

Original Research Article

Separation Anxiety Level of Children Aged 6-10 Years Residing in School Hostels

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ABSTRACT

Around 25% population of India is school going children. Prevalence of anxiety disorder is very common in school going children about 10-15% of all school children can experience separation anxiety at some time, for variety of reasons. The present study was undertaken to assess the anxiety level among children who are separated from parents residing in selected school hostel of Pune city. The conceptual frame work adopted for this study was the Stuart stress adaptation model to anxiety response. A quantitative non-experimental approach with exploratory survey design adopted for the present study. 200 hostelite school children from various area of Pune city were selected by Non-probability convenience sampling technique and were recruited in the study. Data collection was accomplished by using tool (Modified Spence anxiety scale) which consisted two sections. First section dealt with structured interview schedule for demographic information of children. Second sections dealt with assessment of anxiety level as expressed by the hostelite school students. Data collection technique used for the study was interview. Data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The major findings of the study shows that majority of the hostelite children experience mild to moderate level of separation anxiety. The anxiety level of the children is significantly reduced as their age and educational level is increased. Loving and caring teacher and caretaker in the hostel/school, helps in great to the children coping in constructive way by using problem-solving approach, self assertive behaviors that respect the rights of others and thus helps in reducing separation anxiety.

Key words: Separation anxiety, children, school hostel.

INTRODUCTION

The American Academy of child and adolescent psychiatry says it's most common in children between the age of 5-7 and 11-14 when kids have to deal with new challenges in elementary and middle school. (1,2) Separation anxiety disorder is one of the major causes responsible for school refusal. The prevalence of separation anxiety disorder is estimated to be about 4% in children and adolescents. The rate of generalized anxiety disorder in school age children is estimated approximately 3%

while going to school is usually an exciting and enjoyable event for young children. (3-5) "Please don't make me go to school" if you are hearing this from child it might be a sign of separation anxiety. (6)

The child is not miniature but an individual in his own right. The foundation of child's social attitude and skills are laid in the home. Information of statistics about boarding school in India shows that there are various types of boarding schools for example religious Ashram schools, Central Board of Secondary Examination. Boarding

/ Residential schools have been opened by various non-government organizations/Educational institutes/ Trusts. Besides this central Government's Defence ministries has also opened residential schools like Sainik schools. Sainik schools are located at Satara, Nasik, Bijapur, Amaravathinagar, Chittorgarh, Ghorakhal, Kurukonda, Kunjunjpora, Lucknow, Rewa etc. (7)

The school authorities say "At least 50% parents of children, studying in boarding schools do not have time for their children. Of course, the other half of parents, who follow their children progress after sending them in boarding school" (8)

Objectives

- To assess the level of anxiety experienced by children of age group 6-10 years residing in school hostels.

- To correlate the findings with selected demographic variable such as age, gender, education, ordinal position, presence of relative nearby, frequency of parents' visit and type of family

Review of Literature

1. Literature related to Problems faced by boarding school children.
2. Literature related to Anxiety level experienced by boarding school children.
3. Literature related to Anxiety preventative measures among boarding school children.
4. Literature related to Problems faced by boarding school children

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frame work adopted for this study was the Stuart stress adaptation model to anxiety response

