

# STUDY ON ADJUSTMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING MODERATOR TO MITIGATE HOMESICKNESS IN YOUNG ADULTS

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## ABSTRACT

*Adjustment is the result of an individual's attempt to cope with stress and satisfy the demands of maintaining a harmonious connection with the environment. Successful adjustment is crucial for maintaining a good level of life. Individuals with adjustment disorders are more prone to have clinical depression or anxiety, feelings of despair, anhedonia, sleep disturbances, and risky conduct. Homesickness is a distressing situation created by being away from people and places you know and love. It is often a state of emotional anguish. It is a frequent experience for students who relocate away from home, regardless of distance. Psychological well-being involves several aspects of a person's mental and emotional health, such as healthy connections, personal growth and development, positive self-esteem and acceptance, and a sense of control over one's life. The sample consisted of 115 young adults (26 Males, 86 Females and 3 other) with mean age being 21.55 years. Moderation Analysis by Andrew F. Hayes was undertaken to compute the result. The results showed that adjustment has a positive moderation effect between Homesickness and Psychological Wellbeing.*

**Keywords:** Homesickness, Adjustment, Psychological Wellbeing, Moderation Analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1: Adjustment

Adjustment originates from a biological term “adaptation, which refers to the various conditions of social and interpersonal relations in society. Adjustment involves the organization of personality”. This organization leads to the stability that is dynamic adjustment of an individual to his social and physical environment. Adjustment can be analyzed both as an accomplishment and a continuous process. When adjustment operates as an achievement, the individual gives extra attention to a certain activity or circumstance, which is completed. Catering to the circumstances at hand and so adapting to it is considered an achievement.

Individuals who struggle with adjustment issues are more prone to have clinical depression or anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, anhedonia, sleep problems, and risky conduct.

## **1.2: Homesickness**

Homesickness is a stressful situation which is caused by being apart from the people and places you know and love. It is often a state of emotional anguish. It is a frequent experience for students who relocate away from home, regardless of distance.

Homesickness can be related to adjustment disorders. Homesickness can be labelled as an acute adjustment disorder (for people with less than 6 months of feelings) and chronic adjustment disorder (for people with more than 6 months). Homesickness also shares features with agoraphobia. Homesickness can be induced by missing close associates, feeling alienated in an unusual area, or trying to adjust to a new academic workload. Sadness, longing for one's native place and concern for friends and family are signs of homesickness.

## **1.3: Psychological Wellbeing**

Positive sentiments or the absence of unpleasant sensations are used to characterize psychological wellbeing. Positive connections, personal development, positive self-esteem and acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery and a sense of control over one's life are all aspects of psychological wellbeing. Various aspects of a person's mental and emotional health are also included. One of the most important components of someone's general health and pleasure is their psychological wellbeing.

The research would form a strong basis to study the influence of Adjustment as a moderator in Psychological Wellbeing and Homesickness. The following review of literature provides a strong sense of basis that much work is not done apropos these interrelated variables together.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Ren, Ji, Liu and Liu (2023) intended to look at the hidden connections between different aspects of adaptability. For the 5-minute cross-sectional survey and the 8-minute longitudinal survey, the sample comprised 402 volunteers and 565 volunteers respectively. While the other study used a cross-lagged panel to evaluate the latent association between emotional adaptability, the study under consideration examined the relationship between several dimensions of adaptability in a cross-sectional dataset using a structural equation model<sup>1</sup>.

Roxas, Shapiro, Chisholm et al. (2023) sought to evaluate university students' feelings of homesickness, which might have an effect on their health and scholastic achievement in rural

Appalachian campuses. 91 people made up the sample size, and their information was gathered electronically using a questionnaire<sup>2</sup>.

