 67-74.
- Alver, B. (1998). Bireylerin uyum ve empatik beceri düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiler. Unpublished Master Thesis, Atatürk University, Social Sciences Institute.
- Barret, P. M., Rapee, R. M., Dads, M.R. and Ryan, S. M. (1996). Family enhancement of cognitive style in Anxious and aggressive children. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 37, 187-203.
- Bell, H.M. (1934). *The Adjustment Inventory. Management of Directions and Norms.* Palo. Atto. Consulting Psychologist Press (Student Form).
- Bem, S.L. (1981). Gender schema theory: a cognitive account of Sex typing psychology. *Psychological Review*, 19, 311-317.
- Chadha, N.K. (1986). *Dimensions of Rigidity Scale.*
- Koksal., A. (1997). Müzik eğitimi alan ve almayan ergenlerin empatik becerilerinin ve uyum düzeylerinin incelenmesi. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Ankara University.

- Kurc, G. (1990). Kisisel, Sosyo-Ekonomik ve Kulturel Bazı Degiskenlerin Genclerin Uyum Alanları ve Uyum Yöntemlerine Etkisi. *Egitim ve Bilim*, 14(76): 3-9.
- Meiran, N., Diamond, G. M., Toder, D., Nemets, B. (2010). Cognitive rigidity in unipolar depression and obsessive compulsive disorder: Examination of task switching, Stroop, working memory updating and post-conflict adaptation. *Psychiatry Research*.
- Werner, H. (1946). The concept of rigidity: a critical evaluation. *Psychological Review*, 53, 43-52

