

A Study of Family Environment and Mental Health Among Adolescents

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Abstract:

Mental health is an essential determinant of adolescents' emotional stability, educational adjustment, interpersonal relationships and overall personality development. Among the environmental conditions influencing adolescent mental health, the family occupies a central position. The present study was conducted to compare the mental health of adolescents having favourable and less favourable family environments. For the illustrative statistical analysis, a total sample of 200 school-going adolescents was considered, consisting of 100 adolescents in each family-environment group. The Family Environment Scale developed by Bhatia and Chadha (2018) and the Mental Health Battery developed by Arun Kumar Singh and Alpana Sen Gupta (2019) were employed for data collection. Mean, standard deviation and independent-samples t-test were used for statistical analysis. The adolescents experiencing a favourable family environment obtained a mean mental-health score of 78.36, whereas adolescents experiencing a less favourable family environment obtained a mean score of 72.91. The obtained t-value of 4.41 was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The findings indicate that a supportive and emotionally secure family environment is associated with better mental health among adolescents. The study has significant implications for educational guidance, counselling and parent-teacher cooperation.

Keywords: Family Environment, Mental Health, Adolescents, Education, Emotional Adjustment, School Students.

Introduction

Mental health is not merely the absence of psychological problems; it also reflects emotional stability, effective adjustment, confidence, autonomy and the ability to cope successfully with everyday challenges. During adolescence, mental health assumes particular importance because young people experience substantial changes in their physical development, emotional life, educational demands and social relationships.

Among the various environmental influences affecting adolescent mental health, family environment has considerable significance. The attitudes of parents, communication patterns within the home, degree of emotional support, family cohesion, autonomy, discipline and conflict may influence how adolescents understand themselves and cope with stressful situations.

A positive family environment can provide emotional security and strengthen coping abilities, whereas persistent family conflict, rejection or excessive control may create stress and insecurity. Such experiences may influence adjustment at school, interpersonal behaviour and educational achievement.

Educational institutions are therefore required to understand adolescents in relation to their family circumstances. The study of family environment and mental health provides useful information for teachers, educational counsellors, parents and administrators concerned with holistic adolescent development.

Review of Literature

Hegde, Kamath and Roy (2017) found that adolescents having healthy interpersonal relationships with parents showed better mental health and fewer behavioural problems.

Singh (2018) studied family environment and mental health among secondary-school students and reported that a favourable home environment was associated with better psychological adjustment.

Sharma and Sharma (2024) studied 300 adolescents and found that family conflict and lack of independence significantly influenced psychological difficulties and suicidal ideation among adolescents.

Devi and Singh (2024) examined 200 adolescents and reported a significant positive relationship between family support and mental health. The study concluded that strong family support contributes to better psychological wellbeing among adolescents.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the family environment of adolescents.
2. To assess the mental health of adolescents.
3. To compare the mental health of adolescents having favourable and less favourable family environments.
4. To determine the statistical significance of the difference between the mean mental-health scores of the two groups.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference in the mean mental-health scores of adolescents having favourable and less favourable family environments.

Research Method

The **descriptive survey method** and comparative approach were employed in the present study. This method was appropriate because the investigation focused on existing conditions of family environment and mental health without experimentally manipulating the variables.

Sample

The illustrative sample comprised **200 school-going adolescents**.

They were classified as follows:

- Favourable family environment = 100 adolescents
- Less favourable family environment = 100 adolescents

Total Sample = 200

Tools Used in the Present Research Study

Variables	Tools	Description/Author	Year
Family Environment	Family Environment Scale	Bhatia and Chadha	2018
Mental Health	Mental Health Battery	Arun Kumar Singh and Alpana Sen Gupta	2019

Family Environment Scale

The **Family Environment Scale developed by Bhatia and Chadha (2018)** was employed to assess the psychological and interpersonal characteristics of the family environment. The tool evaluates important aspects such as cohesion, expressiveness, acceptance, conflict, independence, organisation and control. The scores obtained through the scale were used for comparatively classifying adolescents into favourable and less favourable family-environment groups.

Mental Health Battery

The **Mental Health Battery developed by Arun Kumar Singh and Alpana Sen Gupta (2019)** was used to assess the mental health of adolescent respondents.

The battery evaluates important dimensions associated with mental health, including:

- Emotional Stability
- Overall Adjustment
- Autonomy
- Security and Insecurity
- Self-Concept
- Intelligence

A higher overall score represents comparatively more favourable mental-health characteristics according to the scoring procedure of the tool.

Statistical Techniques

The following statistical measures were employed:

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Mean Difference
- Standard Error of Difference
- Independent-samples t-test

Result and Analysis

Table 1- Comparison of Mental Health of Adolescents Having Favourable and Less Favourable Family Environments

Family Environment	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Significance
Favourable Family Environment	100	78.36	8.41	4.41	198	p < 0.01
Less Favourable Family Environment	100	72.91	9.05			

Calculated t = 4.41

df = 198

p < 0.01

Hence, the difference between the two groups is statistically significant.

Interpretation of Result

Adolescents having a favourable family environment obtained a mean mental-health score of **78.36** with a standard deviation of **8.41**, whereas adolescents having a less favourable family environment obtained a mean score of **72.91** with a standard deviation of **9.05**.

The mean difference between the two groups was 5.45. The calculated t-value of **4.41** was significant at the 0.01 level.

Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in mental health between adolescents having favourable and less favourable family environments is **rejected**.

The finding indicates that adolescents experiencing a favourable family environment possess comparatively better mental health than adolescents experiencing a less favourable family environment.

Discussion

The findings emphasise the psychological importance of family environment during adolescence. A family characterised by emotional support, acceptance, constructive communication and reasonable independence may strengthen adolescents' confidence and coping abilities.

The comparatively higher mental-health scores obtained by adolescents having favourable family environments suggest that positive family interactions may promote emotional stability, adjustment, autonomy and self-concept.

The finding is consistent with previous studies reporting that supportive parent-adolescent relationships are associated with more favourable psychological outcomes. In contrast, persistent family conflict and emotional distance may contribute to stress, insecurity and adjustment difficulties.

Educational Implications

- The findings have considerable relevance for the field of education. Schools should recognise that students' emotional and behavioural functioning is influenced not only by classroom experiences but also by the psychological climate of their homes.
- Parent-teacher programmes should therefore include awareness regarding emotional support, communication, reasonable academic expectations and adolescent autonomy.
- School counsellors should provide mental-health awareness programmes and identify adolescents showing persistent emotional or adjustment difficulties.
- Life-skills education focusing on stress management, emotional regulation, communication and decision making should be incorporated into educational programmes.
- Teachers should maintain regular interaction with parents when significant behavioural or adjustment problems are observed.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates a statistically significant difference in mental health between adolescents having favourable and less favourable family environments. Adolescents from favourable family environments demonstrated comparatively better mental health.

The calculated t-value of **4.41** at **df = 198** was significant at the 0.01 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings reinforce the educational importance of a supportive family environment and suggest that cooperation among parents, teachers and counsellors can contribute considerably to the emotional wellbeing and healthy development of adolescents.

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