

HOSTILITY OF ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to find out the influence of demographic variables and family environment on hostility of adolescents. The study was carried out among college students of the age group of 17-20. Family Environment Scale and Multiphasic Hostility Inventory were administered to the participants. The collected data were statistically analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and ANOVA. The analysis revealed that there is significant positive correlation among the dimensions of hostility. The results also revealed that there exists significant negative correlation between family environment and hostility. The ANOVA results of demographic variable revealed that birth order, education level and locality have significant influence on the components of hostility. But the religion was found to have significant influence on hostility component acting out and guilt. Family environment and selected demographic were found to be significantly influencing the hostility of adolescents. The study concluded that demographic variables with family environment play a crucial role in the hostility of adolescents.

Key words: Adolescents, Demographics, Family environment, Hostility.

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) defined adolescent as a person between 10 and 19 years of Age (WHO, 1998). Adolescent period is considered as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Adolescent stage is a dynamic developmental period. Such people have to face many challenges such as maintaining a sense of identity and independence. To develop his or her full potential an adolescent in these years needs a stimulating environment. Strong guidance, support and care should be provided within the family because it influences the individuals. Family environment plays a central role in the development outcome of children. Family environment has a crucial role in adolescent well-being and mental health. Adolescent self reported levels of well-being are related to the perceptions of family environment (Kashlow, Gray-Deering & Racusin, 1994). Moss (1989) defines family environment as “the global images that people form about their family based on the experiences with family members”. High levels of expressiveness, high cohesion and low level of conflict characterize a positive family environment. Exposure to adverse childhood family environments increases the risk of negative psychological and physical health outcomes over the life span (Weich, Patterson, Shaw, & Stewart-Brown, 2009).

The teenage years are characterized by an increase in emotional state. Hostility is basic to the human condition as joy or grief; many of us pretend we never experience it. According to Friedmann (1992), Barefoot (1992), Grimm and Yarnold (1985), Smith, Sander and Alexander (1990), Smith and Frohm (1985), the concept hostility includes components such as cynicism, anger, mistrust and aggression. Hostility is a mood state (Buss & Durkee, 1961) that may or may not be reflected in actions directed against the self or others. Barefoot, Dodge, Peterson, Dalhstrom, and William (1989) defined hostility on the basis of gender that is verbal or non-verbal hostility. Verbal hostility includes components such as anger, annoyance, resentment, disgust and contempt and is expressed through verbal emission of emotions and it is more in women (Barefoot, 1992). Non-verbal hostility is seen more as a characteristic of men and expression of non-verbal hostility includes banging on a chair or table or showing strong facial expression etc. Hostility manifests itself in childhood and has been shown to be stable in children and adolescents (Woodall & Matthews, 1993).

Although research findings revealed that family environment and hostility are related such studies have not taken into consideration the role of demographic variables on these

variables. Investigating the relation of these variables among adolescents is necessary because it may fulfil the existing gap in the area.

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between Family environment and Hostility of Adolescents.
2. To find out whether Demographic variables and Family environment have any significant influence on Hostility.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated for the study were:

- 1 Significant correlation exists between Family environment and Hostility.
- 2 Significant main and interaction effects exist for the variables family environment and birth order on hostility.
- 3 Significant main and interaction effects exist for the variables family environment and religion on hostility.
- 4 Significant main and interaction effects exist for the variables family environment and Education on hostility.

METHOD

Participants

The participants of this study comprised of 400 adolescents (Males = 262, Females = 138) with an age range of 17-20 and they were selected through random sampling from different Colleges of Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of Kerala. The characteristics of the participants are present in table 1

Table 1

Characteristics of the participants

Variables		Frequency	N	Percentage
Sex	Males	138	400	34.5
	Females	262		65.5
Age	17 years	152	400	38.0
	18 years	174		43.5
	19 years	60		15.0

	20 years	14		3.5
Education	1 st year Degree	363	400	90.7
	2 nd year Degree	37		9.3
Religion	Hindu	248	400	62.0
	Muslim	114		28.5
	Christian	38		9.5
Locality	Village	298	400	74.5
	Town	102		25.5

The participants of this study consist of 262 (65.5%) females and 138 (34.5%) males. While considering age group of the participants the frequency and percentage show that majority of the participants belong to the age group of 18. The total participants were classified on the basis of education level that is first year degree (90.7%) and second year degree (9.3%). Regarding the religious belief 248 (62.0%) belongs to Hindu religion, 114 (28.5%) Muslim and 38 (9.5%) Christian. The table shows that 74.5% (298) of the participants belong to village and 25.5% (102) hailed from town, among them 86.5% (346) belongs to nuclear family and 13.5% (54) belongs to joint family.

