

# Emotional Maturity and Adjustment of Females in Romantic Relationship: A Comparative Study

Sruthikeerthy R.<sup>1</sup>, Ria Mary Jojo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MSc Health Psychology Student, University of Hyderabad, Telangana

<sup>2</sup>Mphil Clinical Psychology Student, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kerala

**Abstract** - The study was aimed to find whether romantic relationships influence the emotional maturity and adjustment of females. **Method:** The study was conducted on 60 females of age group 18-22, where 30 females were involved in a romantic relationship and the other 30 females were never involved in a romantic relationship. The tools used for the study were Emotional maturity scale by Singh and Bhargava and Adjustment Inventory for College Students by A.K.P. Singh and R.P. Sinha.

**Results:** Females who are in a romantic relationship have higher social adjustment and personality integration, although overall emotional maturity did not significantly vary between groups. There were no significant differences on adjustment among the two groups. On correlational analysis, a positive correlation between emotional maturity and adjustment was observed.

**Conclusion:** The study suggests that romantic relationships may have a positive influence on ones adjustment and thereby, emotional maturity. However, further researches addressing the limitations are required for more conclusive findings.

**Index Terms** - Romantic relationships, young adults, females, emotional maturity, adjustment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The period of adolescence and young adulthood is the time where individuals experience various developments in physical, mental, and social aspects. During this period, a person experiences many emotional changes such as changes in emotional intelligence, emotional maturity, adjustment etc. The young adulthood period is also a time of increased interest and involvement in romantic relationships as a person experiences more freedom than a child and adolescent. Thus, romantic relationships can also have an influence on many emotional developments seen in young adults.

Romantic relationships, unlike others such as friendships, are characterized by a particular intensity, specific expressions of affection, and initiation of passion in a relationship. Romantic relationships have been implicated both in maladaptive behaviors as well as in psychological well-being of individuals (Donnellan, Larsen-Rife & Conger, 2005; Vezina & Hebert, 2007). Thus, it is cited as crucial for development. There are several studies which suggest various findings on romantic relationships. The study conducted by Collins, Welsh and Furman (2009) on adolescents stated that adolescent romantic relationships are significant for individual adjustment and development. The study conducted by Acevedo and Aron (2009) on young couples found that in long-term and short-term relationships, romantic love without obsession was strongly associated with relationship satisfaction, but romantic love with obsession was negatively associated with it in long-term and positively in short-term relationships. In the study conducted by Cui and Fincham (2010) on young adults, parents' marital conflict and parental divorce was associated with young adults' low level of relationship quality through a negative attitude toward marriage, conflict behavior with their partner and lack of commitment to their own current relationships.

Regarding personal development, adjustment and emotional maturity are two important aspects of mental health (Mahanta & Kannan, 2015). As studies suggest that romantic relationships have been implicated in psychological well-being, romantic relationships can also have an influence on adjustment and emotional maturity (Gomez-Lopez, Viejo and Ortega-Ruiz, 2019; Meier & Allen, 2009).

Emotional Maturity of any level reflects emotional developments occurring in an individual. According to Walter D. Smithson (1974) emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously

striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-psychically and intra- personally. Emotional maturity is considered as one of the major determinants in shaping an individual's personality, attitudes and behaviour and thus, it helps in relationship building and to enhance the self-worth of an individual and emotional stability is considered as one of the major component in mental health. The study conducted by Joy and Mathew (2018) on adolescents found that emotional maturity contributes towards the general well-being of adolescents (Joy & Mathew, 2018).

Adjustment is an important process for every individual to cope well with their environment. Adjustment can be defined as a continuous process in which a person varies his behavior to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself and his environment. Alternatively, it can be conceptualized as a state of equilibrium between the individual and his environment (Nehra, 2014). It helps a person to maintain a balance between different needs and the situations that helps in the satisfaction of these needs, thus promoting happiness of an individual. Several studies state that entering to college can be a stressful experience for many students as they have to adjust with their own changes in personality and the changing social environment (Panth, Chaurasia and Gupta, 2015; Pritchard, Wilson, & Yamnitz, 2007). The study conducted by Tyagi and Pandey (2015) on adolescents stated that adjustment plays an important role in wellbeing of adolescents and vice versa. Thus, it is very important for a person to be well adjusted in his life.

