

## Comparative study on behavioural problems among male and female students of pre university courses

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### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to compare between male and female students of I and II PUC on behavioural problems. The sample consisted of 416 pre-university students comprising of 199 male (111- PUC I and 88-PUC II year) and 217 female (112-PUC I and 105 PUC II) students of age group of 16 years to 19 years were selected randomly from five colleges of Bidar city. Revised Behavioural Problems Scale (Quay and Peterson, 1986) was administered on the students of pre-university courses. The data were subjected to 't' test analysis. The male students of PUC I and II had expressed more or less similar level of behavioural problems such as conduct disorder, socialized aggression, attention problem, anxiety, withdrawal, psychotic behaviour and overall behavioural problems. Correspondingly the female students had expressed similar level of behavioural problems such as conduct disorder, socialized aggression, attention problem, anxiety, withdrawal psychotic behaviour and overall behavioural problems. But the male students had expressed more behavioural problems of conduct disorder, socialized aggression, attention problem, psychotic behaviour, and overall behavioural problem compared to female students.

## INTRODUCTION

The period of pre-university courses is a period of significant biological change and psychosocial development. Rapid growth and increased autonomy leave adolescents vulnerable to harmful environmental outcomes (Haugaard, 2001). The broad indicators of maladjustment are externalizing and internalizing behaviours. These forms of maladjustment constitute primary reason for referring youth to mental health services (Reynolds, 1992). Moreover, evidence of problem behaviours during adolescence might foreshadow impaired adult functioning, including poor mental health, substance abuse and problematic social relationships (Maughan and Rutter, 1998; Capaldi and Stoodmiller, 1999).

Principles of development are same for all developing systems, whether it is an organ or organism; behaviour becomes

more versatile and differentiated in all aspects. Each child and adolescent reacts to his or her environment in his or her own way. PUC students might experience psychological discomfort with self and their social environment. Uncomfortable in social context, family context, peer context, health context and academic context retreat the students coping potentiality and the realization of full developmental potential might be jeopardized. These cumulative life changes from High School to college life, pubertal development, early dating behaviour and family disruption were significant predictors of change over time in problem behaviour (Simmons *et al.*, 1987). Behavioural problem is deviation from the accepted pattern of behaviour on the part of the student of PUC when he or she is exposed to inconsistent stressors of social and cultural environment. These are not to be equated with presence of psychiatric illness in the youth. These are the symptoms only

or reactions to emotional disturbance or environmental stress (Verma, 1980).

Broad based studies of risk indicated that simultaneous exposure to multiple risk factors was particularly harmful to youth's long-term psychological well being (Sameroff *et al.*, 1998). Researches suggest that cumulative life stresses increase risk for emotional and behavioural problems (Aneshensel, 1992; Cohen, 1995; Kessler, 1997; Jackson and Warren, 2000). Pol (2005) found that the influence of friends and poor peer relation plays a crucial but differential role in the development of antisocial behaviour among boys and girls.

Students of PUC are at a stage where they have to face severe competition to enter professional courses or even to get admission in reputed educational institutions for general and professional education. In addition to this, the most important ones are being selection of educational career, assured vocational choice, emotional independence, establishing good social relationships within and outside the family and academic competence. The attainment of these developmental tasks is very crucial for sophomores. If the sophomores fail to attain these developmental tasks then it will become stressful and affect their behavioural outcomes. In this study, an attempt has been made to compare between male and female students of pre-university course on behavioural problems with the following hypotheses:

#### Hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference between male students of I and II PUC on behavioural problems.
- There is no significant difference between female students of I and II PUC on behavioural problems.
- There is no significant difference between male and female students of PUC on behavioural problems

## METHODS

#### Sample:

The sample of the present investigation was drawn from pre-university classes from Bhomreddy College, Karnataka College, Government Junior College and Pannalal Heeralal College of Bidar city (Karnataka state). Twenty per cent of the total students present at the time of testing from each of the class, course and college were selected randomly. Thus 199 male (111- PUC I and 88-PUC II year) and 217 female (112-PUC I and 105 PUC II) students of I and II PUC were selected for the study.

#### Measurement:

##### *Revised behavioural problems scale:*

Revised behavioural problems scale was adopted (Quay and Peterson, 1986) to measure the behavioural problems among the PUC students. The scale consists of 61 statements

related to conduct disorder, socialized aggression, attention problem, anxiety withdrawal and psychotic behaviour. Each statement consists of four alternative answers such as, always, sometimes, rarely and never with the scoring of 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The test-retest reliability co-efficient of the scale was 0.554 and it was significant at 0.01 level.

#### Data collection:

The data collection was carried out with the prior permission from the principals and the class teachers to get the responses from male and female students of PUC I and II year of arts, science and commerce of each college. The selected students of each class and course were made to sit in one hall and rapport was established with them. They were also informed that the information given by them would be kept under strict confidence. The students were instructed very clearly about the pattern of answering to each item of the questionnaire. The necessary clarifications were provided to the students as and when they raised doubts while answering the statements. The data were subjected to 't' test.

