



## DEFENSE MECHANISM: AN INDICATOR OF ADJUSTMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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### **Abstract**

*Using defense mechanism is a natural process unless it is used in a proper and healthy way. When used in an ineffective way to cope with adjustment problems of the individual's life it may create serious issues. The study was quantitative and descriptive in nature. Survey method was used for the study and proportionate – stratified simple random sampling technique was used for selecting the sample. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 under graduate students of Aligarh Muslim University, giving due representation to gender and stream of study. Two inventories, namely, defense mechanism inventory and adjustment inventory were used for collecting the data. Correlation and mean difference analysis were the statistical techniques used for the analysis. The result of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between defense mechanism and adjustment among undergraduate students.*

### **Introduction**

To have a better adjustment in the society people use different ways and techniques so that they could escape or get away from various problems in their lives. These ways used by the people are generally termed as defense mechanisms. It is an unconscious process in which individual is usually unaware about the process. The techniques used by different individuals are different in various situations to manage problems like depression, anxiety etc. using different mechanisms to adjust in the life is a usual process. But it becomes problematic when used in an exaggerated way, which may lead to many problems. Using the defense mechanisms individuals can maintain themselves to adjust with harmful stimuli and thereby reduce their anxiety. Defense mechanisms should be used in a better and healthy way for proper adjustment with oneself and also with others. Otherwise it is met with severe consequences. According to psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud “defense mechanisms are psychological strategies brought into play by

the unconscious mind to manipulate, deny, or distort reality in order to defend against feelings of anxiety and unacceptable impulses and to maintain one's self-schema". Robert Plutchik's (1979) views defense mechanisms as "the reaction formation, denial, repression, regression, compensation, projection, displacement and intellectualization". "Psychological adjustment and academic achievement are negatively influenced by wrong forms of defense mechanisms" (Mahmood et.al, 2015)

Maintaining balance among various needs is an inevitable part of our life. This process of maintaining balance with various encounters of life is known as adjustment. Life; in the present world, is full of stress, strains and struggles. There is a great need to counter all these negative forces using certain guiding principles in order to strike a balance among various forces. Adjustment is a proper arrangement of one's behavior for maintaining a balance in environment. "High achievement and low achievement students differed significantly in overall adjustment and high academic achievement groups are more adjusted as compare to low academic achievement groups" (Akhtar et. al. 2016).

### **Need and Significance of the Study**

The present study aims at finding the relationship between Defense Mechanism and Adjustment among Undergraduate Students. Students face different problems in their college life related to adjustment. Students face adjustment problems in relation to language, food, lodging, communication, culture, traditions, customs and practices. In order to cope up with these issues, students use different type of defense mechanisms. Most of the students use poor and unhealthy defense mechanisms which may even effect their achievement, mental and emotional health. Therefore the researcher decided to conduct a study on relationship between defense mechanism and adjustment among undergraduate students.

As the researcher has decided to study on undergraduate students of AMU. It can be said that in AMU a large number of students from different background take admission. They face different adjustment related problems. The researcher tries to find out the relationship of defense mechanism and adjustment so that some possible remedial measures can be suggested. This will help in adjustment of UG Students of AMU and other institutions.

The possible finding of the study, suggestion and remedial measures can be applied to solve the adjustment problems related to defense mechanism of UG Students of similar types of environment in different places.

## **Statement of the Study**

“Defense Mechanism: An indicator of Adjustment among Undergraduate Students”

## **Methodology**

The study is quantitative in nature. Survey method was used to collect data

## **Sample of the Study**

The sample of study consisted 100 students (50 Girls and 50 Boys), in which 50 students from Social Science and 50 students from Science Stream. The sample was selected randomly through Simple Random Sampling Techniques from various Department of Science and Social Science stream of AMU including Women’s College

