



A comparative study of self esteem and level of depression in adolescents living in orphanage home and those living with parents

Priyanka¹, Dr. Ashok Parasar², Dr. Roshan Lal Dewangan³

¹ Clinical Psychologist, Patna, Bihar, India

² Clinical Psychologist, District Hospital, N.M.H.P. Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, India

³ Lecturer, Department of Clinical Psychology, PGIBAMS, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India

Abstract

The loss of parents and parental care at early childhood leads to disastrous consequences for an orphan in the later part of his/her life. Even though the child is provided an alternate option of being in a foster family or in an orphanage home a huge gap exists in the psychosocial need and psychosocial support. Several studies reported that this gap leads to psychological problems in the individual child in different forms. The aim of the current study was to find out level of self-esteem and of depression in adolescents living in orphanage home and to see the differences in self-esteem and depression level in orphan children and children living with parents. The study was conducted on 37 adolescents living in orphanage home and compared them with 31 adolescents living with parents, using Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (RES, Rosenberg, 1989) and Children's Depression Inventory (CDI, Dr. Maria Kovacs, 1992). Result shows that orphan children have low self-esteem and high depression. Results also shows that level of self-esteem is lower in orphan children than children living with parents ($t=2.14$, $df=66$, $p<.05$), and level of depression is significantly high in orphanage children than children living with parents ($t=4.02$, $df=66$, $p<.01$).

Keywords: orphan, self-esteem, depression

Introduction

Adolescence is a period of change- both physical and psychological- and also a time when they form a concept of their own identities in which family and peer interactions play a crucial role. Some adolescents do not receive the individual attention and love from both parents that others of their age receive. Some are left to fend on their own, whereas others are packed off to live with relatives or placed in institutions. Even though the child is provided an alternate option of being in a foster family or in an orphanage home a huge gap exists in the psychosocial need and psychosocial support. This gap leads to psychological problems in the individual child in different forms like identity crisis during adolescence.

Tully Grey, found that depression, withdrawal from social activities, moodiness, loss or increased appetite, and sleep problems are common reactions in adolescent orphans who have lost parents. Sometimes, alcohol and drug use can be a manifestation of extreme depression in these adolescent orphans. Bowlby (1980) [2], understood that one of the commonest sources of a child's anger is the frustration of his desire for love and care and anxiety commonly reflects uncertainty whether parents continue to be available. Thus, sometimes in depression there is much resentment, envy and anger under the surface (Gilbert, 1992) [3]. Exposure to trauma and daily stress were strongly associated with depression and anxiety like symptoms.

Institutionalized children have also been found to have difficulties in forming an integrated self-concept (Kodandaram and Rao, 1983) [4]. Institutionalized children are

less well-adjusted and that they manifest less self-esteem compared with a control group (Youngleson, M. 1973) [10].

It is evident from such background that orphans are deprived group of people. They develop maladaptive characteristics that include low self-esteem, self-rejection, identity confusion, alienation and distrust (Mwebaza Micheal, 2007) [6].

Further studies in the Indian context are required to understand more about the impact of institutionalization on the behaviour and attitudes of adolescents residing there and need to be established is whether self-esteem affects performance of an orphaned child in comparison to the non-orphaned.

Objectives

The present study formulate following objectives:

1. To find out the level of self-esteem and of depression in adolescents living in orphanage home.
2. To see the differences in self-esteem and depression level in orphan children and children living with parents.

Hypothesis

The self-esteem will be low and depression level will be high in orphanage child compare to children living with parents.

Methods

Sample

The sample composed of 68 children. Out of the total sample, 37 participants were living in the orphanage (17 boys and 20 girls); and 31 participants were living with their both parents

(16 boys and 15 girls) at home.

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria for orphan children

1. Age range between 12-18 years.
2. Both genders.
3. Cooperative for study.
4. Must be living in orphanage for the past 6 months.

Exclusion criteria for orphan children

1. Recently added in the orphanage.
2. Mental Retardation, other developmental disorders and organic illness.
3. Physically Handicap.

Inclusion criteria for children living with parents

1. Age range between 12-18 years.
2. Both genders.
3. Cooperative for study.
4. Living with both parents.

Exclusion criteria for children living with parents

1. Mental Retardation, other developmental disorders and organic illness.
2. Any history of parental loss by death or divorce.