Considering the psychological developments of young adults, this is an important area of study as these are the years where drastic changes are taking place in the personality of an individual; especially for females as more changes are taking place among them. The study conducted by Panth, Chaurasia and Gupta (2015) on undergraduate students revealed that girls have higher emotional maturity and adjustment than boys. In the study conducted by Dangwal, Lata, Srivastava and Shipra (2016) on internet users, it was found that female internet users are more emotionally stable than the male internet users. When we try to understand romantic relationships, studies indicate that there are gender differences in most of the aspects. Empirical studies found that regarding the quality of relationship, females are more relationship-focused than males

(Meier & Allen, 2009). Therefore, it would be interesting to examine the influence of relationship status on emotional maturity and adjustment of females. As adjustment and emotional maturity are found to be influencing the wellbeing of a person, understanding the emotional maturity and adjustment of females who are involved or not involved in relationships may also help us understand further about their personality traits, self-confidence, interpersonal skills and so on. The study would also help us identify possible emotional or adjustment difficulties that females may face during their early adulthood phase with respect to relationship statuses. Objectives of the present study are to compare emotional maturity and adjustment level among females who are in a romantic relationship and those who haven't been in a romantic relationship and to study relationship between emotional maturity and adjustment.

## II. METHOD

### A. Sample

The study was conducted in 60 females of age group 18-22 attending various colleges in Thrissur district of Kerala. The sample was identified using convenient sampling method of non-probability sampling where 30 females selected were involved in a romantic relationship (G- I) and 30 females selected were never involved in a romantic relationship (G-II).

### B. Tools

Emotional Maturity scale by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava (1990) is a self-reporting five-point scale. It has a total of 48 items under five categories: (a) Emotional instability (EI), (b) Emotional regression (ER), (c) Social maladjustment (SM), (d) Personal disintegration (PD) and (e) Lack of independence (LI). All the statements are negatively worded, therefore the higher the score on the scale, greater the degree of emotional immaturity and vice-versa.

The Adjustment Inventory for College Students (AICS) by A.K.P. Sinha and R.P. Singh has been designed for use with Hindi knowing college students of India. The test seeks to segregate normal from poorly adjusted college students of all grades in respect of five areas of adjustment (A-Home, B-Health, C-Social, D-Emotional and E-Educational). The inventory has been prepared in Hindi as well in

English and it has 102 items. A higher score (Total ADJ) indicates poor adjustment of an individual.

### C. Procedure

A descriptive research design was employed to study emotional maturity and adjustment level between females who are in a romantic relationship and who have not been in a romantic relationship. For data collection, a sample of 60 female college students was selected through convenient sampling method of non-probability sampling wherein 30 students each were allotted to both groups. Data was collected on the two variables under study after collecting informed consent and proper debriefing.

### D. Statistical Analysis

The data obtained from the groups were compared and analysed using t-test. The relationship between the variables Emotional maturity and Adjustment was studied using Pearson's correlation method.

## III. RESULTS

### A. Figures and Tables

Table I shows mean, standard deviation (SD) and p-value (P) of emotional maturity among females who are in a romantic relationship and females who have not been in a romantic relationship. According to the results, females who are in a romantic relationship (M=109.57, SD=15.39) are observed to have high emotional maturity (as they scored low on the scale) than females who haven't been in a romantic relationship (M=115.40, SD=20.78), although there is no significant difference in the Emotional maturity between the two groups except the dimensions social maladjustment ( $t=2.49$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and personality disintegration ( $t=2.51$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Table I: Mean, SD and p-value of Emotional maturity among females who are in a romantic relationship and females who have not been in a romantic relationship.

	G-I Mean	G-II Mean	G-I SD	G-II SD	P
EI	29.73	27.46	6.55	8.60	0.25
ER	23.50	23.66	5.72	6.83	0.91
SM	18.40	21.60	5.46	4.41	0.01*
PD	18.37	21.93	6.02	4.95	0.01*
LI	19.57	20.17	3.67	5.25	0.61
Total EM	109.57	115.40	15.39	20.78	0.22

\* $p<0.05$

Table II: Mean, SD and p-value of adjustment level among females who are in a relationship and females who have not been in a relationship.