Instruments

Following instruments were employed to assess the different variables included in the study

1. **Family Environment Scale** (Divya & Manikandan, 2010): This scale consists of 59 items with the response category of 'yes' or 'no' form. The numerical weightage given to the responses were '1' for correct answer and '0' for incorrect answer. The sum of the scores of the items in the scale constitutes total family environment score of the participant. The reliability of the instrument was established by finding out the Cronbach alpha and it was found to be .80. The face validity of the scale has been assured by many experts.
2. **Multiphasic Hostility Inventory**: This inventory developed by Jayan and Baby Shari (2005) consists of 44 items. Multiphasic Hostility Inventory measures hostility on the basis of two dimensions: experience and expression of hostility. Experience of hostility is a subjective process including angry feelings or cynical thoughts. Expression of

hostility is amore observable component which includes acts of verbal and physical aggression. The components of hostility that come under experience are Self-criticism, Guilt and Cynicism. Expression of hostility includes Acting out, Criticism of others and Projection hostility. The reliability of the scale was determined by odd even reliability. The product moment correlation between the tests was found to be .75. The correlation coefficient obtained was .64. The face validity of the scale has been assured by many experts in the field. Items measuring particular dimension positively and responded as 'always true', 'usually true', 'sometimes true', 'seldom true', and 'never true', were given the scores of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively. And the scoring was in the reverse order for negative items.

Procedure

The investigators visited the head of the institution and got permission to administer the instruments. A self introduction and rapport with students was established. The investigators then explained the purpose and relevance of the study and they were assured that the information provided would be strictly confidential and used only for research purpose. The instruments were distributed among the participants and collected back after completion. Then the collected responses were scored according to the scoring scheme and then treated statistically.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to find out whether family environment and certain demographic variables have any significant influence on hostility of adolescents. The selected demographic variables are religion, education, locality, family type and birth order. To know how family environment and hostility and its components are related to each other Pearson product moment correlation was calculated and results are presented in table 2.

Table 2

Correlation of Hostility and Family environment (n=400)

Variables	Self-criticism	Guilt	Cynicism	Criticism of others	Acting out	Projection hostility	Family environment
Self criticism	-						
Guilt	.14**	-					
Cynicism	.37**	.21**	-				
Criticism of others	.16**	.12*	.25**	-			
Acting out	.31**	.15**	.51**	.37**	-		
Projection Hostility	.28**	.17**	.30**	.16**	.33**	-	
Family environment	-.24**	-.19**	-.23**	-.04	-.18**	-.24**	-

*p< .05 **p< .01

All the components of hostility were found to be significantly correlated with each other. The variable family environment and hostility was found to be negatively correlated ($r = -.24, p < .01$). Many research studies reported that non-supportive, unaccepting and conflictual family environment contributes to the development of hostility (Matthews, Woodall, Kenyon & Jacob, 1996; Smith & Gongile, 1991). Evidences from genetic studies provide the roots of hostility lie in difference in family environment. (Ross, 1988; Smith, Mc- Gongile, Turner & Slattery, 1991).

The order in which a person is born into a family plays a substantial role in the development of personality, character, and intelligence (Stewart, Stewart & Campbell, 2001). Birth order is the position in which a child is born within the framework of specific family. It influences how one copes with people and society on an individual or a group basis. In this study, to know the influence of birth order and family environment on hostility, two-way ANOVA was computed. Since the family environment was measured through an interval scale; for running ANOVA, it was classified into two groups – Healthy and Unhealthy family environment based on the median (Median = 43) as the cut off point. Participants who scored below 43 were considered as unhealthy and above 44 were considered as a subject belonging to healthy family environment. Out of total sample, 189 of the participants belong to unhealthy and 211 healthy family environment. In the case of birth order, there were three categories as first born, second born and later born. The result of two-way ANOVA is presented as table 3.

Table 3

Summary of ANOVA of Hostility by Family Environment and Birth Order (2 x 3)

Variables	Residual		Main effects						Interaction Effect		
			Family Environment			Birth Order					
	Sum of squares	Mean square	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sum of squares	Mean square	F
Self criticism	3215.22	8.16	67.52	67.52	8.27**	4.43	2.21	0.27	29.01	14.50	1.77
Guilt	3942.04	10.01	72.15	72.15	7.21**	6.80	3.40	0.34	35.60	17.80	1.78
Cynicism	9411.74	23.89	284.24	284.24	11.90*	0.07	0.04	0.01	5.55	2.77	0.12
Criticism of others	8271.63	20.99	0.61	0.61	0.03	78.06	39.03	1.86	16.15	8.07	0.39
Acting out	10080.68	25.59	86.68	86.68	3.39	88.98	44.49	1.74	223.11	111.56	4.36*
Projection hostility	5812.76	14.75	123.96	123.96	8.40**	14.07	7.04	0.48	8.38	4.19	0.28

*p< .05 **p< .01

ANOVA results revealed that the main effect of family environment on hostility and its components was found to be significant on self-criticism ($F=8.27$, $p< .01$), guilt ($F= 7.21$, $p< .01$), cynicism ($F=11.90$, $p< .01$) and projection hostility ($F=8.40$, $p< .01$). This shows that family environment such as parental behaviour including rejection, low affection, conflict and strict control are associated with hostility in children and young adults (Matthews, Woodall, Kenyon & Jacob, 1996), and create chronic constipation among adolescents (Lisoba, Felizola, Nogueira, Soraia, Neto & Demoris, 2008). Birth order was found to be of no effect on components of hostility. The interaction between birth order and family environment was found to be significant on the variable acting out ($F=4.36$, $p< .01$).

