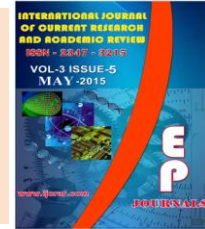




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A Comparative study on adjustment and self-esteem of adolescents of convicted parents and non-convicted parents: a cross-sectional study in Kathmandu, Nepal

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A B S T R A C T

Adjustment is adaptive process involving the social, psychological, and biological developmental accomplishments persons are expected to reach at certain stages of life. Self-esteem is the way one feels about oneself, including the degree to which one possess self respect and self acceptance. Adolescence bridges the mutual relationship between parents and others like peers or the closest partners. The present study was conducted to study the adjustment and self-esteem among the adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents of Kathmandu, Nepal. The sample of the study consisted of 240 adolescents comprising 120 males and 120 females. Among 240, 120 belonged to convicted parents and rest 120 belonged to non-convicted parents. Instrument used for the data collection was The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS), Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES) and Self report questionnaire prepared to know their attitude towards their parents and their relationship with them. The result revealed that majority of adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents had average adjustment and self-esteem. Adolescents of non-convicted parents were better adjusted ($M = 23.77$, $SD = 6.17$) than the adolescents of convicted ones ($M = 20.78$, $SD = 6.71$) which was statistically significant $t(238) = 3.59$, $P(0.001) < 0.05$. Similarly, adolescents of convicted parents had low self-esteem ($M = 16.88$, $SD = 3.82$) than the self-esteem of non-convicted parents ($M = 18.45$, $SD = 3.8$) which was statistically significant $t(238) = 3.14$, $P(0.002) < 0.05$. Also, negative relationship was found between the adjustment and self-esteem and value of Pearson's correlation was found to be -0.36 .

Introduction

Adjustment is individuals' orientation towards his parents, peers, school and himself in terms of satisfaction an individual derives from his interactional relationship with significant others and own self (Thomson, 1999). Adjustment plays vital role in building up the self-esteem of an individuals. Moreover, proper parental role has always been sought for having great impact upon the self esteem and adjustment. Parents are the first teachers and they are internalized in an individual. Parents who are approving, responsive and nurturing are likely to build high levels of self-esteem, whereas disapproving, unresponsive and uninterested parents may break down self-esteem levels of children (Allen & Collins, 1990).

Self team is the way one feels about oneself, including the degree to which one possess self respect and self acceptance. It is a favorable or unfavorable attitude towards the self and most generally refers to an individual's overall positive evaluation of the self (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995).

Self-esteem is an individual's sense of his or her value or worth or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes or likes himself or herself.(Blascovich & Tomaka, (1991). Self-esteem has more recently has been used to refer to an overall evaluation of one's worth or value as a person (Harter & Whitesell, 2003).

Adolescence bridges the mutual relationship between parents and others like peers or the closest partners. In adolescence the link between parenting style, adjustment and

self-esteem is quite strong (Leary & MacDonald, 2003). Peer relationships also play the vital role to promote both social and cognitive development which is the indicators of positive adjustment (Diehl, Lemerise, Caverly, Ramsay & Roberts, 1998). Considering this, people who experience peer rejection are predisposed to undergo a broad variety of adjustment problems during adolescence and into adulthood (Parker & Asher, 1987). Contrary to this, people who are well received by and hold positions of status among their peers are candidates for positive adjustment (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003).

So, familial relationship and relationship with peers is very crucial for the proper adjustment and self-esteem. But regarding the children and adolescents of the convicted parents, when parents go to prison, most of them continue to live with relatives (Bloom and Steinhart, 1993; Mumola, 2000) and they have to face to different problems because of their parental conviction and the stigma that exists in the society. Sometimes they won't have relatives or other care givers who will provide them with their needs as a result they will have limited financial resources.

Moreover, children and adolescents show higher stress levels and fewer coping resources compared to adults (Allen & Hiebert, 1991). Thus, it leads to improper adjustment and low self-esteem. The present study is focused at exploring the differences in the self-esteem and adjustment of adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents who are provided with all their necessities.

Subject and Method

Research design

Two hundred and forty adolescents (120 males and 120 females) belonging to the convicted and non-convicted parents studying in eight different schools of Kathmandu valley were taken using purposive random sampling. Out of those 120 males, 60 belonged to the non-convicted parents and 60 belonged to convicted parents and the same is the ratio in females as well. After taking consent, a proper instruction was given and respondents were provided with the testing materials.