Sami, Aziz and Khan (2023) attempted to evaluate university students' levels of homesickness, which might have an effect on their wellbeing and performance on the rural Appalachian campuses. An electronic questionnaire was utilised to gather data from 91 participants, making up the sample size. 65% of the students reported experiencing homesickness, particularly during the move-in period, with various events either making it better or worse, according to the data<sup>3</sup>.

Hamid (2022) aims to investigate homesickness and psychological discomfort among migrant Sudanese in the United Arab Emirates. The sample consisted of 1444 migrants from Sudan; their standard deviation was 10.98 and their mean age was 40.20. The findings demonstrated a relationship between reduced levels of homesickness, psychological distress, and symptoms of depression and anxiety with older age and longer residency in the United Arab Emirates<sup>4</sup>.

Anike, Marrie-Nwankwo (2021) sought to investigate how homesickness and friend-sickness contribute to undergraduate students' feelings of loneliness. The sample included 244 individuals, 140 of whom were female and 104 of whom were male. The sample ages varied from 18 to 26 years, with a mean of 21.52 years and a standard deviation of 2.01 years<sup>5</sup>.

Khoerunnisa and Grafiyana (2021) sought to investigate the connection between Rantau students' homesickness and adaptability. 35 students, who had no family in Purwokerto and lived in boarding homes near the college, made up the sample size. Responses to the Behavioural Adaptation Questionnaire and the Homesickness Questionnaire were gathered. Utilising correlational analysis, the outcomes were calculated<sup>6</sup>.

Rathakrishnan, Singh, Kamaluddin, Ghazali, Yahaya, Mohamed and Krishnan (2021) sought to look at how foreign students' perceptions of stress, homesickness, and sociocultural adjustment related to social sustainability at a public university in Sabah. There were 200 people in the sample, 100 of whom were men and 100 of whom were women. The Perceived Stress Scale, Homesickness Scale, Socio-Cultural Adaptation Scale, and the Revised Socio-Cultural Adaptation Scale were used to gather the data<sup>7</sup>.

Rajguru and Srivastava (2020) sought to look at the connection between college students' perceptions of control, sense of belonging, and homesickness. The sample consisted of 300 students enrolled in three-year undergraduate degree programmes at Delhi-based educational

institutions, ranging in age from 17 to 22. The third version of the Spheres of Control Scale, the COPE inventory, the Utrecht Homesickness Scale, and the Sense of Belonging Inventory were used<sup>8</sup>.

Biasi, Mallia, Russo, Menozzi, Cerutti and Violani (2018) sought to evaluate a model that postulated that their psychological anguish and sleep issues might be directly and indirectly impacted by two different aspects of homesickness: connection to home and dislike of university. The study comprised a sample of 271 first-year students who were living away from home; their mean age was 21.3 and their standard deviation was 2.7<sup>9</sup>.

Gotz, Stieger and Reips (2018) sought to use a smartphone app-based research to track the onset and fluctuation of homesickness in foreign university exchange students. There were 148 students in the sample. Over the course of three months, homesickness was evaluated every other day, and a post hoc questionnaire was used to identify possible modifiers. Regression analysis and curve estimation were two of the analyses performed to calculate the findings<sup>10</sup>.

English, Davis, Melissa, and Gross (2017) sought to investigate the correlations between homesickness and other dimensions of adjustment, as well as the weekly degrees of homesickness experienced throughout the first term of college. The findings indicated that throughout the first semester of college, homesickness somewhat subsided. Higher levels of homesickness among freshmen were associated with lower overall college adjustment<sup>11</sup>.

Nazari and Karbalaie, Mohammad and Meigooni (2017) sought to identify the structural model of marriage adjustment, psychological health, and perfectionism. There were 405 people in the sample. To compute the findings, descriptive correlation analysis was employed. The link between personal standards, organisation, worry about mistakes, uncertainties about acts, parental criticism, and parental expectations is mediated, according to the results, by psychological wellness<sup>12</sup>.

