

Intelligence and Social Adjustment among Secondary School Students of Arunachal Pradesh: Evidence from Papum Pare District

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Abstract

Intelligence and social adjustment are two aspects of adolescent development that can affect the way that students understand, react and adapt in their educational and social settings. The present study was aimed to investigate the relationship between Intelligence and Social adjustment of secondary school students of Papum Pare district in Arunachal Pradesh. Descriptive survey design and correlational approach was used. The population of the study consisted of 850 students in class X from 30 secondary and higher secondary schools. The Group Test of Intelligence (GGTI) developed by Ahuja was used for assessment of intelligence and social adjustment was assessed by using social adjustment dimension of the Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) developed by Sinha and Singh. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's product-moment correlation. The students' mean intelligence score was 107.93 (SD = 9.66) and their mean score on the social-adjustment scale was 19.02 (SD = 8.46). The results showed moderate negative correlation between intelligence with social-adjustment score ($r = -0.54$). Negative correlations mean that higher scores (better) on the social-adjustment measure were correlated with higher intelligence among the students, since lower scores (better) on the social-adjustment measure were correlated with higher intelligence among the students. The results reveal the importance of cognitive functioning for adolescents' social functioning and emphasize the importance of providing educational settings where cognitive development and healthy social adjustment go hand in hand.

Keywords: Adolescents, Arunachal Pradesh, Intelligence, Secondary School Students, Social Adjustment

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage that brings about change in cognitive, emotional, and social functioning. In secondary school, students have to deal not only with growing academic pressures but also with the development of interpersonal relationships, meeting social demands, and adjusting to the changing school, family, and peer settings. Therefore, their functioning in this period may be linked to their cognitive abilities and social adaptability. In this context, the two dimensions of adolescent development that are important are intelligence and social adjustment.

Intelligence is the overall ability of an individual to learn, reason, understand relationships, solve problems and respond to the demands of the environment. It has historically played a pivotal role in educational and psychological studies, especially its relationship to learning and academic performance. There has long been a link between intelligence and educational achievement (Deary et al., 2007; Roth et al., 2015). Studies in the Indian context also have demonstrated positive relationships between intelligence and academic performance of secondary school students (Dutta, 2016; Boruah, 2016). However, intelligence is far from being purely a product of education and the environment; education and other contextual factors may also help shape cognition (Brinch & Galloway, 2012; Ritchie & Tucker-Drob, 2018).

Successful social adjustment is another important developmental task that takes place in adolescence along with cognitive development. Social adjustment is the capacity to respond to social expectations, develop satisfactory interpersonal

relationships and adapt to the social environment. For adolescents in school, this means a constant engagement with peers, teachers, family and school. Prior studies have shown that peer acceptance, teacher–student relations, school connectedness, and a positive school climate are associated with positive adjustment among students (Parker & Asher, 1987; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Resnick et al., 1997; Wentzel, 1998).

Research carried out in India has also shown that there are certain personal and contextual factors which are related to social adjustment in adolescents. The differences in adjustment have been studied in relation to sex, locality, characteristics of the school, family background, emotional maturity and academic achievement (Chauhan, 2013; Sekar & Lawrence, 2016; Jayachandran, 2017; Srinivasan & Sudhakar, 2019). The results suggest that social adjustment is a complex process, which is affected by personal factors as well as by the environment in which the adolescents grow up.

While there are numerous studies that have focused on the relationship of intelligence to social adjustment separately, few studies in the reviewed literature have focused directly on the relationship between general intelligence and social adjustment. The study by Tripta (2018) indicated that there was a possible relationship between general intelligence and adaptive functioning, as the better the general intelligence, the better the adolescent's adjustment. However, it cannot be taken for granted that the relationship holds true across different populations, as interpersonal, educational, familial, and sociocultural factors also influence social adjustment.

This is also very relevant in Arunachal Pradesh owing to its unique sociocultural and educational background. Past research by the state has looked at intelligence and adjustment, although in different sets of relationships. Meanwhile, Nyicyor (2016) studied the relationship between intelligence, creativity and academic achievement among secondary school students of East Siang and Lohit districts and revealed that intelligence and academic achievement were found to have a low positive correlation. More recently, Ering et al. (2024) investigated the level of social adjustment among adolescents in East Siang district and found that the majority of adolescents had average level of social adjustment. Riba et al. (2024) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and social adjustment in adolescents of Papum Pare district and concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and social adjustment of adolescents of Papum Pare district. But emotional intelligence is different from the general cognitive intelligence, though.

