

Determining Adjustment Patterns among College Students in Manipur: The Role of Residence and Family Income

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Abstract:

The term adjustment, akin to biological adaptation, embodies the efforts made by individuals to cope with changes in their surroundings. Transitioning into college life introduces myriad novel experiences and stimuli, potentially influencing one's adjustment process. This study delves into the adjustment dynamics among college students in Manipur, with a focus on demographic factors. Employing a descriptive research design and a quantitative approach, data was gathered from 1071 college-going adolescents in Manipur using a two-stage sampling technique. Socio-demographic information was collected through interviews utilizing a self-developed semi-structured proforma, while the Adjustment Inventory for College Students (AICS-SS) was employed as the study tool. The results revealed that overall adjustment predominantly fell within the unsatisfactory category (82%), with only 16% and 2% in the average and good categories, respectively. This trend was consistent across various adjustment domains, including home, health, social, emotional, and educational aspects. Furthermore, the study found that variables such as place of residence and annual family income did not exhibit significant relationships with overall adjustment. These findings underscore the pressing need for timely interventions to address the mental well-being of college students in Manipur, given the prevailing challenges in adjustment.

Keywords: Adjustment patterns, college students, residence, family income

Introduction:

The term "adjustment" finds its roots in biology, specifically in the notion of adaptation, which highlights the efforts of organisms to acclimate to changes in their environment. Much like animals adjust their behaviours and physiologies in response to seasonal shifts, humans employ psychological mechanisms to navigate life's intricacies, including transitions in career, financial setbacks, or personal losses (Weiten, Dunn, & Hammer, 2016). Recent research underscores the pivotal role of successful adjustment in maintaining a high quality of life. Studies indicate that insufficient adjustment is closely linked with clinical conditions such as anxiety, depression, and a spectrum of behavioural and emotional challenges (Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Bisson & Sakhuja, 2006).

Recent investigations into adjustment dynamics highlight the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon. Researchers have delved into the complex interplay between individual resilience factors and external stressors, shedding light on the mechanisms that underlie effective adjustment. Additionally, advancements in neuroscience have provided insights into

the neural underpinnings of adjustment processes, revealing the neurobiological mechanisms involved in adaptive behaviours and coping strategies. Contemporary studies emphasize the dynamic nature of adjustment, viewing it as an ongoing process rather than a static outcome. Longitudinal research efforts have traced the trajectory of adjustment over time, identifying factors that contribute to resilience and well-being across various life stages. Furthermore, cross-cultural investigations have underscored the influence of cultural norms and societal expectations on patterns of adjustment, stressing the importance of considering cultural context in understanding and promoting adaptive responses to life challenges. In light of these recent findings, there is a growing recognition of the need for comprehensive interventions aimed at fostering effective adjustment and mitigating the adverse consequences of maladjustment. Evidence-based approaches, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, mindfulness-based interventions, and resilience training programs, have shown promise in enhancing individuals' adaptive capacities and promoting psychological well-being. Some recent researches emphasise the critical importance of successful adjustment in promoting mental health and overall well-being. By elucidating the underlying mechanisms and dynamic nature of adjustment processes, contemporary studies provide valuable insights for the development of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing resilience and fostering adaptive responses to life's challenges.

Literature Review:

Recent literature has expanded our understanding of the concept of adjustment by delineating two distinct frameworks: adjustment as an achievement and adjustment as a process. The former framework, as outlined by Hammond and O'Kelly (1955) and Arkoff (1968), conceptualizes adjustment as a response to specific challenges encountered at a given moment. In contrast, the latter framework, supported by contemporary research findings, posits adjustment as an ongoing and dynamic process, characterized by continuous adaptation to life's myriad changes. Recent studies have highlighted the multifaceted nature of adjustment and its significance in various life domains, particularly during transitional periods such as the transition to college. Transitioning to college represents a pivotal phase of adjustment, particularly for students navigating the shift from adolescence to adulthood. This transition introduces a myriad of stressors and novel experiences, ranging from academic pressures to social adjustments and newfound independence. Recent research by Lapsley and Edgerton (2002) and McDermott and Pettijohn (2011) have underscored the profound impact of college life on students' emotional well-being. The transition to college is marked by a series of first-time experiences, including forming new social networks, adapting to a new academic environment, and managing increased autonomy. These challenges can significantly influence students' emotional states and adjustment processes, with implications for their overall psychological well-being. Moreover, recent findings suggest that adjustment during the college transition is influenced by a multitude of factors, including individual characteristics, social support networks, and environmental stressors. Research has highlighted the importance of resilience and coping strategies in facilitating successful adjustment, as well as the role of campus resources and support services in promoting students' emotional resilience and well-being.

