

A Comparative Study of Adjustment Level of Adolescent Students belonging to Army and Civil Backgrounds

Raveena Chambial^{1*}, Dr Rajesh Tiwari²

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Education, Oriental University, Indore (M.P.), India

Email: raveenachambial@gmail.com

²Assistant professor, Department of Education, Oriental University, Indore (M.P.), India

Email: rajeshtiwari@orientaluniversity.in

Abstract:

Adjustment is an essential process that individuals undergo to adapt to new environments or changes in their lives. It involves altering one's behaviour, thoughts, and emotions to align with the demands of a particular situation or setting. For army personnel, frequent transfers are a part of their profession, often requiring them to relocate every two to three years, and sometimes even within a year. As a result, adolescents in these families may face various challenges related to adjustment. Each new posting exposes them to a different place, a new school, and unfamiliar surroundings. They must build new social connections and friendships, fully aware that these relationships may only last a few years. This often places emotional strain on adolescents, as forming meaningful bonds requires time, trust, and emotional investment. Hence, in the present study, an attempt was made to compare the adjustment level of adolescent students from Army and Civil backgrounds. A descriptive survey method was used for the study. The Adjustment Inventory for School Children developed by A.K.P. Sinha and R.P. Singh was used as a tool for data collection. A total of 600 adolescent students were selected from two Kendriya Vidyalayas and an Army Public School of Binnaguri Cantonment, West Bengal. Out of these 600 students, 300 (150 males & 150 females) were taken from army background and 300 (150 males & 150 females) were taken from civil background. Mean, standard deviation, and t-test were used for the analysis of the data in the study. The results of the study revealed that Army background students were found to be more adjusted as compared to Civil background students at an overall level. There was a significant difference in the adjustment level when compared gender wise. Male army background adolescents found to be more adjusted as compared to students from civil background. But in the case of female adolescents, females from civil and army background were found to be adjusted at same level.

Keywords: Adjustment, Adjustment level, Army background, Civil background, Adolescent students

1. Introduction:

Adjustment is the process by which people learn to deal with changes in their lives. It means being able to adapt to new situations, manage emotions, and solve problems in a healthy way. Everyone goes through different types of changes in life such as starting a new school, moving to a new place, or dealing with personal challenges and being able to adjust well helps a person stay mentally and emotionally strong. For children in army families, adjustment can be more challenging than for children from civilian backgrounds. Army children often experience frequent moves due to their parent's job. Studies show that military children move much more often than civilian children sometimes up to nine times during their school years (Park, 2011). Each move means starting over in a new school, making new friends, and adjusting to a new environment, which can be stressful and emotionally difficult.

In comparison, civilian children usually have more stable lives. They often grow up in the same city, attend the same schools for many years, and have long-lasting friendships. This stability can lead to a stronger sense of belonging and emotional security. On the other hand, army children may struggle with feelings of isolation or loss due to constant change, but they also develop strong coping skills such as resilience, flexibility, and independence at an early age (Huebner et al., 2007). Another big difference is the experience of parental absence. Army children often have to live without one parent for months at a time during military deployments. This can lead to anxiety, sadness, or behavioural problems (Chandra et al., 2010). Civilian children, unless their parents travel for work or are separated for other reasons, usually have more consistent access to both parents, which can help with emotional stability.

Despite these challenges, many army children learn to adapt quickly, become emotionally strong, and develop a global perspective due to their diverse life experiences. With the right support from family, teachers, and counsellors, they can thrive just as well and sometimes even more than their civilian peers. Because of this lifestyle, army children face both challenges and opportunities. On one hand, constant moving and separation from a parent can cause emotional difficulties, disrupt their studies, and make it hard to form lasting friendships. On the other hand, many army children also become very adaptable, mature, and responsible from a young age. They often learn to adjust quickly, become independent, and develop strong problem-solving skills. Understanding these differences is important to help schools and communities offer the right kind of support. Whether from military or civilian backgrounds, all children benefit from love, stability, and guidance as they learn to adjust and grow.

1.1 Statement of the problem:

The present research will investigate “A Comparative Study of Adjustment level of Adolescent Students belonging to Army and Civil Backgrounds”.

1.2 Objectives of the study:

- To compare the mean scores of Adjustment level of adolescent students belonging to Army and Civil background.
- To compare the gender-wise mean scores of Adjustment level of adolescent students belonging to Army and Civil background.

