

# Comparison of Adjustment among Only-child and Multiple-sibling High School Students

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of the present study is to compare adjustment of only children and multiple siblings. Participants included 234 students (99 only children and 144 multiple siblings) studying in high schools of Tehran, Iran. Data collection was done by adjustment inventory for high school students. Data analysis was performed using independent t-test and variance analysis. Results showed that adjustment of only-child students is better and higher than that of multiple-sibling students. Level of emotional, social and academic adjustment only-child student is better than that of multiple-sibling students.

**Keywords:** Only-child, Multiple-sibling, High School, Students.

## INTRODUCTION

The term adjustment is mostly used in relation to social or psychological adaptation. In this case, its positive aspect is mostly considered, namely good adjustment, when a person engages in a rich process and continues to realize and develop his potential abilities, responds to environment and in turn changes it and acts in an effective manner along with mental health (Saatchi, 2008). Adjustment, in general, refers to a relation established by an organism with its environment relative to the status quo. Adjustment implies that one involves in a consistent process to show his potentials, reaction to the environment and while changing it in an effective healthy way. Perfect equilibrium between organism and environment is a state in which all needs are met and all organismic actions take place easily (Poorafkari, 1994).

Adjustment involves personal and social compatibility when putting efforts to maintain and improve social welfare (Birjand, 1976). Adjustment refers to a relationship between the individual and his environment, particularly social environment, which allows him to satisfy his motives of deficiencies and facing (Islaminasab, 1994). People who experience conflict or obstacle in meeting requirements, their activities will be positive and effective if they act wisely to eliminate barriers in different ways; if they act sufficiently to face the obstacles, their activities are called adjustment (Shariatmadari, 2004). Adjustment involves a process which begins with emergence of a requirement and human responds to that need through a series of activities. The social adjustment is quite similar to above process. One has psychological needs which need to be met to ensure that his mental equilibrium is established. In addition to physiologic aspect, human is also a social entity. If a child feels safe or a student considers himself as alone or one feels failure, it will required to adjust the environment (Pourmoghadas, 2007).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study used adjustment inventory for school students (AISS) developed by Sinha and Singh (1993) including 66 items which distinguish high school students with good adjustment from weak students in three domains of adjustment (emotional, social and academic). Validity of the test was confirmed by a group of psychologists (Saghi and Rajai, 2008). For data analysis, this study used descriptive and inferential statistics and methods such as mean, distribution table and percentage. For statistical inference, the current study used independent t-test and MANOVA.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Statistical parameters such as mean and standard deviation are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Statistical parameters of adjustment for only-child and multiple-sibling students

Components of adjustment	Only child		Multiple sibling	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Emotional adjustment	6.85	3.96	8.07	3.78
Social adjustment	7.255	3.05	7.63	3.76
Academic adjustment	7.06	3.65	7.37	3.67
Total adjustment	21.16	8.49	23.07	9.46

Table 1 shows that adjustment level of only-child students is higher and better than that of multiple-sibling students. Level of emotional, social and academic adjustment of only-child students is better than that of multiple-sibling students.

Statistics parameters in terms of adjustment such as mean and standard deviation are shown in the table below.

Table 2. statistical parameters of adjustment in terms of gender

Components of adjustment	Male		Female	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Emotional adjustment	6.98	3.97	8.095	3.77
Social adjustment	7.22	3.72	7.72	3.15
Academic adjustment	6.86	3.84	7.63	3.41
Total adjustment	21.06	9.58	23.45	8.31

According to Table 2, the total adjustment of female students is higher than that of male students. Level of emotional, social and academic adjustment of female students is better than that of male students. Using MANOVA test, adjustment of only-child and multiple-sibling students was tested.

Table 3. Results of MANOVA test to compare adjustment of only-child and multiple-sibling students

Subscales	Sum of squares (SS)	Degrees of freedom (df)	Mean square (MS)	F ratio	$\alpha$
Emotional adjustment	80.26	1	80.26	5.37	0.02*
Social adjustment	7.72	1	7.72	0.64	0.42
Academic adjustment	5.03	1	5.03	0.38	0.54
Total adjustment	195.44	1	195.44	2.4	0.12

According to the test results presented in Table 3 and MANOVA, F value is 5.37 for emotional adjustment which is larger than critical F and significant in ( $p > 0.02$ ). Thus, there is a significant difference between emotional adjustments of only-child and multiple-sibling students. Therefore, considering mean scores of Table 1, emotional adjustment is higher in only-child students than multiple-sibling students. However, F value is smaller than critical F and the difference is not significant for other subscales. Using MANOVA test, adjustment of male and female students was tested.

Table 4. Results of MANOVA tests to compare adjustments of male and female students

Subscales	Sum of squares (SS)	Degrees of freedom (df)	Mean square (MS)	F ratio	$\alpha$
Emotional adjustment	67.41	1	67.41	4.5	0.035*
Social adjustment	13.75	1	13.75	1.15	0.285
Academic adjustment	32.28	1	32.28	2.43	0.12
Total adjustment	309.765	1	309.765	3.83	0.052

According to the test results presented in Table 4 and MANOVA, F value is 4.5 for emotional adjustment which is larger than critical F and significant in ( $p > 0.035$ ). Thus, there is a significant difference between emotional adjustments of male and female students. Therefore, considering mean scores of Table 1, emotional adjustment is higher in male students than female students. However, F value is smaller than critical F and the difference is not significant for other subscales ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### **Discussion**

Using MANOVA test, the present study tested adjustment of only-child and multiple-sibling students. According to results and MANOVA, there is a significant difference between emotional adjustments of only-child and multiple-sibling students ( $p < 0.05$ ); considering mean scores, emotional adjustment of only-child students is higher than that of multi-sibling students. While, F value is smaller than critical F and the difference is not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

This finding is inconsistent with Bayani (2004) who compared emotional, social and academic adjustment and sympathy of mothers and daughters among female only-child and multiple-sibling students in Tehran, Iran. His results showed a significant difference between social adjustment and total adjustment of only-child and multiple-sibling students. Only children gained better results in these two scales; however, there was no significant difference between emotional and academic adjustment as well as sympathy of mothers and daughters. Results also showed a significant correlation between emotional, academic and total adjustment and sympathy of mothers and daughters; however, there was no correlation between social adjustment and sympathy of mothers and daughters (Bayani, 2004).

One of components of adjustment is love, attachment and being accepted. Only children receive more love than other people; therefore, their adjustment, particularly in relation to emotions, is higher than others. Using MANOVA test, adjustment of male and female students was tested. According to results and MANOVA, there is a significant difference between emotional adjustment of male and female students ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to mean scores, emotional adjustment of male students is higher than female students. However, F value was smaller than critical F and insignificant in  $p < 0.05$  for other subscales.

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