

Positive Therapy for the Enhancement of Adjustment, Self-esteem and Management of Anxiety in Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Six hundred students studying in XI standard were screened using the Case Study Schedule (Hemalatha, 2008) and Bell's Adjustment Inventory. Out of them 394 students with Very Unsatisfactory Adjustment/ Unsatisfactory Adjustment were selected for the study. The psychological intervention Positive Therapy (Hemalatha, 2004) was administered to all the adolescents. All the four strategies of Positive Therapy namely, Relaxation Therapy, Counselling, Exercises and Behavioural Assignments were applied. The subjects were provided with Positive Therapy for 30 sessions; each session lasted for about one hour, over a period of 6 weeks. The results showed that the major causes of Unsatisfactory Adjustment were improper home atmosphere and adaptation of wrong coping strategies. Initially, the entire adolescents had Very Unsatisfactory Adjustment/ Unsatisfactory Adjustment but after the administration of Positive Therapy, for 6 weeks, there was a drastic enhancement in the level of the Adolescent's Adjustment and reduction in Anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

Adjustment is a state in which the needs of an individual on the one hand and the claims of the environment on the other are fully satisfied. Adjustment takes the form of variation of the environment and variation in the organism through the acquisition of responses appropriate to the situation. The variation in the organism may be biological. The adjustment process is a universal sequence that can be identified in the behaviour of organism from the lowest species up to man.

Adjustment generally means an effective adaptation to the environment, both external and internal, including conformity to group norms, mores, ideals, values and so on. Adjustment is a continuous process of action in the life of a human or an organism with a definite purpose of meeting the needs of the self, the needs of the environment and the needs of the culture or society. The end result may be survival or extermination. A continuous close watch on the life of an organism or a human being may bring out many happy and unhappy events which are based upon the struggle for successful survival. Man is an interdependent creature, always expecting the help and the cooperation from other human beings and the culture or society in which he lives, for the fulfillment of his basic needs and also makes inevitable demands on them.

Adjustment may be defined as a process of action in the life of human beings right from the period of childhood, adolescence and adulthood with a definite purpose of meeting the needs of the self, the needs of the environment and the needs of the culture. The ultimate end of the process of action of adjustment is the successful survival of the organism. The failure of the process of adjustment may end in the extermination of the organism (Campbell, 2002).

The degree of quality of life of the adolescent's dominates their mode of adjustment. The level of satisfaction with the choice of subject, friends circle, and relationship with parents, siblings and

teachers, standard of living, progress in the academic achievement decides the overall adjustment on every individual invariably.

Adjustment has to be made by individuals in all life situations. Every situation may need different type of adjustment. If an individual fails to adjust himself to the situation that arises, then it may have psychological consequences like conflict frustration, emotional maladjustment, aggression and violence. The adolescent sometimes cannot withstand severe emotional maladjustment to a situation. He/she can even discard everything and run away from home irrespective of the consequences. It is quite hard to state the exact reasons for such causes.

One of the main reasons for poor adjustment of adolescents is that they are highly emotional and do not tolerate even a slight critical remark from their parents and others, like their teachers and friends. It is rooted in infancy and childhood and in the child rearing practices of the parents. Another important reason for this type of behaviour patterns of adolescents are the themes of the motion pictures. Adolescents are very fond of movies. Generally the present day motion pictures and the television series are packed with aggression, violence, fighting, quarrelling, eloping, use of vulgar words and indecent sexuality.

There are several different areas through which the adolescent boys and girls should go through successfully to achieve harmonious emotional development and adjustment. Academic achievement in schools, developing creativity, emotionally well balanced motivation as the level of aspiration, developing creative skills, keeping oneself free from delinquency, avoiding maladjustment due to any discrimination by the parents, maintaining good relationship with parents, maintaining adjustment with peers and others in the school situation and in the playground, are some of the areas. Any impairment in any of these areas may cause problems for adolescent boys and girls. Adolescent boys and girls who have no problems appear in a tensed state which may impair their happiness. The inherent impulses in the adolescent period are always in conflict. If the conflict is not resolved then it may cause several problems like frustration, aggression, violence and personality disorganization leading to total maladjustment.

The most vital areas of adjustment in the period of adolescence are home, health, social and emotional. These vital areas are very helpful in moulding any individual's personality. If an adolescent passes through these areas of adjustment without any major trouble then he/she is on the safe side to progress efficiently into his adulthood, whereas if an individual has trouble in any of the areas, then it could be very natural that he/she would have trouble in the rest of the areas as well, because problems in one area can possibly reflect other areas as well. Therefore each area is connected to the other. Maladjustment in any one area can also doom the individual's life by restricting his progress to further growth. The objective of the study was to find whether Positive Therapy helps adolescent boys and girls to enhance their adjustment.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Five schools were selected from various zones of Coimbatore for the study. The students from class XI were selected to serve as the sample. The sample consists of 394 adolescents comprising 200 boys and 194 girls. Purposive sampling method was employed for the selection of the sample.