1.3 Hypothesis:

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Adjustment level of adolescent students belonging to Army and Civil background.
- There is no gender-wise difference between the mean scores of Adjustment level of adolescent students belonging to Army and Civil background.

1.4 Operational definitions

Adjustment: In general, adjustment is the process through which individuals adapt to changes or new situations in their lives. It involves altering one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours to effectively meet the demands or challenges of a given environment.

Adjustment Level: In the present study, “adjustment level” refers to how well an adolescent adapts to the various social, emotional and academic changes and challenges that occur during adolescence.

Army Background: In the present study, "adolescents from an army background" refers to adolescents whose one or both parents serve in the Indian Army. This includes officers, junior commissioned officers, and other ranks.

Civil Background: In the present study, "adolescents from a civil background" refers to adolescents whose neither parent serves in the Indian Army.

Adolescent Student: In the present study, adolescent students refer to the children between the ages of 14-18 years.

2. Review of related literature:

Islam (2024) studied the adjustment problems of adolescents, focusing on differently-abled adolescents. The sample included 200 teenage students (100 boys and 100 girls) aged 12–18 years, randomly selected from different schools in Kamrup district of Assam. The study found that both boys and girls faced adjustment problems, but their levels of adjustment were not the same. Boys adjusted better in all areas compared to girls. In terms of emotional adjustment, boys also showed better adaptation than girls.

Shaban et al. (2021) conducted a study to assess the adjustment problem faced by adolescent boys in comparison to adolescent girls in the home, health, social and emotional areas. The data was collected from the 100 adolescent students (50 boys and 50 girls) using Bell's adjustment inventory by RK Ojha. Results revealed that there is a significant difference in the adjustment problems among adolescent boys and girls. On comparison, adolescent girls have been found to be suffering from more adjustment problems than boys. No significant association was found between the adjustment problems of boys with residence, type of family, education of parents, occupation of parents, and religion, while a significant association was found between adjustment problems among girls and type of family.

Barik and Dhara (2019) conducted a study to assess the adjustment abilities of secondary school students in the Purba Bardhaman District of West Bengal, focusing on various personal and social factors. The research sample included 350 students from different senior secondary schools in the region. The findings indicated that female students exhibited significantly higher adjustment levels compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, students from rural areas showed better adjustment than those from urban backgrounds. The study found no notable difference in adjustment abilities between urban male and urban female students. Furthermore, students from joint families showed significantly better adjustment than those living in nuclear families.

Sunny et al (2017) examined the emotional, social, and educational adjustment levels among adolescents aged 15 to 16 in Jorhat, Assam. Using the Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) developed by A.K.P. Sinha & R.P. Singh. The researchers found that most participants showed a high level of emotional adjustment, indicating strong emotional stability and coping skills. However, in the areas of social and educational adjustment, the results were more varied, with a majority showing a good level of adaptation, while some adolescents exhibited either excellent or low adjustment. This suggests that while many students manage their social interactions and academic demands effectively, others may face difficulties that require additional support. The study further revealed no significant differences in adjustment levels based on gender, indicating that both male and female adolescents in the sample experienced similar challenges and strengths across all three domains.

Rani (2016) studied adjustment problems among 200 adolescents from District Sri Muktsar Sahib, equally divided between government and private senior secondary schools. Bell's Adjustment Inventory (Student Form) developed by R.K. Ojha (1968) was used as a tool for the study. Statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, and t-test were used for the analysis of data. The study found no significant difference in adjustment problems based on school type or gender.

Singh (2015) studied how Class 11 students adjust to changing schools in Haridwar (Uttarakhand) and Meerut (U.P.). The sample included 600 newly admitted students from 20 randomly chosen schools. The results showed that boys faced more adjustment problems than girls in most areas, except in peer relationships, where both had similar issues. The study also found no link between students' sociability or educational stress and their adjustment problems.

Dar and Tali (2014) conducted a study to examine the adjustment problems among Kashmiri adolescents. The study used a descriptive survey method and included 300 adolescents from higher secondary schools across three districts in Jammu and Kashmir. From each district, 50 boys and 50 girls were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data was collected using the Youth Problem Inventory, and the results were analysed using mean, t-test, and ANOVA. The findings revealed that Kashmiri adolescent boys and girls faced significant adjustment problems in various areas, including family, school, social life, and personal well-being. However, there was no significant difference found between boys and girls in their overall adjustment problems.