The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS), an Indian test, designed by A.K.P Sinha and R.P Singh was used to measure adjustment of the adolescents. This inventory seeks to assess the adjustment of secondary school students (age group 14 to 18 years) in the three areas of adjustment- Emotional, Social and Educational domains. The inventory consists of 60 items, 20 items for each area of adjustment. For any answer indicative of good adjustment a score of zero is given, otherwise a score of one is awarded. The total score on adjustment is obtained by summing the individual domain scores that indicates the general adjustment status. Scores greater than 11 on the emotional domain indicates unstable emotions while low scores indicate stable emotions.

Individuals with scores greater than 11, on the social adjustment domain indicate that they are submissive and revering. Scores greater than 11 or above on the educational domain indicate that adolescents are poorly adjusted with their curricular and co-

curricular programs while low scores indicative that they have interest in school programs. The split half reliability is 0.95, the test retest reliability is 0.93 and the K-R formula reliability was found to be 0.94. Validity coefficients were determined for each item by the biserial correlation method significant level being .001.

Self Esteem was measured by using 10 item Rosenberg's Self Esteem scale developed by Rosenberg (1965). Each item must be responded in 4 point Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). The scale has five positive (1, 3, 4, 7, 10) and five negative (2, 5, 6, 8, 9). Score 3 is given for strongly agree, 2 for agree, 1 for disagree and 0 for disagree responses. Score is reversed for negative statements and score of self esteem is found by summing of the scores. Maximum obtainable score is 30 and higher score indicates better self esteem. The RSE demonstrates a Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of .92, indicating excellent internal consistency. Test-retest reliability over a period of 2 weeks reveals correlations of .85 and .88, indicating excellent stability.

The RSE demonstrates concurrent, predictive and construct validity. The RSE correlates significantly with other measures of self-esteem, including the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Taking the language barrier in concern, both of these scales were translated to Nepali language in consultation with professionals from Psychology background and the translated version of the scale was used in the present research.

A self report questionnaire prepared with the proper consultation with the professionals from the psychology background was also

used as the data collection tool. It contained six questions related to their family and familial relationship. The samples were supposed to give their subjective answer to the questions. The objective of the questionnaire was to understand their attitude towards their parents and specifically the effects of conviction on them for the Adolescents of convicted parents.

Result and Discussion

The result of the present study showed that adolescents of non-convicted parents are better adjusted than adolescents of convicted parents. Majority of adolescents of both

convicted and non-convicted parents have average general adjustment. 26.7 % of adolescents of non-convicted parents had average adjustment which is half in case of adolescents of convicted ones (13.3 %). None of the adolescents had excellent general adjustment. 3.8 % of adolescents of non-convicted parents showed very unsatisfactory adjustment that is again two times greater in adolescents of convicted parents (7.5 %). Majority of adolescents of convicted parents (24.6 %) had unsatisfactory general adjustment contrary to this majority of adolescents of non-convicted parents had average general adjustment (26.7 %).

Table.1 Respondent type and General adjustment

		General adjustment					Total
		Excellent	Good	Average	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	
Respondent Type	Adolescents of convicted parents (ACP)	---	11	32	59	18	120
			4.6%	13.3%	24.6%	7.5%	50%
	Adolescents of non-convicted parents (ANCP)	---	14	64	33	9	120
			5.8%	26.7%	13.8%	3.8%	50%
Total		---	25	96	92	27	240
			10.4%	40%	38.3%	11.3%	100%

Table.2 Respondent type and Self-esteem

		Self-esteem			Total
		Low	Average	High	
Respondent Type	Adolescents of convicted parents	52 21.7%	66 27.5%	2 .8%	120 50%
	Adolescents of non-convicted parents	34 14.2%	83 34.6%	3 1.2%	120 50%
Total		86 35.8%	149 62.1%	5 2.1%	240 100%

Table.3 Difference in self-esteem and general adjustment of Adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents.

t-test for equality of means					
	Respondent Type	Mean	Std.Deviation	P value	t value
General adjustment	Adolescents of convicted parents	20.78	6.71	.001	3.59
	Adolescents of non-convicted parents	23.77	6.17		
Self-esteem	Adolescents of convicted parents	16.88	3.82	.002	-3.14
	Adolescents of non-convicted parents	18.45	3.8		

The present study also demonstrated that 21.7 % of adolescents of convicted parents had low self-esteem where as just 14.2 % of adolescents of non-convicted parents had low self-esteem. Greater percent of both adolescents of convicted parents (27.5 %) and adolescents of non-convicted parents (34.6 %) had average self-esteem. Similarly,

greater number of adolescents of non-convicted parents (1.2 %) had high self-esteem than that of adolescents of convicted parents (0.8 %). So, we can say that adolescents of non-convicted parents had better self-esteem than that of adolescents of non-convicted ones.

