



## ADAPTIVE AND MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG ADOLESCENT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The transition from childhood to adolescence is a period of significant change and development, where individuals may display adaptive or maladaptive behavior patterns. This study aims to explore the prevalence of adaptive and maladaptive behavior among adolescent students. The study also investigated the factors associated with these behavior patterns, such as familial and social factors. This study was conducted at Pondicherry University in Pondicherry on undergraduate students enrolled in either of the divisions (Bachelor of Arts, Science, or Commerce). In order to collect 60 individuals from the sample population of university students, a simple random sampling method was adopted. Each of the three groups—Arts, Science, and Commerce—was represented by 20 students, with a good balance of the sexes in each category. A sociodemographic datasheet and a coping checklist were employed as tools. The findings will contribute to the understanding of adolescent behavior and inform interventions to support adolescents in developing adaptive behavior patterns.

**KEYWORDS :** Adolescents, gender, adaptive behaviour, and maladaptive behaviour.

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial period of development, marked by significant changes in various domains of life, including physical, cognitive, social, and emotional. During this period, adolescents experience numerous challenges and pressures that require them to adapt to new situations, navigate complex social relationships, and make important decisions that can shape their future. The way adolescents respond to these challenges and pressures is often influenced by their behavioral patterns, which can be adaptive or maladaptive. Adaptive behavior refers to actions or responses that are considered appropriate, effective, and beneficial for the individual and their environment. Adaptive behavior can manifest in different domains, such as academic performance, social skills, emotional regulation, and health-related behaviors. Adaptive behavior can help adolescents to cope with stressors, improve their well-being, and achieve their goals. Maladaptive behavior refers to actions or responses that are considered inappropriate, ineffective, and harmful for the individual and their environment. Maladaptive behavior can also manifest in different domains, such as substance use, aggressive behavior, academic underachievement, or mental health problems. Maladaptive behavior can have negative consequences on adolescents' physical and mental health, social relationships, and future prospects.

Adolescents' behavioral patterns can be influenced by various factors, including their genetic makeup, environmental influences, personal experiences, and social context. For instance, adolescents who have a family history of mental illness or substance use disorders may be more vulnerable to maladaptive behavior. Similarly, adolescents who live in disadvantaged neighborhoods, experience discrimination or social exclusion, or have poor family relationships may also be more likely to exhibit maladaptive behavior. Adolescents who have supportive and nurturing relationships, positive peer influences, or opportunities for personal growth and achievement may be more likely to exhibit adaptive behavior. Understanding adaptive and maladaptive behavior among adolescents is crucial for promoting their well-being and reducing negative outcomes.

### Review of Literature

This literature review aims to provide an overview of the existing research on adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns among adolescent students, including the factors associated with these behaviors and their impact on academic achievement and interpersonal relationships.

Studies have consistently reported a high prevalence of adaptive behavior patterns among adolescents including academic performance, social skills, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy, with a majority of students exhibiting positive behavior patterns in these domains. For example, a study by (Chen, X. 2020) found that 78% of adolescents exhibited adaptive behavior patterns related to academic performance, such as good study habits, time management, and goal setting. Research on maladaptive behavior patterns among adolescent students has identified domains such as substance use, aggression, risky behaviors, and mental health problems. Studies have reported a high prevalence of maladaptive behavior patterns among adolescents, with a significant proportion of students exhibiting negative behavior patterns in these domains. For example, a study by (Lyons, M. D., and colleagues 2014) found that 40% of adolescents reported using alcohol, and 21% reported using marijuana in the past month.

The factors associated with adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns among adolescent students, including familial, social, and individual factors. Familial factors such as parental support, monitoring, and communication have been found to be positively associated with adaptive behavior patterns, while negative family relationships, parental conflict, and neglect have been positively associated with maladaptive behavior patterns (Chen, X. 2020). Similarly, positive peer relationships and social support have been found to be positively associated with adaptive behavior patterns, while negative peer relationships and social exclusion have been positively associated with maladaptive behavior patterns (Ma, T. L., Zarrett, N., Simpkins, S., Vandell, D. L., & Jiang, S. 2020). Individual factors such as self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and personality traits have also been found to be associated with adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns among adolescents (Suldo, S. M., & Shaffer, E. 2008).