3. Methodology:

➤ Population:

The target population for the study comprises adolescent wards of Army and Civil personnel, studying in Senior Secondary schools of the Army Cantonment, Binnaguri, West Bengal. Descriptive survey method was used in the present study.

➤ Sample:

Population of 600 adolescents were taken for the purpose of research, in which 300 adolescents were from army background and 300 adolescents from civil background. These 300 students were further divided into 150 males and 150 females.

➤ Sampling Technique:

Depending upon the need of the study, purposive sampling technique was used.

➤ Research Tool:

For the present study the standardised tool, Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) developed by A.K.P. Sinha & R.P. Singh was used.

➤ **Statistical Analysis:** Statistical techniques were applied on raw data to make it meaningful. After the collection of data, the gathered information was tabulated and then computed in different forms. Mean, Standard deviation, t-test were used for data analysis.

4. Delimitations of the Study:

The study has a wide scope for the purpose of research but due to lack of time and resources, the study was delimited in the following aspects: -

- The study was restricted to Binnaguri Cantonment only.
- The study was delimited to 14 to 18 years old adolescent children only.
- Sample of the study was confined to 600 adolescents only.
- The study was delimited to the comparison of Adjustment level of adolescent students belonging to Army and Civil background.

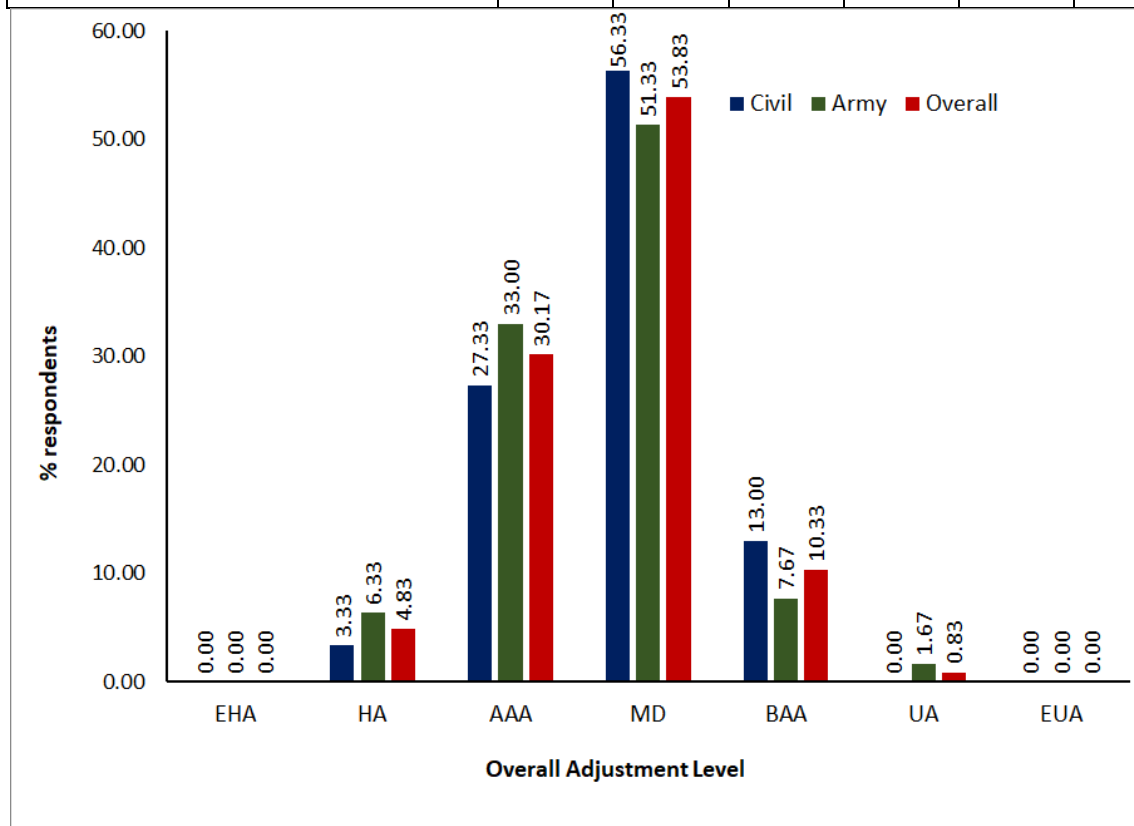
5. Results and Discussion:

A detailed analysis of Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) from the responses received from the students of the sampled region was done. Analysis was done at two levels. First analysis was done according to the background of the students, i.e., whether he/she belongs to Civil background or Army background, then at second level analysis was done according to gender.