Tools

A Case Study Schedule (Hemalatha, 2008) was used to get the needed information about the Adolescent Students. Data was collected regarding the age, income, area (rural or urban) and number of children. It also assesses the negative emotions and negative symptoms of the adolescent students.

Bell's Adjustment Inventory (Bell, 1934) is a self-report of the individual's life and adjustment which he/she has experienced. It tries to obtain more realistic information from the individual concerning what one thinks and feels about one's family relationships; one's body functioning; one's friends and acquaintances outside the home; how aggressive or retiring one is; how much trust one can have in people around and how well one has come to play the roles that the society expects. It also seeks to obtain information about how well the individual understands and has learned to live with his feeling and emotions (Max, 2007).

It is a test of personality that assesses the individual's adjustment in a variety of situations such as Home, Health, Social, Emotional and Overall dimensions. High scores on the inventory signify poor adjustment and low scores denotes better adjustment in different specific areas and also in respect of adjustment taken as a whole. Test-retest reliability of different adjustment dimension as reported in the manual range from 0.70 to 0.93 and internal consistency (odd-even) range from 0.74 to 0.93 (Kim, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1: MEAN AND S.D'S OF BEFORE, AFTER AND FOLLOW-UP IN ADJUSTMENT AMONG THE ADOLESCENT BOYS N = 200

ADJUSTMENT	BEFORE		AFTER		FOLLOW-UP	
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.
	66.22	20.54	43.23	17.98	45.55	18.22

TABLE 2: 'F' VALUE FOR BEFORE, AFTER AND FOLLOW-UP IN ADJUSTMENT AMONG THE ADOLESCENT BOYS N = 200

ADJUSTMENT	SUMOF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARES	F
BETWEEN GROUPS	64061.22	2	32030.612	89.16**
WITHIN GROUPS	214471.8	597	359	

** Significant at 0.01 level

TABLE 3: POST-HOC ANALYSIS FOR BEFORE, AFTER AND FOLLOW-UP IN ADJUSTMENT AMONG THE ADOLESCENT BOYS N = 200

VARIABLE	GROUP	MEAN	S.D.	BEFORE	AFTER	FOLLOW-UP
ADJUSTMENT	BEFORE	66.22	20.54	-	**	**
	AFTER	43.23	17.98	**	-	**
	FOLLOW -UP	45.55	18.22	**	**	-

* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 shows the Post-hoc Analysis of the level of adjustment among the boys. The results indicate that there is a decrease in adjustment among the boys. The effectiveness of the Positive Therapy helped the boys to improve their understanding, sociability, confidence and enhance their perceptions positively which in turn resulted in better adjustment levels. They agreed to continue with the therapeutic training and the result showed a drastic enhancement in the adjustment level after the administration of Positive Therapy and a balance in the follow-up. In the follow-up phase, there was a significant balance in the adjustment level, due to the positively changed perceptions and also the learned positive coping up strategies due to the practice of Positive Therapy.

TABLE 4: MEAN AND S.D'S OF BEFORE, AFTER AND FOLLOW-UP IN ADJUSTMENT AMONG THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS N =194

ADJUSTMENT	BEFORE		AFTER		FOLLOW-UP	
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.
	61.11	22.42	39.04	19.45	40.62	19.29

TABLE 5: 'F' VALUE FOR BEFORE, AFTER AND FOLLOW-UP IN ADJUSTMENT AMONG THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS N = 194

ADJUSTMENT	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARES	F
BETWEEN GROUPS	58815.11	2	29407.55	1.70.37**
WITHIN GROUPS	241956.1	597	417.88	

** Significant at 0.01 level

TABLE 6: POST-HOC ANALYSIS FOR BEFORE, AFTER AND FOLLOW-UP IN ADJUSTMENT AMONG THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS N = 194

VARIABLE	GROUP	MEAN	S.D.	BEFORE	AFTER	FOLLOW-UP
ADJUSTMENT	BEFORE	61.11	22.42	-	**	**
	AFTER	39.04	19.45	**	-	**
	FOLLOW-UP	40.62	19.29	**	**	-

** Significant at 0.01 level

Post-hoc analysis shows significant improvement in adjustment level after Positive Therapy. In the follow-up phase there is a balance in the adjustment level of the girls. It can be due to the practice of Positive Therapy which helped the girls to overcome their negative perceptions and enhance their adjustment levels. The Post-hoc analysis shows a significant difference between before and after Positive Therapy and it also shows a balance in the adjustment levels in the follow-up session also.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study the following conclusions were made:

- After Positive Therapy, majority of the adolescent's adjustment level enhanced to 'Good'/'Excellent' levels.
- The most important causes of poor adjustment were lack of clear understanding and healthy support from the family members.
- The effects of poor adjustment were lack of active participation at school, frustration etc.

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