Tools

The following tools were used:

1. Self-structured socio-demographic data sheet.
2. Rosenberg’s Self Esteem Scale (RES, Dr. Rosenberg, 1989)
3. Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI, Dr. Maria Kovacs, 1992)

Description of tools

1. **Self-structured socio-demographic data sheet:** A self-structured socio-demographic data sheet was used especially designed for the study to collect information regarding age, sex, education of the children.
2. **Rosenberg’s Self Esteem Scale:** Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one’s worth or value. This 10-item scale is the most widely used measure of self-esteem. The scale generally has high reliability: test-retest correlations are typically in the range of .82 to .88.
3. **Children’s Depression Inventory:** Evidence of the CDI has strong support for reliability and validity has been established over many years of empirical research. This instrument is mature in the sense that there have been a number of fundamental psychometric studies. Further, the CDI has demonstrated consistent correlations with various syndromes, other scales, and replicated predictive relationships.

Procedure

Formal permission was obtained from Bal Grih to draw the sample of orphans of Raipur city. Moreover, formal permission was also obtained from private school of Raipur city to draw the sample of children living with both parents. A consent form was obtained from each institution. Rapport

was established with the respondents assuring them of confidentiality of their personal information and they were assured that their information would be used for research purpose exclusively. Their general information were taken on the self-made Socio-demographic data sheet then the Self-esteem Scale and Children’s Depression Inventory was administered individually to all the research participants in order to determine the level of their self-esteem and depression.

Statistical Analysis

The SPSS (version 16) was used to analyze data. Chi-square and t-test were applied to compare relevant socio-demographic variables, and t-test was applied to compare the self-esteem and depression of orphan children to children living with parents.

Results

Table 1: Mean, SD and t-test value of the age of both the sample groups

Variable	Orphanage children		Children living with both parents		t-test(df=66)
	M	SD	M	SD	
Age	14.62	1.48	14.77	1.25	.45

Table-1 represents age of orphan children and children living with parents, no significant differences were found in the groups with respect to their age ($p > .05$).

Table 2: significant difference of socio-demographic details of both the groups

Variables		Groups		χ^2
Orphanage children		Children living with parents		
Sex	Male	17	16	0.217 5.514
	Female	16	15	
Education	Primary	4	0	
	Middle	31	31	
	Ten plus	2	0	

Table-2 represents socio-demographic variables of both the groups, no significant differences were found in both the groups with respect to their sex and education.

Table 3: Mean, SD and t-test of both the groups in self-esteem and depression

Variables	Orphanage children (N=37)		Children living with parents (N=31)		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Self-esteem	14.91	4.16	16.93	3.49	2.14*
CDI	15.37	7.40	9.06	5.07	4.02***

Table-3 represents the differences between the self-esteem and depression among orphan children and children living with parents. There are significant differences between orphan children and children living with parents on the basis of level of self-esteem and depression.

Discussion

The current study investigated level of self-esteem and

depression of orphan children and differences in self-esteem and depression of orphan children and children living with both parents in their home. The mean age of orphan children was 14.62 and for children living with parents were 14.77, suggesting no significant difference was there on the basis of their age. The findings of the current study suggest that the orphan children reported lower self-esteem ($M=14.91$ and $SD=4.16$) and high depression ($M=15.37$ and $SD=7.40$) as compared to the children living with their parents (self-esteem $M=16.93$, $SD=3.49$ and depression $M=9.06$, $SD=5.07$).

Orphans living in global deficient orphanages display a delay in behavioral development (Tully Grey). Being easily distracted and overacting are behavioral characterizations of orphans. Low mood, withdrawal from social activities, moodiness, loss of increased appetite and sleep problems are common reactions in adolescent orphans. A child's relationship with his parents determines how the child defines himself, as loss of parental figure (s) results in the halted identification of self (Panicker, *et al.*, 2006) [1]. The current study shows lower self-esteem in orphan children compare to children living with parents. Mohanty and Newhill (2005), suggest that international adolescent adoptees have lower self-esteem and are at higher risk for developing severe mental health problems and social maladjustment than children of the same age living with their biological families in the general population.

Conclusion

The findings of this research suggest that there is a significant difference in self-esteem and depression of the orphan children and the children living with parents. The orphan children reported lower self-esteem and high depression than the children living with their parents.

Limitations

1. Sample size taken was small and the results may not be generalized.
2. Only limited variables were taken like age, sex and education.

Implication

The findings of this research have implications for understanding the emotional state and personality development of the children living in orphanages. Therapeutic interventions and more researches should be done in this area. The findings may also draw attention of policy makers, and help them to make health and wellbeing policies for this kind of institutions.

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