Table 1: Distribution of Adjustment Scores According to Student Background

Score Level	Civil		Army		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Extremely High Adjustment	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
High Adjustment	10	3.33	19	6.33	29	4.83
Above Average Adjustment	82	27.33	99	33.00	181	30.17

Average/Moderate Adjustment	169	56.33	154	51.33	323	53.83
Below Average Adjustment	39	13.00	23	7.67	62	10.33
Unsatisfactory Adjustment	0	0.00	5	1.67	5	0.83
Extremely Unsatisfactory Adjustment	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	300	100.00	300	100.00	600	100.00



EHA: Extremely High Adjustment; **HA:** High Adjustment; **AAA:** Above Average Adjustment; **MD:** Average/Moderate Adjustment; **BAA:** Below Average Adjustment; **UA:** Unsatisfactory Adjustment; **EUA:** Extremely Unsatisfactory Adjustment

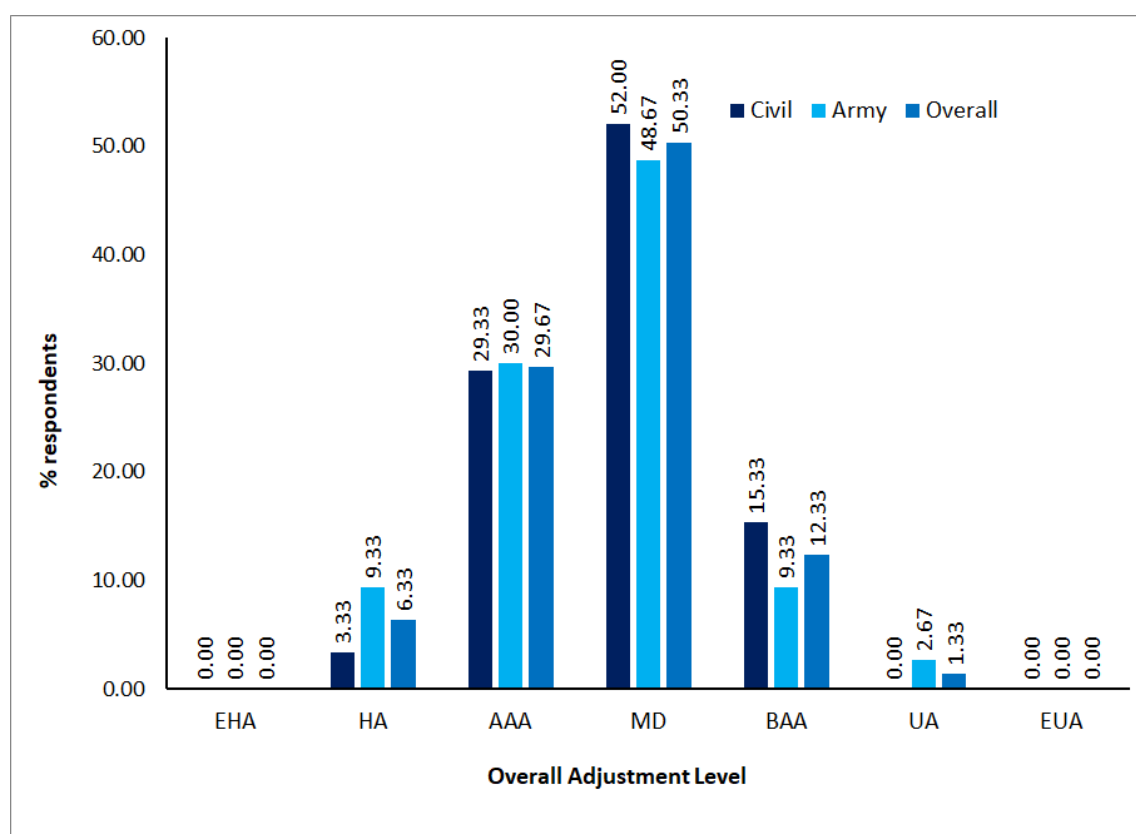
In table 1 given above shows the distribution of adjustment scores (combining emotional, social, and educational adjustment) of school students belonging to civil and army background. The distribution of scores shows that maximum number of students' scores fall into "Average/Moderate Adjustment" category in both the background and at overall level. From the table it is evident that maximum proportion of students fall into "Average/Moderate" adjustment category. Overall, around 54% of students were found to be moderately adjusted. 30% of students were found to be adjusted at the above average level, and approximately 11% of students' adjustment levels was below moderate level. Similar pattern of distribution can be observed in the distribution of adjustment scores of civil background students, and army background students separately.