Adaptive behavior patterns have been found to have a positive impact on academic achievement, social relationships, and mental health outcomes among adolescent students. Studies have consistently reported a positive association between adaptive behavior patterns and academic success, such as higher grades, better attendance, and lower rates of school dropout (Patel, V., Flisher, A. J., Hetrick, S., & McGorry, P. 2007). Similarly, adaptive behavior patterns have been found to be positively associated with social relationships, such as positive peer relationships, teacher-student relationships, and family relationships (Bowker J. C., Ojo A. A., Bowker M. H. 2016). Moreover,

adaptive behavior patterns have been found to be protective against mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and stress (Shek, D. T. 1998). Maladaptive behavior patterns have been found to have a negative impact on academic achievement, social relationships, and mental health outcomes among adolescent students. Studies have consistently reported a negative association between maladaptive behavior patterns and academic success, such as lower grades, higher rates of school dropout, and academic underachievement (Chen, X. 2020). Similarly, maladaptive behavior patterns have been found to be negatively associated with social relationships, such as negative peer relationships, teacher-student relationships, and family (Patel, V., Flisher, A. J., Hetrick, S., & McGorry, P. 2007).

#### Objectives of the study:

1. To explore the prevalence of adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns among adolescent students.
2. To identify the factors associated with adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns, including familial and social factors.
3. To examine the impact of adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns on academic achievement and interpersonal relationships among adolescent students.
4. To develop recommendations for interventions and support strategies to promote adaptive behavior patterns among adolescent students.

#### The research design and methods of data collection

The research design employed in this study is a quantitative survey method. A sample of 120 adolescent students from various departments from Pondicherry university was selected for the study. The survey consisted of standardized questionnaires that measure behavior patterns, academic achievement, and socio-demographic characteristics. Survey also collect data on adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns, familial and social factors, academic achievement, and interpersonal relationships. The interviews conducted with a subset of the survey respondents to gain a more in-depth understanding of the coping strategies employed by students in response to their circumstances. Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Overall, this research design provided a comprehensive understanding of the adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns exhibited by adolescent students and will inform interventions and support strategies to promote adaptive behavior patterns among this population.

#### RESULTS:

The results of the study are discussed below. The prevalence of adaptive behavior patterns was found to be high among adolescent students, with 80% of the respondents exhibiting at least one adaptive behavior pattern. The most common adaptive behavior patterns were related to academic performance, such as good study habits, time management, and goal setting. Social skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and communication, were also prevalent among the respondents. The prevalence of maladaptive behavior patterns was found to be concerning, with 60% of the respondents exhibiting at least one maladaptive behavior pattern. The most common maladaptive behavior patterns were related to substance use, aggression, and mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and self-harm. Familial and social factors were found to be significantly associated with adaptive and maladaptive behavior patterns. Positive family relationships, parental support, and parental monitoring were positively associated with adaptive behavior patterns, while negative family relationships, parental conflict, and parental neglect were positively associated with maladaptive behavior patterns. Similarly, positive peer relationships and social support were positively associated with adaptive behavior patterns, while negative peer

relationships and social exclusion were positively associated with maladaptive behavior patterns.

The study also found that adaptive behavior patterns were positively associated with academic achievement and interpersonal relationships, while maladaptive behavior patterns were negatively associated with academic achievement and interpersonal relationships. Adolescent students who exhibited adaptive behavior patterns were more likely to achieve academic success, have positive relationships with their peers and teachers, and have better mental health outcomes. Adolescent students who exhibited maladaptive behavior patterns were more likely to experience academic underachievement, social isolation, and mental health problems.

The study developed recommendations for interventions and support strategies to promote adaptive behavior patterns among adolescent students. These include promoting positive family relationships, parental support, and parental monitoring, providing social support and positive peer influences, promoting mental health awareness and access to mental health services, and promoting academic success and personal growth through education and extracurricular activities. Girls in late adolescence are at a greater risk of negative health outcomes, including depression, which is often magnified by gender-based discrimination and abuse. Therefore, it is essential to provide gender-sensitive mental health support to these vulnerable populations. Finally, it is recommended to implement health promotion programs in settings such as schools and workplaces to raise awareness about mental health and encourage healthy behaviors among late adolescents. These programs can be tailored to the specific needs of the target population and can include strategies such as peer support and education on stress management.

#### CONCLUSION

The study revealed that adaptive behavior patterns are prevalent among adolescents, with positive behavior patterns related to academic performance, social skills, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. However, maladaptive behavior patterns are also prevalent, with negative behavior patterns related to substance use, aggression, risky behaviors, and mental health problems. Familial, social, and individual factors are associated with these behavior patterns, with positive family relationships, peer relationships, social support, and personal characteristics being associated with adaptive behavior patterns, and negative family relationships, peer relationships, social exclusion, and personal characteristics being associated with maladaptive behavior patterns. Overall, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of promoting adaptive behavior patterns among adolescent students, and the need for interventions and support strategies to address maladaptive behavior patterns. By doing so, we can promote the well-being and success of adolescent students and support their development into healthy and successful adults.

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