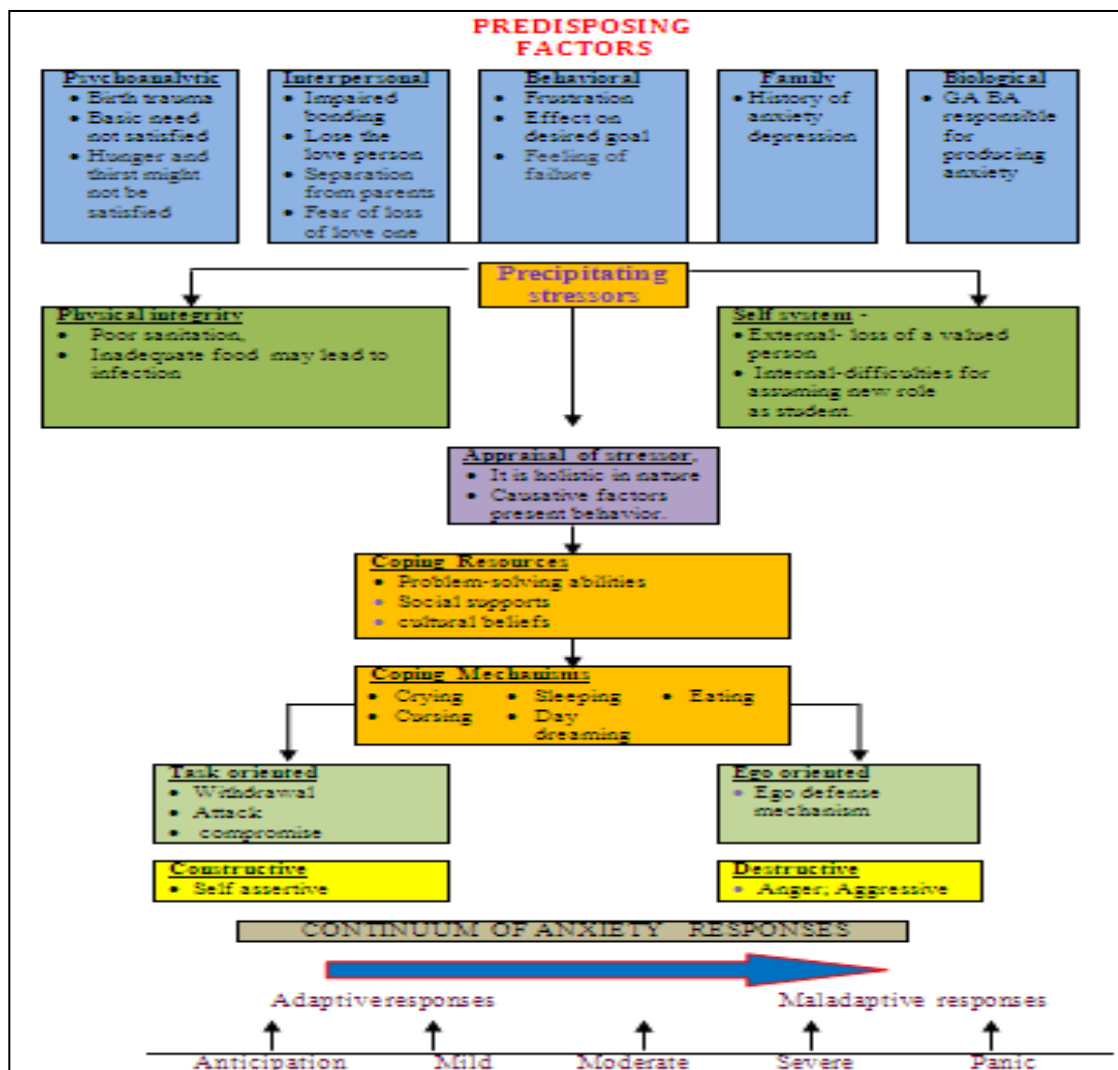


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework Based on Stuart Stress Adaptation Model to Anxiety Responses

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative non-experimental approach with exploratory survey design was adopted for the present study. The samples of the present study were hostelite school children aged 6-10 years who are residing in the selected schools of Pune city. The present study was conducted in schools hostel situated at Nagar road, Gurwarpath, Camp, Shivaji Nagar near R.T.O. and Vadgoan sheri areas of Pune city. 200 (100 female child, 100 male child) hostelite school children from the selected areas of Pune city were selected by Non-probability convenience sampling technique and were recruited in the study. The sick or critically ill children and the children who stayed more than one year in hostel were excluded from the study. The data collection tool used for the study was structured interview schedule which consisted of two sections. The first section dealt with demographic data of the sample and the second section

was comprised of statements to assess the anxiety of the hostelite school students as faced by them (Modified Spence anxiety scale). The data collection technique used was interview. Informed consent from entire participant's parents was taken during visiting time and parents meeting. Administrator, Principal, teacher and hostel wardens' consent was taken before starting the procedure. Every day investigator contacted the respective school and individually approached to group. The criteria of the study sample were kept in mind while selecting the sample. Each sample was interviewed for 40 -50 minutes during their intervals or off period. Data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

A. Findings related to demographic data of the children:

Table No.1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Children According to Socio-Demographic Data (N=200)