## **Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the relationship between Defense Mechanism and Adjustment among undergraduate students.
2. To identify the significant difference in the Defense Mechanism between the Social science and Science Stream among undergraduate students.
3. To identify the significant difference in the Defense Mechanism between the Boys and Girls among undergraduate students.
4. To identify the significant difference in the Defense Mechanism between the Social Science Boys and Science Boys among undergraduate students.
5. To identify the significant difference in the Defense Mechanism between the Social Science Girls and Science Girls among undergraduate students.
6. To identify the significant difference in the Adjustment between the Social Science and Science Stream among undergraduate students.
7. To identify the significant difference in the Adjustment between the Girls and Boys among undergraduate students.
8. To identify the significant difference in the Adjustment between the Social Science Girls and Science Girls among undergraduate students.

9. To identify the significant difference in the Adjustment between the Social Science Boys and Science Boys among undergraduate students.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. There is no significant relationship between Defense Mechanism and Adjustment among undergraduate students.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Defense Mechanism between Social Science and Science Stream among undergraduate students.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Defense Mechanism between Boys and Girls among undergraduate students.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean score of Defense Mechanism of Social Science Boys and Science Boys among undergraduate students.
5. There is no significant difference in the mean score of Defense Mechanism of Social Science Girls and Science Girls among undergraduate students.
6. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Adjustment between the Social Science and Science Stream among undergraduate students.
7. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Adjustment between the Girls and Boys among undergraduate students.
8. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Adjustment between the Social Science Girls and Science Girls among undergraduate students.
9. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Adjustment between the Social Science Boys and Science Boys among undergraduate students.

### **Tools Used**

In this study two inventories were used, those were:

1. Defense Mechanism Inventory
2. Adjustment Inventory

### Statistical Techniques

1. Mean
2. Standard Deviation
3. Correlation (Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation)
4. t-Test

### Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The data was analyzed to see the relationship between Defense Mechanism and Adjustment.

#### Objective No. 1

To identify the relationship between Defense Mechanism and Adjustment among undergraduate students.

**Table-1**

*Correlation Matrix of different variables of total sample*

Variables	Coefficient of correlation 'r'	Level of significance
Defence Mechanism and Adjustment	0.180	0.01**

**\*\*Correlation significant at 0.01**

It shows that there is positive correlation between Defence Mechanism and Adjustment. It further shows that those having high Defence Mechanism also having high Adjustment ability and those having low Defence Mechanism also having low Adjustment ability.

#### Objective No.2

To identify the significant difference in the Defense Mechanism between the Social science and Science Stream among undergraduate students.

**Table-2**

*Result of test of significance difference between Mean scores of Defense Mechanism of Social Science and Science Stream*

Group Sample	Number	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	L.O.S.	H <sub>0</sub> (A/R)
Social science Stream	50	46.7200	7.29283	0.936	1.96	0.05	A
Science Stream	50	48.1800	8.27263		2.58	0.01	A

It is revealed from the table-2 that the calculated value of 't' (.936) is less than the tabulated value of 't' (1.96 & 2.58) at both the level of significant (0.05 & 0.01) respectively. So the Null Hypothesis is accepted and shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of Defense Mechanism of SOCIAL SCIENCE and SCIENCE STREAM among undergraduate students. It further shows that SCIENCE Students show more Defense Mechanism than the SOCIAL SCIENCE students because the mean score of SCIENCE Students (48.18) is higher than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Students (46.72).

### Objective No.3

To identify the significant difference in the Defense Mechanism between the Boys and Girls among undergraduate students.

**Table-3**

*Result of test of significance difference between Mean scores of Defense Mechanism of Boys and Girls*

Group Sample	Number	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	L.O.S.	H <sub>0</sub> (A/R)
Boys	50	48.1000	7.65919	0.833	1.96	0.05	A
Girls	50	46.8000	7.94882		2.58	0.01	A

It is revealed from the table-3 that the calculated value of 't' (.833) is less than the tabulated value of 't' (1.96 & 2.58) at both the level of significance (0.05 & 0.01) respectively. So the null hypothesis is accepted and it shows that there is no significant difference between the Defense Mechanism of Boys and Girls among undergraduate students. It further shows that Boys show more Defense Mechanism than Girls because the mean score of Boys (48.10) is higher than the mean score of Girls (46.80).