Variable	G-I Mean	G-I SD	G-II Mean	G-II SD	P
A	7.13	2.80	6.16	2.76	0.183
B	6.86	2.52	6.36	2.77	0.47
C	8.3	1.86	8.53	2.21	0.66
D	17.06	3.08	17.2	3.33	0.87
E	11.8	3.93	11.46	3.81	0.73
Total ADJ	51.16	8.35	49.73	10.09	0.55

\* $p<0.05$

Table II shows mean, standard deviation, t-value, and p-value of Adjustment level among females who are in a romantic relationship and females who have not been in a romantic relationship. According to the results, females who have not been in a romantic relationship (M=49.73, SD=10.09) are observed to have high adjustment (as they scored low on the scale) than females who are in a romantic relationship (M=51.16, SD=8.35), although there is no significant difference in the Adjustment between the two groups. Table III: Pearson correlation between emotional maturity and adjustment.

	EI	ER	SM	PD	LI	Total EM
A	0.25	0.48**	0.12	0.12	0.02	0.24
B	0.05	0.08	0.00	0.16	0.13	0.11
C	0.10	0.11	0.01	0.14	0.06	0.10
D	0.22	0.15	0.25	0.20	0.15	0.32*
E	0.29*	0.17	0.12	0.09	0.05	0.26*
Total ADJ	0.31*	0.32*	0.18	0.14	0.09	0.35**

\* $p<0.05$ ; \*\* $p<0.01$

Table III shows Pearson correlation between emotional maturity and adjustment. The result shows a positive correlation between Emotional maturity and adjustment and various dimensions of the two variables.

## IV. DISCUSSION

The objectives of the present study were to compare emotional maturity and adjustment level among females who are in a romantic relationship and those who have not been in a romantic relationship and to study relationship between emotional maturity and adjustment. The hypotheses of the study state that there will be a significant difference in emotional maturity and adjustment level between females who are in a romantic relationship and who have not been

in a relationship and there will be a significant relationship between emotional maturity and adjustment. Results indicate that there are no significant differences among females who are in a romantic relationship and who have not been in a romantic relationship in terms of Emotional maturity and Adjustment, except the dimensions social maladjustment and Personality disintegration of Emotional maturity and a significant relationship between emotional maturity and adjustment. Thus, the hypothesis is partially accepted. The results suggest that the females who are in a romantic relationship have higher social adjustment and personality integration. This can happen as the romantic relationship gives them an opportunity to grow personally and various aspects of their personality are working in a harmonious manner, thus providing them enough skills to adjust to their social environments. Although the adjustment level of the females not involved in a romantic relationship is high, according to the standard deviation this may be due to individual differences.

Results indicate a positive correlation between Emotional regression and home adjustment. Thus, an increase in home adjustment increases the emotional progression of an individual and poor home adjustment suggests emotional regression. Result shows a positive correlation between Emotional instability and Education adjustment. Thus, a poor educational adjustment will lead to a decrease in emotional stability of an individual. Result shows a positive correlation between Total Adjustment, Emotional instability, and Emotional regression. Thus, a poor adjustment suggests low emotional stability and emotional progression.

Result shows a positive correlation between emotional adjustment, educational adjustment, and total emotional maturity. Thus, a poor emotional and educational adjustment suggests low emotional maturity of an individual. Results also indicate a positive correlation between Total Emotional maturity and Total Adjustment. Thus, it states that an increase in emotional maturity leads to an increase in adjustment and vice versa.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The results suggest that the females who are in a romantic relationship have higher social adjustment

and personality integration. The results also state that an increase in emotional maturity leads to an increase in adjustment and vice versa.

#### VI. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Through this study we learned that romantic relationships could have a positive influence on the emotional maturity of females. This study also adds to the findings that romantic relationships can also contribute towards the positive psychological growth of young adults.

There are some limitations in the current study. The sample size of the study was small, and the study was conducted only on females. The study can be expanded by including a larger sample, covering a wider area, and considering other related variables.

#### REFERENCE

- [1] Acevedo, B. P., & Aron, A. (2009). Does a Long-Term Relationship Kill Romantic Love? *Review of General Psychology*, 13(1), 59-65. doi:10.1037/a0014226
- [2] Collins, W. A., Welsh, D. P., & Furman W. (2009). Adolescent romantic relationships. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 631-652. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163459>
- [3] Credé, M., & Niehorster, S. (2011). Adjustment to College as Measured by the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire: A Quantitative Review of its Structure and Relationships with Correlates and Consequences. *Educational Psychology Review*, 24(1), 133-165. doi:10.1007/s10648-011-9184-5
- [4] Cui, M., & Fincham, F. D. (2010). The differential effects of parental divorce and marital conflict on young adult romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships*, 17(3), 331-343. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.2010.01279.x
- [5] Dangwal, Lata K., Srivastava, & Shipra. (2016). Emotional maturity of internet users. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4, 6. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1086227>
- [6] Donnellan, M. B., Larsen-Rife, D., & Conger, R. D. (2005). Personality, Family History, and Competence in Early Adult Romantic Relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social*