Hence, from the literature reviewed for the present study it is observed that there is not much empirical evidence on direct correlation between general intelligence and social adjustment of secondary school students of Arunachal Pradesh. The study of this relationship can help to deepen the understanding of the interaction between cognitive ability and adolescents' social adaptation in the educational and sociocultural environment of the state. Hence, the present study aims to study the correlation between intelligence and social adjustment of secondary school students of Arunachal Pradesh.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To find out the intelligence level of the secondary school students of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. To find out the social adjustment of secondary school students of Arunachal Pradesh.
3. To study the correlation between intelligence and social adjustment of secondary school students of Arunachal Pradesh.

Hypothesis

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

H₀: Intelligence does not affect the social adjustment of secondary school students of Arunachal Pradesh.

Methodology

Research Design

The study was descriptive survey and correlational approach in order to study the relationship between intelligence and social adjustment of secondary school students. Since the study was an investigation of the existing levels of intelligence and social adjustment and the relationship between these without manipulation of the study conditions, the design was considered appropriate.

Population and Sample

The population for the study included all the students of Class X of the secondary and higher secondary schools of Papum Pare district, Arunachal Pradesh for the academic session 2024-2025. The UDISE Report (2024-2025) shows that there are 73 secondary and higher secondary schools with 2,109 students in Class X level in the district. The study sample comprised 850 students of class X from 30 secondary schools (including higher secondary schools) of the study area. The sample schools were selected using a quota-cum-purposive sampling technique to ensure representation of the relevant school characteristics and the students from the selected schools were selected using simple random sampling technique.

Tools used for the study

Two standardized instruments were used for the present study.

Group Test of Intelligence (GGTI)

The Group Test of Intelligence developed and standardized by Ahuja (1976) was used to assess the intelligence. It has a total of 135 items that are broken down into eight subtests: Following Directions, Classification, Analogies, Arithmetic Reasoning, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Series, and Best Answers. Each correct answer will be given one mark, each incorrect answer will be given zero marks. The total raw scores are normed to Deviation Intelligence Quotient (DIQ) scores using norms given in the test manual. The test developer reported test-retest reliability of 0.84 and split-half reliability of 0.951.

Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS)

The social adjustment dimension of the Adjustment Inventory for School Students (Sinha and Singh, 1971) was used to assess social adjustment. The total inventory consists of 60 items divided into three equal parts: emotional, social and educational adjustment. The 20 items that related to social adjustment were used for the present study. The items are answered using the response categories: Always, Sometimes, and Never. The reported reliability coefficients for the social adjustment dimension were 0.93 for the split half method, 0.90 for the test-retest method and 0.92 for the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20. The raw scores on the inventory are higher for poorer/satisfactory social adjustment and lower for better social adjustment according to the scoring norms of the inventory.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted after obtaining permission from the authorities of the selected schools. The researcher made personal visits to the schools, and conducted administration of the standardized instruments during school hours. The purpose of the study and instructions for completing the instruments were explained to the participants. Students were told that their answers would be kept confidential and that it would be for academic and research purposes only. The time to complete the instruments was adequate and the data collection took about two months.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used in analyzing the data. The levels and distribution of intelligence and social adjustment were described using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to study the correlation between intelligence and social adjustment. Descriptive measures of normality such as skewness and kurtosis were used to examine the distributions of the two variables before the correlational analysis.

Results

The analysis focused on describing the overall pattern of intelligence and social adjustment and examining the relationship between these two variables among secondary school students.

Descriptive Statistics of Intelligence and Social Adjustment

The descriptive characteristics of intelligence and social adjustment scores are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Intelligence and Social Adjustment among Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	Sd
Intelligence	850	107.93	9.66
Social Adjustment	850	19.02	8.46

The descriptive results indicate that the students obtained a mean intelligence score of 107.93 (SD = 9.66), reflecting an overall average level of intelligence. The mean social-adjustment score was 19.02 (SD = 8.46), indicating an average level of social adjustment among the respondents.

Relationship between Intelligence and Social Adjustment

To find out the relationship between intelligence and social adjustment, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was computed.

Table 2: Correlation between Intelligence and Social Adjustment among Secondary School Students

Variables	N	R	Interpretation
Intelligence and Social Adjustment	850	-0.54	Moderate negative correlation

The correlation analysis revealed a moderate negative relationship between intelligence and social-adjustment scores ($r = -0.54$). This indicates that an increase in intelligence scores tends to be associated with a decrease in social-adjustment raw scores.

The direction of the relationship should be interpreted in accordance with the scoring procedure of the social-adjustment measure, wherein lower scores indicate better adjustment. Thus, the negative correlation suggests that students with higher intelligence tend to demonstrate better social adjustment. Conversely, comparatively lower intelligence tends to be associated with poorer social adjustment.