### Objective No.4

To identify the significant difference in the Defense Mechanism between the Social Science Boys and Science Boys among undergraduate students.

#### Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean score of Defense Mechanism of Social Science Boys and Science Boys among undergraduate students.

**Table-4**

**Result of test of significance difference between Mean scores of Defense Mechanism of SOCIAL SCIENCE Boys and SCIENCE Boys**

Group Sample	Number	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	L.O.S.	H <sub>0</sub> (A/R)
Social Science Boys	25	47.4400	6.08331	0.605	1.96	0.05	A
Science Boys	25	48.7600	9.04747		2.58	0.01	A

It is revealed from the table-4 that the calculated value of 't' (.605) is higher than the tabulated value of 't' (1.96 & 2.58) at both the level of significance (0.05 & 0.01) respectively. So the null hypothesis is accepted and it shows that there is no significant difference between the Defense Mechanism of SOCIAL SCIENCE Boys and SCIENCE Boys among undergraduate students. It further shows that SCIENCE Boys show more DEFENSE MECHANISM than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Boys because the mean score of SCIENCE Boys Students (48.76) is higher than the mean score of SOCIAL SCIENCE Boys Students (47.44).

#### **Objective No.5**

To identify the significant difference in the Defense Mechanism between the Social Science Girls and Science Girls among undergraduate students.

**Table-5**

**Result of test of significance difference between Mean scores of Defense Mechanism of Social Science Girls and Science Girls**

Group Sample	Number	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	L.O.S.	H <sub>0</sub> (A/R)
Social Science Girls	25	46.0000	8.39643	0.708	1.96	0.05	A
Science Girls	25	47.6000	7.56086		2.58	0.01	A

It is revealed from the table-5 that the calculated value of 't' (.708) is less than the tabulated value of 't' (1.96 & 2.58) at both the level of significance (0.05 & 0.01) respectively. So the Null Hypothesis is accepted and it shows that there is no significant difference in the Defense Mechanism of SOCIAL SCIENCE Girls and SCIENCE Girls among undergraduate students. It further shows that the SCIENCE Girls show more Defense Mechanism than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Girls because the mean score of SCIENCE Girls (47.60) is higher than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Girls (46.00).

#### **Objective No.6**

To identify the significant difference in the Adjustment between the Social Science and Science Stream among undergraduate students.

**Table-6**

***Result of test of significance difference between Mean scores of Adjustment of SOCIAL SCIENCE and SCIENCE STREAM***

Group Sample	Number	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	L.O.S.	H <sub>0</sub> (A/R)
Social Science Stream	50	18.3400	4.89319	0.022	1.96	0.05	A
Science Stream	50	18.3600	4.36012		2.58	0.01	A

It is revealed from the table-6 that the calculated value of 't' (.022) is less than the tabulated value of 't' (1.96 & 2.58) at both the level of significant (0.05 & 0.01) respectively. So the Null Hypothesis is accepted and shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the Adjustment between the Social Science and Science Stream among undergraduate students. It further shows that SCIENCE students show more Adjustment than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Students because the mean score of SCIENCE Students (18.36) is higher than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Students (18.34).

#### **Objective No.7**

To identify the significant difference in the Adjustment between the Girls and Boys among undergraduate students.



**Table-7**

***Result of test of significance difference between Mean scores of Adjustment of Girls and Boys***

Group Sample	Number	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	L.O.S.	H <sub>0</sub> (A/R)
Girls	50	18.3400	4.89319	0.022	1.96	0.05	A
Boys	50	18.3600	4.36012		2.58	0.01	A

It is revealed from the table-7 that the calculated value of 't' (.022) is less than the tabulated value of 't' (1.96 & 2.58) at both the level of significant (0.05 & 0.01) respectively. So the Null Hypothesis is accepted and shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of Adjustment of Girls and Boys students. It further shows that Boys students show more Adjustment than the Girls students because the mean score of Boys students (18.36) is higher than the Girls students (18.34)

### **Objective No.8**

To identify the significant difference in the Adjustment between the Social Science Girls and Science Girls among undergraduate students.