Table 2: Distribution of Adjustment Scores of Female Students According to Background

Score Level	Civil		Army		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Extremely High Adjustment	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
High Adjustment	5	3.33	14	9.33	19	6.33
Above Average Adjustment	44	29.33	45	30.00	89	29.67
Average/Moderate Adjustment	78	52.00	73	48.67	151	50.33

Below Average Adjustment	23	15.33	14	9.33	37	12.33
Unsatisfactory Adjustment	0	0.00	4	2.67	4	1.33
Extremely Unsatisfactory Adjustment	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	150	100.00	150	100.00	300	100.00

The distribution of overall adjustment scores for female students given in the table 2 above shows that maximum proportion of female students from civil background were found to be adjusted at moderate level. Around 50.33% of female students fall into this category. Around 30% of female students' adjustment was found to be at above average level, around 13% of female students' adjustment level was found to be below average level. Almost similar pattern of distribution can be observed in the distribution of civil, and army background female students separately.



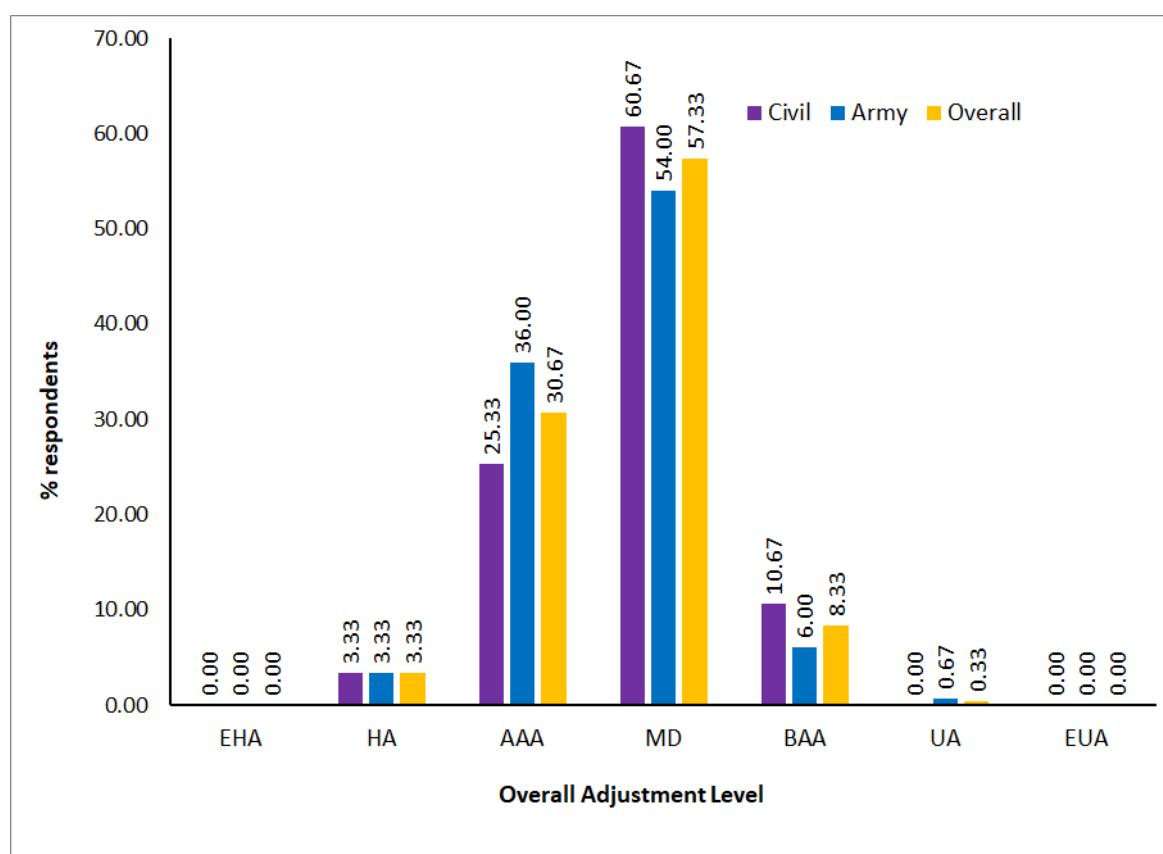
EHA: Extremely High Adjustment; **HA:** High Adjustment; **AAA:** Above Average Adjustment; **MD:** Average/Moderate Adjustment; **BAA:** Below Average Adjustment; **UA:** Unsatisfactory Adjustment; **EUA:** Extremely Unsatisfactory Adjustment