In addition to family environment religion has been found to be a positive impact on adolescent functioning (Baumrind, 1971; Schaefer, 1965) by decreasing risk behaviours such as

alcohol and substance abuse (Wills, Yaeger & Sandy, 2003) crime and delinquent behaviour (Johnson, Jang, Larson & Li, 2000). This study attempted to understand the role of family environment and religion on hostility. There were two levels for the variable family environment (Healthy and Unhealthy) and three levels for the variable religion (Hindu, Christian, and Muslim). Out of the total sample, 248 of the participants belong to Hindu, 114 Christian and remaining 38 of the participants belong to Muslim religion. Results of two-way ANOVA is presented in table 4

Table 4

Summary of ANOVA of Hostility by Family Environment and Religion (2 x 3)

Variables	Residual		Main effects						Interaction Effect		
			Family Environment			Religion					
	Sum of squares	Mean square	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sum of squares	Mean square	F
Self criticism	3228.60	8.19	29.66	29.66	3.62	18.86	9.43	1.15	0.55	0.28	0.03
Guilt	3861.29	9.80	4.28	4.28	0.44	83.58	41.79	4.36*	68.88	34.44	3.51*
Cynicism	9403.31	23.87	115.08	115.08	4.82*	13.62	6.81	0.29	4.88	2.44	0.10
Criticism of others	8330.24	21.14	5.53	5.53	0.26	4.46	2.23	0.11	28.53	14.27	0.68
Acting out	10380.03	26.35	113.67	113.67	4.31*	1.56	0.58	0.02	11.17	5.58	0.21
Projection hostility	5729.68	14.54	21.54	21.54	1.48	28.52	14.26	0.98	43.78	21.89	1.51

*p< .05 **p< .01

From table 4, it can be seen that the main effect of family environment on hostility dimension was found to be significant on the variables cynicism (F= 4.82, p< .05) and acting out (F = 4.31, p< .05). The two-way interaction between family environment and religion on guilt

($F = 3.51, p < .05$) is found to be significant. A healthy personality of adolescents can be developed only by the kind of environment he or she has in the family from the beginning. Family plays a major role in inculcating moral and religious values. Adolescents reared in such family environment do not show hostile behaviour.

Education plays a crucial role in the development of the adolescents. Education of the participants and family environment may independently or jointly influence the hostility of the individuals. To know how family environment and education influence the hostility of adolescents two-way ANOVA was carried out. Out of 400 participants 248 belong to first year degree and 114 are doing second year graduation. Among first year degree, 123 students belong to unhealthy family environment and 125 come from healthy family environment. In the same manner, among second year students 56 were from unhealthy and 58 from healthy family environment. The result of two-way ANOVA is presented in table 5.

Table 5

Summary of ANOVA of Hostility by Family Environment and Education (2 x 2)

Variables	Residual		Main effects						Interaction Effect		
			Family Environment			Education					
	Sum of squares	Mean square	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sum of squares	Mean square	F
Self criticism	3233.25	8.17	62.94	62.94	7.71**	0.21	0.21	0.03	14.37	14.37	1.76
Guilt	3984.94	10.06	44.18	44.18	4.39*	0.88	0.88	0.09	0.05	0.05	0.01
Cynicism	9395.14	23.73	193.33	193.33	8.15**	5.52	5.52	0.23	20.28	20.28	0.86
Criticism of others	8356.55	21.10	0.15	0.15	0.01	6.69	6.69	0.32	0.35	0.35	0.02
Acting out	10327.38	26.08	3.44	3.44	0.13	2.18	2.18	0.08	66.19	66.19	2.54
Projection hostility	5668.52	14.31	13.65	13.65	0.95	11.69	11.69	0.82	167.60	167.60	11.71**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

The result of the analysis of variance of hostility by family environment and education revealed that the main effect of family environment was found to be significant among the variables self criticism ($F = 7.71, p < .01$), cynicism ($F = 4.39, p < .05$) and guilt ($F = 8.15, p < .01$). Education has no influence on hostility of the individuals. Hostility is independent of education status. But education and family environment significantly interact on the variable projection hostility ($F = 11.71, p < .01$).

Conclusion

The present study is an attempt to examine the influence of family environment and selected demographic variables such as birth order, religion and education on hostility of adolescents. The participants of this study consist of undergraduate student of the age group of 17-20 selected from different colleges of Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of Kerala. The statistic used for the study was correlation and ANOVA. The results revealed that there is an intercorrelation among the dimensions of hostility. Each of these variables when correlated with family environment revealed an inverse relationship. From this result it can be inferred that family environment in which an individual is reared expresses hostility later in his/her life. To know the influence of birth order and family environment, two-way ANOVA was computed and the result revealed that birth order has no significant influence on hostility, but there exist significant interaction on the variable acting out. While considering the demographic variable religion, revealed a significant result on cynicism and guilt and an interaction effect on the variable guilt; education has no major effect on hostility but there is a significant interaction between family environment and education on projection hostility. This study may provide additional information regarding the relationship of family environment and demographic variables such as birth order, religion and educational level of individuals on their hostile behaviour.

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