**Table-8**

***Result of test of significance difference between Mean scores of Adjustment of SOCIAL SCIENCE Girls and SCIENCE Girls***

Group Sample	Number	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	L.O.S.	H <sub>0</sub> (A/R)
Social Science Girls	25	17.8800	4.64866	0.775	1.96	0.05	A
Science Girls	25	18.8400	4.08942		2.58	0.01	A

It is revealed from the table-8 that the calculated value of 't' (.775) is less than the tabulated value of 't' (1.96 & 2.58) at both the level of significant (0.05 & 0.01) respectively. So the Null Hypothesis is accepted and shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the Adjustment between the Social Science Girls and Science Girls among undergraduate students. It further shows that SCIENCE Girls students show more Adjustment than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Girls students because the

mean score of SCIENCE Girls students (18.84) is higher than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Girls students (19.98).

### Objective No.9

To identify the significant difference in the Adjustment between the Social Science Boys and Science Boys among undergraduate students.

**Table-9**

***Result of test of significance difference between Mean scores of Adjustment of SOCIAL SCIENCE Boys and SCIENCE Boys***

Group Sample	Number	Mean	S.D.	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	L.O.S.	H <sub>0</sub> (A/R)
Social Science Boys	25	17.8800	4.52143	0.661	1.96	0.05	A
Science Boys	25	18.8000	5.29150		2.58	0.01	A

It is revealed from the table-9 that the calculated value of 't' (.661) is less than the tabulated value of 't' (1.96 & 2.58) at both the level of significant (0.05 & 0.01) respectively. So the Null Hypothesis is accepted and shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the Adjustment between the Social Science Boys and Science Boys among undergraduate students. It further shows that SCIENCE Boys students show more Adjustment than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Boys students because the mean score of SCIENCE Boys students (18.80) is higher than the SOCIAL SCIENCE Boys students (17.88).

### Educational Implications of the Study

The following are the educational implications of the study:

1. As there has been found difference in the educational adjustment of the boys and girls, it is suggested that the girls should be provided with better home environment and educational facilities for their better achievement.
2. Students are facing educational adjustment problems. It means that they are not able to utilize their capabilities, capacities and potentialities in a proper way. Specially female students are facing more educational problems as compared to male students. Therefore

schools should organize competitive programmes for students so that they can explore their talent and capabilities in a proper way.

3. Special courses should be introduced in the school so that the students can become self-reliant, self-confident and well adjusted in the society, school as well as home also.
4. As there has been found difference in emotional adjustment of co-educational and single-sex school students. To eradicate this problem there should be proper provision of counseling centre in the schools. It may be able to help students to adjust him/her.
5. Teachers should make use of various methods, teaching tactics and techniques to make students to better adjustment in every aspect.
6. Teacher should respect the student's efforts and let them how they adjust and their ability to do well. The teacher let them to have some freedom and responsibility to deal with the consequences of their thinking.
7. It becomes the foremost duty of teachers to make every effort, so that our youth in the school can become mature, thereby will adjust. They should create conducive climate in the school to train their emotions in the right direction.
8. Teacher should provide proper care and attention to the students to improve their adjustment problems.
9. It becomes the core duty of teacher in the classroom to help the students achieving the level of better adjustment. So that their proper adjustment in the school and society can take place.

### **Conclusion**

Students are using different types of defense mechanisms to adjust in their college and also at hostels. Most of them are using poor means of adjustment mechanisms. Students of both science and social science streams are using almost same types of mechanisms to defend themselves for their adjustment problems. On an analysis of adjustment problems of boys and girls, the researchers couldn't find much difference in the type of mechanisms used by them.

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