Parameters		Frequency (f)	Percentage %
School	Dr. Erins NagarwalaShri Shivaji Preparatory	100	50
	Military	50	25
	St. Andrews	10	5
	St. Hildas	40	20
Age (Yrs)	6 – 8	119	59.5
	9 – 10	81	40.5
Sex	Male	100	50
	Female	100	50
Education Standard	I	39	19.5
	II	41	20.5
	III	39	19.5
	IV	39	19.5
	V	42	21
Ordinal position	1	66	33
	2	82	41
	3	42	21
	4	6	3
	5	4	2
Reasons for living Hostel	Family conflict	7	3.5
	Education	155	77.5
	Join military	19	9.5
	Poor/low economical	15	7.5
	Only father	1	0.5
	Only mother	2	1
	Politician	1	0.5
Any relative near to your hostel	Yes	156	78
	No	44	22
How many time parent visit to your hostel	Weekly	100	50
	Twice a week SR	100	50
Type of family	Joint	98	49
	Nuclear	102	51

The data presented in Table 1 shows that 50% students were from Nagarwala School.

25% students were from Shri Shivaji Preparatory Military School, 5% were from

St Andrews school and 20% were from St Hildas School. 50% were female and 50% were male taken from different school Majority of the sample i.e 59.5% were in 6-8 years of age group. More of the sample i.e. 21.5% from the V standard, 20.5% from the II standard, only 19.5% from I, III, IV standard. Maximum of the children i.e. 51% belong to nuclear family. More of the children i.e. 41% were having 2nd ordinal position in the family. Various Reason for living in hostel were family conflict (3.5%), education (77.5%), wish to join military (9.5%), poor /low economical condition (7.5%) and wish to join politics (0.5%) and single parent (0.5 to 1%).

B. Findings related to anxiety score of the children:

According to anxiety score as obtained by the Modified Spence anxiety scale it shows that 20.5% having normal anxiety level, 69% have mild level of anxiety, 10.5% have moderate level of anxiety and no one is in sever type of anxiety.

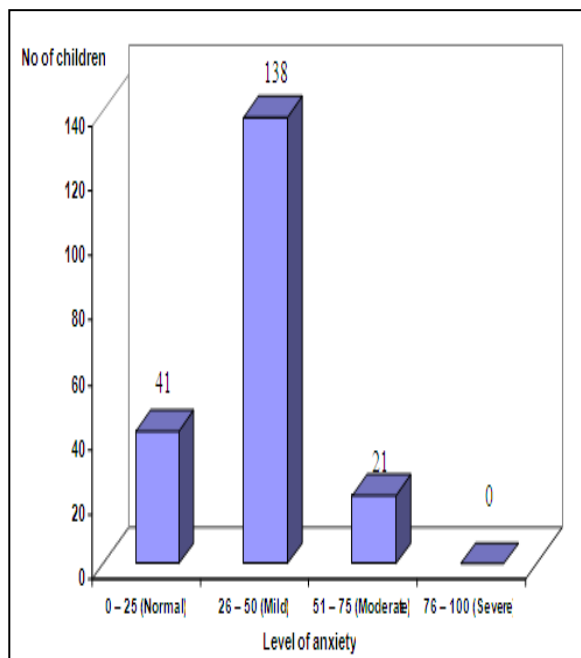


Figure 2: Bar diagram showing the distribution of children according to their anxiety level

C. Findings related to the association between anxiety level with selected demographic variables:

- Study shows the anxiety level of the children is significantly reduced as their age is increase evidence by Z value 5.06 and P value <0.0001.Hence we can say children may adjust with the hostel environment physically, psychologically as they become older.
- The level of anxiety is significantly reduce as their educational level is increase as evidence by ‘F’ value of 11.28 and P<0.0001.
- The study findings reveals that there is no significant difference in the anxiety level of the children according to their gender, ordinal position, type of family, or whether the relative live near the hostel or not live near the hostel.
- But the anxiety level of the children is significantly increase as their parent frequently visited them than the parent visited the children as the school rules that is during the holiday and vacation and pickup them home evidenced by Z value 3.34.P value<0.0001.