- Psychology, 88(3), 562-576. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.88.3.562
- [7] Furman, W. (2002). The Emerging Field of Adolescent Romantic Relationships. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11(5), 177-180. doi:10.1111/1467-8721.00195
- [8] Gerdes, H., & Mallinckrodt, B. (1994). Emotional, social, and academic adjustment of college students: A longitudinal study of retention. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 72(3), 281-288. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1994.tb00935.x>
- [9] Gómez-López, M., Viejo, C., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2019). Well-being and romantic relationships: A systematic review in adolescence and emerging adulthood. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(13), 2415. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16132415>
- [10] Gonzaga, G. C., Turner, R. A., Keltner, D., Campos, B., & Altemus, M. (2006). Romantic love and sexual desire in close relationships. *Emotion*, 6(2), 163-179. doi:10.1037/1528-3542.6.2.163
- [11] Jhahharia, & Gunjan. (2017). Relationship of romantic love to achievement motivation, creativity and self actualization (Master's thesis, University of Culcutta, Culcutta, India).
- [12] Joy, M., & Mathew, A. (2018). Emotional maturity and general well-being of adolescents. *IOSR Journal Of Pharmacy*, 8(5). Retrieved from [ca0329b813d167b4cb5fa66beddb55c7fd22.pdf](http://ca0329b813d167b4cb5fa66beddb55c7fd22.pdf)
- [13] Mahanta D., & Kannan V. (2015). Emotional maturity and Adjustment in First Year Undergraduates of Delhi University: An Empirical Study. *Indian Journal of Psychological Science*, 5, 84-90. <http://www.napsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/13-Dimpy-Mahanta-min.pdf>
- [14] Mahmoudi A. (2012). Emotional maturity and adjustment level of college students. *Education Research Journal*, 2.
- [15] Meier, A., & Allen, G. (2009). Romantic Relationships from Adolescence to Young Adulthood: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 50(2), 308-335. doi:10.1111/j.1533-8525.2009.01142.x
- [16] Nehra S. (2014). Relationship between Adjustment and Emotional Maturity of IX Class Students. Nehra, S. / *Educational Confab*, 3. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/681c/619f9cf19dfd488a70ce583c60ca6aec2411.pdf>
- [17] Panth, M. K., Chaurasia N., & Gupta M. (2015). A Comparative Study of Adjustment and Emotional Maturity between Gender and Stream of Undergraduate student. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 5(3). <https://www.ijrssh.com/>
- [18] Pritchard, M. E., Wilson, G. S., & Yamnitz, B. (2007). What Predicts Adjustment Among College Students? A Longitudinal Panel Study. *Journal of American College Health*, 56(1), 15-22. doi:10.3200/jach.56.1.15-22
- [19] Roisman, G. I., Clausell, E., Holland, A., Fortuna, K., & Elieff, C. (2008). Adult romantic relationships as contexts of human development: A multimethod comparison of same-sex couples with opposite-sex dating, engaged, and married dyads. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(1), 91-101. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.44.1.91
- [20] Seiffge-Krenke, I., Shulman, S., & Kiessinger, N. (2001). Adolescent Precursors of Romantic Relationships in Young Adulthood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 18(3), 327-346. doi:10.1177/0265407501183002
- [21] Sharma B. (2012). Adjustment and Emotional Maturity Among First Year College Students. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 10, 32-37.
- [22] Smithson, W. D. (1974). *The psychology of adjustment: Current concepts and applications*. McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- [23] Tyagi, V., & Pandey, N. (2015). Inter-Relation Between Well-Being and Adjustment: Among Adolescents. *Indian Journal of Psychological Science*, 5(2), 55-60. <http://www.napsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/09-Neelam-Pandey-min.pdf>
- [24] Vézina, J., & Hébert, M. (2007). Risk Factors for Victimization in Romantic Relationships of Young Women. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 8(1), 33-66. doi:10.1177/1524838006297029