An independent sample t-test conducted showed that adolescents of convicted parents scored lower in total adjustment ($M = 20.78$, $SD = 6.71$) than adolescents of non-convicted parents ($M = 23.77$, $SD = 6.17$) which was statistically significant $t(238) = 3.59$, $P(0.001) < 0.05$. Similarly, the self-esteem of adolescents of non-convicted parents is greater ($M = 18.45$, $SD = 3.8$) than the self-esteem of adolescents of convicted parents ($M = 16.88$, $SD = 3.82$) and it was statistically significant $t(238) = 3.14$, $P(0.002) < 0.05$ which indicates that there really exists the difference in the self-esteem of adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents.

The present study also explored the relationship between adjustment and self-esteem of the adolescents. The relationship between the different variables was assessed through Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results indicated that there is negative correlation between the general adjustment and self-esteem of the respondent (Pearson's correlation coefficient -0.36 at 0.01 levels).

The result showed that there was significant difference in the general adjustment of adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents. The adolescents of non-convicted parents are found to be better in general adjustment than the adolescents of convicted parents. This may be because of their problematic family backgrounds and stigma that prevails in Nepalese in society regarding the conviction of an individual. In self-report questionnaire the adolescents of convicted parents stated that the conviction of their parents had been one of the events which they don't want to remember and share with other people and they don't want

to be compared with their parents. Moreover, the conviction of their parents led them to the different difficult situations to be faced like homelessness, financial crisis, rejection from the society and so on. Among them, the most unacceptable thing for them was the name calling in school and in the locality where they lived. Besides this, the low adjustment may also be due to the lack of proper parental monitoring since parental monitoring is one of the indicators of adolescent adjustment (Jacobson, Kristen, Crockett & Lisa, 2000).

Present study showed the significant difference in the self-esteem of the adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents. The adolescents of non-convicted parents had better self-esteem than those of adolescents of convicted parents. The reasons underlying it might be due to the different negative impacts an individual have after the conviction of their parents. They reported that for having their parents been convicted, they had to be criticized where ever they go due to the stigma that prevails in Nepalese society regarding an individuals' conviction which leads to an individual have the feelings of worthlessness. Moreover, many researchers have found parental availability directly associated with the self-esteem of their children.

Present study showed the negative correlation between adjustment and self-esteem of the mid-adolescents. The specific finding of the present study contradicts the study conducted by Friedlander, Reid, Shupak & Cribbie (2007) which indicated that increased global, academic, and social self-esteem leads to the increased academic and social adjustment and DuBois, Bull,

Sherman & Roberts (1998) indicating higher global self-esteem being associated with more favorable scores on most measures of adjustment.

The self-report questionnaire that was provided to the samples to check the attitudes towards their parents and their availability and the effects of parental conviction to the adolescents of convicted parents showed that the parental conviction is one of the most negative remarkable events in their life which they don't want to talk and let other people be aware about it. Moreover, the adolescents expressed the conviction of their parents as being one of the reasons behind losing their home resulting in difficulty in the general adjustment. Moreover, they clearly stated that the stigma that prevails in Nepalese society always lags them behind to live with pride in the society where they were born.

The problem that they need to face in the school and in the society for having their parents been imprisoned was always unbearable for them. Even some of them stated that after their imprisonment they had the great pressure for being not able to fulfill their basic needs since there was the economic crisis in their family and in some of their cases they completely lost their house as there was none to take care of them and their relatives refused to take care of them. So, it can be predicted to be the cause of the significant difference in the adjustment and self-esteem of adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents. Yet, it calls for the further researches for the conclusion to be made.

Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from the present study is; there is significant difference in the adjustment and self-esteem of adolescents of convicted and non-convicted parents. The adolescents of non-convicted parents had higher self-esteem and were well adjusted than that of convicted ones.

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