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Shaffer and Shoben's (1956) study on graduates and undergraduates revealed that both boys and girls had study problems. Study made by Verma and Joyeeta (1990) study indicated that both early and late adolescents had problems like irritability, sleeplessness, day dreaming, temper tantrums, difficulty to concentrate and difficult to take notes etc. In the present study it is also hypothesized that there was no significant difference between the male students of PUC I and II year on the behavioural problems. The results of Table 1 revealed that the 't' value of male students of PUC I and II year had not differed significantly on conduct disorder ( $t=0.332NS$ ), socialized aggression ( $t=0.066NS$ ), attention problem ( $t=1.023NS$ ), anxiety withdrawal ( $t=0.419NS$ ), psychotic behaviour ( $t=1.483NS$ ) and behavioural problems ( $t=0.537NS$ ). The results revealed that male students of PUC I and II year had expressed more or less similar level of behavioural problems of conduct disorder, socialized aggression, attention problem, anxiety withdrawal and psychotic behaviour. It might be due to the reasons that parents had higher expectations about their academic achievements, as both the groups had problems related to teaching, medium of instructions, study and with peer group and also experienced more or less similar stressors. The results support to the study of Verma and Jeyeeta (1990). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male students of PUC I and II year on behavioural problems is accepted.

Verma and Joyeeta (1990) found that both early and late adolescents had problems like irritability, sleeplessness, daydreaming, temper-tantrums, difficulty to concentrate and

difficult to take notes etc. Therefore, in the present study it is hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the PUC I and II year female students on the components of behavioural problems. The results of Table 2 indicated that the female students of PUC I and II year had expressed more or less similar level of behavioural problems of conduct disorder (t=0.045NS), socialized aggression (t=0.083NS), attention problem (t=0.104NS), anxiety withdrawal (t=0.718NS), psychotic behaviour (t=0.950NS) and behavioural problems (t=0.321NS). This may be due to the fact that they had similar environmental stressors and similarity in experiences might be responsible for developing similar behavioural problems. These results support to the study of Verma and Joyeeta (1990). The female students of PUC I and II year had expressed similar level of behavioural problems hence the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between female students PUC I and II year on components of behavioural problems is accepted.

Gender stereotypes refer to preconceived simplified assumptions and generalizations about sex typical behaviour.

Such stereotypes are net results of cultural conditioning of a number of social behavioural criteria that goes with maleness and femaleness (Kohlberg, 1965; Mischel; 1966; Martin and Halverson, 1981). Due to maleness and femaleness the society may expect different behaviours from boys and girls, but today due to increasing competition in every area, the level of differentiation is decreased. Therefore, in the present study it is hypothesized that there is no significant difference between male and female students of PUC on behavioural problems.

The results of present study (Table 3) revealed that the male students were distinctively higher in conduct disorder (t=6.21; P<0.01), socialized aggression (t=7.56; P<0.01), attention problem (t=3.11; P<0.01), psychotic behaviour (t=4.00; P<0.01), and overall behavioural problems (t=5.23; P<0.01), than female students. This may be because the society expects different type of behaviour from the adolescent boys and the girls. Girls are supposed to be submissive and well mannered. While the boys are supported to be aggressive and independent. Therefore, boys may have availed the opportunities given to

**Table 1 : Comparison between male students of PUC I and II year on behavioural problems**

Sr. No.	Component of behavioural problems	PUC I (n=111)		PUC II (n=88)		't' value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Conduct disorder	38.74	9.69	39.19	9.0	0.332NS
2.	Socialized aggression	27.87	6.39	27.93	5.84	0.066NS
3.	Attention problem	29.83	7.85	30.95	7.37	1.023NS
4.	Anxiety withdrawal	20.52	6.19	20.86	5.02	0.419NS
5.	Psychotic behaviour	0.78	2.84	11.39	2.96	1.483NS
	Behavioural problems	157.91	35.04	160.42	2.48	0.537NS

NS=Non- significant

**Table 2 : Comparison between female students of PUC I and II year on behavioural problems**

Sr. No.	Component of behavioural problems	PUC I (N=112)		PUC II (N=105)		't' value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Conduct disorder	33.83	7.78	33.79	7.01	0.045NS
2.	Socialized aggression	24.29	3.59	24.25	3.00	0.083NS
3.	Attention problem	28.25	6.58	28.16	5.89	0.104NS
4.	Anxiety withdrawal	20.11	5.67	20.64	5.19	0.718NS
5.	Psychotic behaviour	9.78	2.73	10.13	2.64	0.950NS
	Behavioural problems	143.54	26.46	144.65	23.95	0.321NS

NS=Non-significant

**Table 3 : Comparison between male and female students of PUC on behavioural problems**

Sr. No.	Component of behavioural problems	Male (n=199)		Female (n=217)		't' value
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1.	Conduct disorder	38.94	9.37	33.81	7.40	6.21**
2.	Socialized aggression	27.90	6.14	24.28	3.31	7.56**
3.	Attention problem	30.33	7.65	28.20	6.24	3.11**
4.	Anxiety withdrawal	20.67	5.70	20.37	5.44	0.54 <sup>NS</sup>
5.	Psychotic behaviour	11.05	2.90	9.95	2.69	4.00**
6.	Overall behavioural problems	159.01	21.69	144.08	25.22	5.23**

\*\* indicates significance of value at P=0.01 NS = Non-significant

them and might have expressed more behavioural problems. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the male and female students on behavioural problems is rejected. These results were similar to the findings of Coie and Dodge (1998). These results support to the studies which concludes that boys had shown more behavioural problems compared to girls (Cummings and Davies, 1994; Heftherington *et al.*, 1985).

### Conclusion:

- The male students of both PUC I and II year had expressed more or less similar level of behavioural problems of conduct disorder, socialized aggression, attention problem, anxiety withdrawal, psychotic behaviour and overall behavioural problems.
- Correspondingly, the female students of PUC I and II had expressed more or less similar level of behavioural problems of conduct disorder, socialized aggression, attention problem, anxiety withdrawal, psychotic behaviour and overall behavioural problems.
- But the male students had expressed more behavioural problems of conduct disorder, socialized aggression, attention problem, psychotic behaviour, and overall behavioural problems compared to female students.

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