Table 3: Distribution of Adjustment Scores of Males Students According to Background

Score Level	Civil		Army		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Extremely High Adjustment	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
High Adjustment	5	3.33	5	3.33	10	3.33
Above Average Adjustment	38	25.33	54	36.00	92	30.67
Average/Moderate Adjustment	91	60.67	81	54.00	172	57.33

Below Average Adjustment	16	10.67	9	6.00	25	8.33
Unsatisfactory Adjustment	0	0.00	1	0.67	1	0.33
Extremely Unsatisfactory Adjustment	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	150	100.00	150	100.00	300	100.00

The distribution of overall adjustment scores for male students given in the table 3 above. The distribution of adjustment scores of male students from civil background shows that around 58% of students fall into average or moderate adjustment category, 31% of students in above average adjustment categories, and around 9% of students fall into below average adjustment categories. Difference in the pattern of distribution can be observed in the distribution of civil, and army background male students separately which is clearly observed in the graph given below.



EHA: Extremely High Adjustment; **HA:** High Adjustment; **AAA:** Above Average Adjustment; **MD:** Average/Moderate Adjustment; **BAA:** Below Average Adjustment; **UA:** Unsatisfactory Adjustment; **EUA:** Extremely Unsatisfactory Adjustment

Hypothesis Test Results:

After descriptive analysis of data testing hypotheses were in order to find that whether adjustment levels of students from civil and army background differ statistically significantly or not at and overall level, and for male and female students separately. The hypotheses test results are given below.

H₀₁: “There is no significant difference between mean adjustment scores of students belonging to Army and Civil background”

First background wise testing of hypotheses was done. Under background wise testing of hypotheses first mean scores of overall adjustment level of civil and army background students were compared and tested. The test result is given below.

Table 4: Test Result – Comparing Overall Adjustment of Civil and Army Background Students

Background	N	Mean	SD	t-Val	df	p-val	Result
Civil	300	48.39	12.35	2.329	598	0.020	*
Army	300	45.98	12.95				

* = Sig. ($p < 0.05$); ** = Sig. ($p < 0.01$); *** = Sig. ($p < 0.001$); NS = non-significant ($p > 0.05$)

The test result given above shows that there was significant difference in the overall adjustment scores of students of civil and army background ($t = 2.33$, $p < 0.05$). The mean score of civil background students (48.39) was higher than the mean adjustment score of army background students (45.98). Hence, the hypothesis is rejected and it can be inferred the army background students were found to be more adjusted as compared to civil background students.

H₀₂: “There is no gender-wise significant difference between mean adjustment scores of students belonging to Army and Civil background”

Table 5: Test Result – Comparing Adjustment Scores of Females Students from Civil and Army Background

Background	N	Mean	SD	t-Val	df	p-val	Result
Civil	150	48.03	12.43	0.882	298	0.378	NS
Army	150	46.70	13.72				

* = Sig. ($p < 0.05$); ** = Sig. ($p < 0.01$); *** = Sig. ($p < 0.001$); NS = non-significant ($p > 0.05$)

The adjustment score of female students belonging to civil and army background does not differ statistically significantly ($t = 0.882$, $p > 0.05$). The mean adjustment score of female students from civil background was 48.03, and the mean overall adjustment scores of female students from army background was 46.07. The non-significant difference in the adjustment scores of females from civil and army background shows that females from civil background and females from army background are adjusted at the same level.