To sum up, the above literatures highlighted the dynamic nature of adjustment and its critical importance during transitional periods such as the transition to college. By elucidating the underlying mechanisms and factors influencing adjustment processes, recent research

provides valuable insights for developing interventions aimed at supporting students' emotional well-being and facilitating successful adjustment to the challenges of college life.

Objectives:

The objectives of the present investigation are i) to delineate the five areas of adjustment among college students; ii) to evaluate the association between place of residence and overall adjustment among college students; and iii) to investigate the relationship between annual family income and overall adjustment among college students.

Materials and Methods:

The study adopted a descriptive research design coupled with a quantitative approach. A primary sample comprising 1071 college-going adolescents from Manipur was selected using a two-stage sampling technique. Initially, Simple Random Sampling was employed to select seven colleges within the Imphal town area. Subsequently, proportional allocation was made, selecting 20% of the total student population from each chosen college. Prior to data collection, requisite permissions were obtained from college authorities, and participants were apprised of the study's objectives, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured proforma to collect socio-demographic data. Additionally, the Adjustment Inventory for College Students (AICS-SS) by Sinha and Singh was administered to gauge adjustment levels. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software version 21 employing χ^2 -test to determine the association between overall adjustment and variables such as place of residence and annual family income, with significance levels set at $P < 0.05$ and $P < 0.01$.

Analysis and Results:

As adolescents transition into college life, they are gradually immersed into the adult environment, where they encounter a sudden influx of responsibilities and expectations. This transition can pose a significant challenge, both for those new to the experience and for those with prior exposure to similar situations. At this critical juncture of transitioning into adulthood, the adjustment process can be particularly daunting. Adolescents who manage to navigate this transition relatively smoothly are able to adapt to their new roles and responsibilities as adults. Their ability to do so indicates a successful adjustment to their new environment, equipping them better to handle the challenges ahead. The present study examined a primary sample of 1071 college students. The results were categorized based on overall adjustment, as well as two predicted variables and their association with overall adjustment.

Table - 1 displays the number of study subjects or so called frequencies and percentages of good, average and unsatisfactory categories of adjustment among college students in Manipur. Out of the 1071 participants, 884 (82%) were classified under unsatisfactory adjustment, 170 (16%) fell into the average category, and only 17 (2%) were categorized as having good adjustment. A chi-square goodness of fit test revealed a highly significant difference among the three categories of adjustment ($P = 0.001$), indicating that the majority of college students in Manipur experienced unsatisfactory adjustment. This table illustrates the distribution of home adjustment categories among college students in Manipur.

The majority of 67% were classified as having unsatisfactory home adjustment, while 26% fell into the average category, and only 7% were categorized as having good home adjustment. A chi-square goodness of fit test showed a highly significant difference among the three categories of home adjustment ($P = 0.001$), indicating a prevalent trend of unsatisfactory home adjustment among college students in Manipur. In the health adjustment category, 69% of college students in Manipur were classified as having unsatisfactory adjustment, while 28% fell into the average category, and only 3% were categorized as having good adjustment. A chi-square goodness of fit test revealed a highly significant difference among the three categories of health adjustment ($P = 0.001$), indicating a predominance of unsatisfactory health adjustment among college students in Manipur.