DISCUSSION

The major findings of the study shows that the children experience mild to moderate degree of separation anxiety when they stays in school hostel. The anxiety level of the children is significantly reduced as their age, educational level is increase. Hence we can say that he/she may adjust with the hostel environment physically, psychologically. The study also shows that love and affection of parents during holidays and vacation also helps to reduce their anxiety.

The school authorities have a great responsibility towards appraisal of the stressors and assessment of behavior of the children. The authorities should adopt coping resources like problem solving abilities, social supports and cultural beliefs to help the students to cope with new environment. Loving and caring teacher and caretaker in the hostel/school, help the children coping in constructive way that is problem-solving approach, self assertive

behaviors that respect the rights of others. (9,10)

The above findings of the present study are also supported by the study done by:

Mireia Orgiles in Spanish (2010) who studied sample of 1407 children aged between eight and eleven, and examines gender and age differences in late childhood. It was used a specific self-report measure for separation anxiety disorder, the Separation Anxiety Scale for children, developed for Spanish speaking children and based on the DSM-IV-TR and ICD-10 diagnostic criteria. Result showed that children have more cognitive symptoms than psycho physiological or motor responses. The most feared situations found are related to the possibility that something bad happen to the parents and the less common situations are those related to somatic complaints. Separation anxiety symptoms were experienced by 3.9% of the sample, were more common in girls than in boys and decreasing with age. (2)

Stallard, P. (2010) done study on Mental health prevention in UK classroom; the FRIENDS anxiety prevention programme, Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties. Childhood anxiety is common condition which, if untreated, can cause considerable distress and impairment and increase the likelihood of mental health problems in adulthood. Developing good emotional health in children is therefore an important objective which has been emphasized recent governmental initiatives policies; in particular, schools have been identified as having an important role in promoting positive mental health in children. The researchers summarize the different approaches, outcome and shortfall of school based anxiety prevention programmes. One particularly encouraging programme based upon cognitive behavior therapy, the FRIENDS are summarized and the way the programme can be integrated within schools to complement other initiatives discussed. Finally, limitations of the current research are discussed and issues

about the practical implementation of FRIENDS in schools highlighted. (11)

Lock, S, & Barret P.M.(2003) A longitudinal study of developmental differences in universal preventive intervention for child anxiety. The present paper presents the results of a longitudinal study evaluating the effects of a universal school-based intervention for child anxiety at two developmental stages. The study involved a cohort of 733 children enrolled in grade 6 (n=336, 45.6%) aged between 9 and 10 years, and grade 9 (n = 401, 54.4%) aged between 14 and 16 years. Participants were allocated to either a school-based cognitive-behavioural intervention or to a monitoring group who completed standardized measures of anxiety, depression and coping style. Young people identified as risk of an anxiety disorder were assessed for a clinical diagnosis with a structured diagnostic interview. Findings showed universal intervention as potentially successful in reducing symptoms of anxiety and increasing coping skills in children. Primary school children reported the greatest changes in anxiety symptoms, suggesting earlier preventive intervention was potentially more advantageous than later intervention. Developmental differences in anxiety, depression and coping strategies are discussed in addition to the implications. (12)

CONCLUSION

The anxiety level of the children is significantly reduced as their age and educational level is increased. Hence we can say that he/she may adjust with the hostel environment physically, psychological. (e.g. food, staying, studying, rules and regulation of hostel) study also shows that love and affection of parents during holidays and vacation helps in reducing the anxiety level Loving and caring teacher and caretaker in the hostel/school, helps in great to the children coping in constructive way by using problem-solving approach, self assertive behaviors that respect the rights of

others and thus helps in reducing separation anxiety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A similar study can be conducted on a large population for better generalization of findings.
2. A study can be conducted to identify the behavioral responses of student to prove the result of study.
3. A comparative study can be done to find out the anxiety levels of day scholar children and Hostel living children
4. A comparative study can be done among Government granted (Adivasi Ashram School) and private school.
5. The study may be conducted on the attitude of the care taker and behavior of the children.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical permission of the college authority and the institutional ethical committee obtained for conducting the research study.

Administrative approval was obtained from principal, BVDU College of nursing and principal of all the schools, wardens for conducting the study in the specific settings.

Participant was explained regarding the purpose of the study. Confidentiality assured and informed written consent is taken from participant before conducting study.

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