Table 6: Test Result – Comparing Adjustment Scores of Male Students from Civil and Army Background

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-Val	df	p-val	Result
Civil	150	48.75	12.31	2.465	298	0.014	*
Army	150	45.27	12.15				

* = Sig. ($p < 0.05$); ** = Sig. ($p < 0.01$); *** = Sig. ($p < 0.001$); NS = non-significant ($p > 0.05$)

Finally, the adjustment scores of male students from civil, and army background were compared. The test result is given in the table 6 above. Test result reveal that a statistically significant difference exists in the adjustment scores of male students from civil and army background. ($t = 2.465$, $p < 0.014$). The mean adjustment scores of civil background score is 48.75 whereas mean adjustment scores of students from army background is 45.27, hence test result indicate that male students from army background are more adjusted as compared to students from civil background.

From the analysis of adjustments scores of male and female students from civil and army background separately, it was found that a significant difference in the mean adjustment scores of male civil background students, and male army background students exists, and students from army background were found to be more adjusted as compared to students from civil background. But in the case of female students from civil and army background a non-significant difference in the adjustment scores of females from civil background, and females from army background was found, i.e., females from

civil and army background were found to be adjusted at same level. Hence, it can be said that gender wise difference exists in the adjustment scores of students from civil and army background, and hypothesis “There is no gender-wise significant difference between mean adjustment scores of students belonging to Army and Civil background,” is rejected.

6. Conclusion:

The present study was undertaken specially to compare the adjustment level of adolescent students belonging to Army and Civil backgrounds. The finding of the study showed a significant difference in the overall adjustment scores of students of Civil & Army backgrounds. It was concluded that the Army background students were found to be more adjusted as compared to Civil background students. The reason behind it could be more exposure of Army children to various emotional, social & educational challenges from a very young age throughout their life because of their parents' transferable jobs. They get used to these challenges and are able to deal with all the changes more efficiently than other children of their age. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference found in the overall adjustment scores of male and female students. However, when compared background wise, male students of Army background were found to be more adjusted as compared to male students from the Civil background. Hence, it can be said that gender wise difference exists in the adjustment scores of students from civil and army background.

7. Educational Implication:

Adolescence is a challenging phase for all students, as they often struggle to adapt to various situations. This process of adjustment can add extra pressure to their lives. Gaining insight into how both army and civilian children cope with their unique lifestyles can help parents, teachers, families, policymakers, and other stakeholders develop effective strategies to support and enhance the adjustment skills and overall well-being of adolescent students. With the right guidance and support, these adolescents can grow up to be strong, confident and emotionally healthy individual.

References:

1. Barik, A., & Dhara, R. (2019). Measurement of adjustment Ability among Senior Secondary Level School Students of Purba Bardhaman District in West Bengal, India. *International journal of Research and analytical Review*, 6(1), 326-335.
2. Chandra, A., Lara-Cinisomo, S., Jaycox, L. H., Tanielian, T., Burns, R. M., Ruder, T., & Han, B. (2010). Children on the Homefront: The experience of children from military families. *Pediatrics*, 125(1), 16–25. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2009-1180>
3. Dar, I. A., & Tali, L. A. (2014). Adjustment problems among Kashmiri adolescents. *International Journal of English Language, Literature & Humanities*, 1(5), 99–107.
4. Huebner, A. J., Mancini, J. A., Wilcox, R. M., Grass, S. R., & Grass, G. A. (2007). Parental deployment and youth in military families: Exploring uncertainty and ambiguous loss. *Family Relations*, 56(2), 112–122. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2007.00445.x>
5. Islam, R. (2024). Adjustment problems of adolescents with special reference to differently-abled adolescents. *Innovation: The Research Concept*, 9(2).
6. Park, N. (2011). Military children and families: Strengths and challenges during peace and war. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 65–72. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021249>
7. Rani, P. (2016). Study of adjustment problems among adolescents. *Global Journal for Research Analysis*, 5(12), 211–212.
8. Shaban, N., Kour, P., Dar, M. A., & Majeed, M. (2021). A comparative study to assess adjustment problems among adolescents on the basis of gender. *Indian Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 12(1), 1-7.

9. Singh, P. (2015). Adjustment to School Change an Investigation of Patterns and Correlates in 11th Class students. PH.D. Thesis in Home Science, Rajasthan: Banasthali University.
10. Sunny, O., Regma, S.S. & Saikia, J. (2017). A Study of Adjustment Level of Adolescents. *International Journal of Current Research*, 9(2), 46413-46415.