For social adjustment, 58% of respondents were classified as having unsatisfactory adjustment, 29% as average, and 13% as good. A chi-square goodness of fit test indicated a highly significant difference among the three categories of social adjustment ($P = 0.001$), suggesting that social adjustment among college students in Manipur tended towards the unsatisfactory category. Emotional adjustment showed a similar trend, with 82% classified as unsatisfactory, 17% as average, and only 1% as good. A chi-square goodness of fit test indicated a highly significant difference among the three categories of emotional adjustment ($P = 0.001$), indicating a prevalence of unsatisfactory emotional adjustment among college students in Manipur. In the educational adjustment category, 66% were classified as unsatisfactory, 28% as average, and 6% as good. A chi-square goodness of fit test revealed a highly significant difference among the three categories of educational adjustment ($P = 0.001$), indicating a predominance of unsatisfactory educational adjustment among college students in Manipur.

The present study also examines the relationship between place of residence and overall adjustment. It shows that urban, rural, and urban-exposed adolescents had varying percentages of good, average, and unsatisfactory adjustment. However, a chi-square test revealed an insignificant relationship between place of residence and overall adjustment ($P = 0.338$) shown in Table - 2. Similarly, the Table - 3 analyses the relationship between annual family income and overall adjustment. It indicates that adolescents from different income categories had varying percentages of good, average, and unsatisfactory adjustment. However, a chi-square test revealed an insignificant relationship between annual family income and overall adjustment ($P = 0.323$).

Discussion and Conclusion:

The present study aimed to assess adjustment categories among college students in Manipur. The findings revealed that the majority of college students in Manipur experienced unsatisfactory adjustment across various domains, including home, health, social, emotional, and educational. This contradicts previous research indicating average adjustment levels (Sharma and Kermane, 2015). Additionally, the study found no significant association between place of residence or annual family income and overall adjustment, contrary to previous findings. The findings highlight a prevalent issue of unsatisfactory adjustment among college students in Manipur, indicating a need for immediate intervention to address mental health concerns. Further research is warranted to explore additional variables not covered in this study. Additionally, longitudinal studies on college adjustment are necessary.

These findings can inform psychologists, educators, and parents in supporting the well-being of college students.

Table -1: Test of adjustment in terms of categories of the study samples

Adjustment Area	Level	N	Percentage	Test value
Overall	Good	17	2	$\chi^2=1199.71$; P = 0.001
	Average	170	16	
	Unsatisfactory	884	82	
	Total	1071	100	
Home	Good	78	7	$\chi^2=596.98$; P = 0.001
	Average	277	26	
	Unsatisfactory	716	67	
	Total	1071	100	
Health	Good	31	3	$\chi^2=727.64$; P = 0.001
	Average	296	28	
	Unsatisfactory	744	69	
	Total	1071	100	
Social	Good	137	13	$\chi^2=343.22$; P = 0.001
	Average	309	29	
	Unsatisfactory	625	58	
	Total	1071	100	
Emotional	Good	10	1	$\chi^2=1166.94$; P = 0.001
	Average	187	17	
	Unsatisfactory	874	82	
	Total	1071	100	
Educational	Good	68	6	$\chi^2=587.51$; P = 0.001
	Average	296	28	
	Unsatisfactory	707	66	
	Total	1071	100	

Table - 2: Overall adjustment and place of residence of college students

Place of residence	Overall Adjustment			
	Good	Average	Unsatisfactory	Total
Urban	3 (18%)	44 (26%)	172 (19%)	219 (21%)
Rural	12 (71%)	96 (56%)	537 (61%)	645 (60%)
Urban exposed	2 (11%)	30 (18%)	175 (20%)	207 (19%)
Total	17 (100%)	170 (100%)	884 (100%)	1071 (100%)

$$\chi^2=4.54; P = 0.338$$

Table - 4: Overall adjustment and annual family income of college students

Family income	Overall Adjustment			
	Good	Average	Unsatisfactory	Total
1 lakh Below	4 (24%)	26 (15%)	125 (14%)	155 (15%)
1 lakh - 6 lakhs	13 (76%)	129 (76%)	708 (80%)	850 (79%)

Above 6 lakhs	0 (00%)	15 (09%)	51 (06%)	66 (06%)
Total	17 (100%)	170 (100%)	884 (100%)	1071 (100%)

$$\chi^2=4.67; P = 0.323$$

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