The finding therefore indicates a meaningful association between cognitive ability and social adjustment among secondary school students in the study area.

Discussion

This study is an attempt to find out the correlation between intelligence and social adaptation of secondary school students in Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh. The results showed moderate negative correlation between the intelligence scores and social-adjustment scores ($r = -0.54$). The negative relationship is consistent with the scoring of the social adjustment measure, which is such that lower scores reflect better social adjustment. So, it seems cognitive ability is a meaningful correlate of the ability of adolescents to adapt to their social context.

This is in line with Tripta (2018) who studied the relationship between general intelligence, emotional intelligence, home environment and adjustment of secondary school students and found that the students with high general intelligence had better adjustment than the students with low general intelligence. The present findings add to this evidence and indicate that the link between cognitive ability and adjustment could also be present in the unique sociocultural and educational context of Arunachal Pradesh, among secondary school students.

A possible explanation for this relationship is that intelligence could help support the cognitive processes involved in the understanding and responding to social situations. Students who have a better ability to think, understand, and solve problems might be able to better understand interpersonal situations, predict outcomes, consider options, and adjust their behavior based on the situation. These skills can help students deal with the everyday situations they encounter in the school and community with peers, teachers and others. Intelligence, then, might have applications outside of the academic environment and play a role in the adaptive processes that take place during the adolescent years.

The finding also should be considered in the context of the general literature on adolescent adjustment. Numerous interpersonal and environmental factors have been found to be related to social adjustment in the past, such as peer relationships, teacher support, school connectedness, family characteristics, and school environment (Parker & Asher, 1987; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Resnick et al., 1997; Wentzel, 1998). Other Indian studies have also reported links between demographic, familial, educational and psychological factors and adjustment (Chauhan, 2013; Jayachandran, 2017; Srinivasan & Sudhakar, 2019). The moderate level of relationship found in the present study is interesting and also suggests that intelligence is one of several factors having a relationship to adolescents' social adjustment.

These results are significant in context of the past study conducted in Arunachal Pradesh. The relevance of cognitive ability to students' academic functioning has been reported by Nyicyor (2016) who found positive correlation between intelligence and academic achievement of class X students of East Siang and Lohit districts. Ering et al. (2024) in more recent times reported

that most of the adolescents in East Siang district had average social adjustment. According to Riba et al (2024) emotional intelligence and social adjustment among adolescents in Papum Pare district was significantly positively correlated. Emotion intelligence is distinct from general intelligence, but both of these findings suggest that mental and cognitive resources are crucial for understanding adolescents' adjustment in the region.

The present study is an attempt to add to this literature by specifically showing that there is an association between general intelligence and social adjustment of secondary school students in Papum Pare district. The current findings link cognitive intelligence with social adjustment, whereas previous regional studies have investigated intelligence with regard to academic outcomes or social adjustment to emotional and demographic factors. This provides context-specific evidence from Arunachal Pradesh, an area with a lower representation in empirical studies of adolescent cognitive and social development.

The relationship observed should not, however, be read as a proof of the causality of intelligence in social adjustment. Due to the correlational design of this study, the results can only be assumed to be an association between the variables and do not indicate causal direction. Social adjustment is a multi-faceted developmental outcome that is shaped by individual, family, educational, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors. The results thus indicate that intelligence does not necessarily determine social adjustment but is one of the possible correlates of social adjustment.

Conclusion

The present study attempted to explore the correlation between intelligence and social adjustment of secondary school students of Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh. This study showed that there was a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.54$) between intelligence and social-adjustment scores. Given the scoring pattern of the social adjustment measure, in which lower scores are indicative of better social adjustment, the result suggests that students of higher intelligence tend to have better social adjustment.

The results indicate that intelligence could be applicable to more than the cognitive and learning processes of students, and could also be linked to their adaptability in the social environment. Well-developed cognitive functions might enable adolescents to better comprehend social situations, assess alternative reactions, resolve interpersonal conflict, and appropriately adjust to their environment. But social adjustment is a multidimensional process, which is affected by various factors of the person, family, educational, and sociocultural environment; thus, intelligence should be considered as one of the numerous factors that affect social adjustment and not as an independent factor.

The study is a contribution to the scanty empirical work conducted on general intelligence and social adjustment of school going adolescents of Arunachal Pradesh. The results highlight the need to take a holistic view of adolescent development and provide opportunities for positive interpersonal relationships and social development in addition to cognitive development. This can help schools, teachers, counsellors and parents to develop nurturing environments that also foster healthy social adjustment and cognitive functioning.

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