Kumar, Nabi, Mujoo, Mir et.al. (2016) wanted to examine the impact of social relationships on college students' stress, adjustment, and homesickness. A sample of 279 students aged 17 to 25 years old was recruited, with a mean age of 20.82. The sample was given the College Adjustment Test, the Perceived Stress Scale, and the Social Relationship Scale in order to gather data. There were no discernible gender or location disparities in the results<sup>13</sup>.

Mashayekhi (2016) intended to ascertain the correlation between homesickness, connection, and spiritual wellness with mental health as well as the variations in mental health issues across demographic categories. 442 foreign postgraduate students studying in Malaysia made up the sample. Four questions covering overall health, spiritual wellness, adult attachment, and homesickness. The results were computed using correlation, ANOVA, and the t-test<sup>14</sup>.

Palai & Kumar (2016) sought to investigate the connection between university students' homesickness, stress, and adjustment. Out of the 100 students in the sample, 47 were male and 53 were female. The sample's mean age was 20.83 years, with a range of 18 to 25 years. The college adjustment exam and the perceived stress scale were the scales employed<sup>15</sup>.

Can (2015) sought to investigate if there were any gender disparities in the effects of homesickness, adjustment issues, and felt discrimination on the psychological health of international college students. There were 145 people in the sample, ages 18 to 41. The Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students, the Michigan International Students Problem Inventory (MISPI), and the Psychological Well-Being scale were utilized to gather data<sup>16</sup>.

Scharp, Paxman and Thomas (2015) intended to investigate the kinds of help that people who feel homesick look for. There were 34 in-depth interviews were out. The results, which were computed using content analysis, indicate that there are twelve distinct places that individuals overlook. The meaning of "home" was determined using a thematic analysis, and the respondents defined it as any cozy and secure setting<sup>17</sup>.

Stroebe, Schut and Nauta (2015) sought to give a scientific foundation for homesickness research in order to facilitate and direct it. The emphasis on (a) differentiating and studying stressors at home and in new places separately, (b) identifying various challenges and psychopathological consequences linked to each of these domains, and (c) emphasising the inclusion of regulatory processes in the model make the proposed model especially unique<sup>18</sup>.

Ashwini and Barre (2014) sought to investigate the academic performance of PUC college-bound students in a city, as well as their stress and adjustment areas. Eighty students made up the sample, forty of whom were in the arts. Twenty boys and twenty girls, ages sixteen to eighteen, were selected at random<sup>19</sup>.

Bhaskar, Rudramma and Komala (2014) sought to comprehend the connection between teenage adjustment and stress levels. Three hundred boys and three hundred girls, aged fifteen to sixteen, were enrolled in studies at the PUC College in Mysore. The Perceived Life Events Scale and the Bells Adjustment Scale, in that sequence, were used to gauge the stress and adjustment levels of teenagers<sup>20</sup>.

Rostami, Abolghasemi and Narimani (2013) sought to investigate the signs of quality-of-life therapy's impact on the mental health of maladjustment couples in the city of Shiraz. The Ryff measure of psychological well-being was applied. Multivariate analysis was used to examine the data (MANOVA)<sup>21</sup>.

Wong (2012) sought to investigate the association between psychological well-being and psychological maladjustment and positive v/s negative thinking. 398 Singaporean undergraduate students were included in the sample. Positive thinking has a negative correlation with pathology markers and a positive correlation with psychological wellness, or happiness and life satisfaction<sup>22</sup>.

Harrison and Brower (2011) to investigate Cultural Intelligence and Psychological Hardiness offer a justification for hypotheses on the influence on study abroad participants' effective psychological adjustment. In 96% of the evaluation tools, the only metric used to determine performance was student happiness<sup>23</sup>.

Hendrickson, Rosen and Aune (2011) sought to investigate how friendships arise, how they affect study abroad experiences, and how strong friendships are in relation to the three areas of friendship network, social connectivity & homesickness was completed by 84 foreign students<sup>24</sup>.

## **METHODOLOGY**

**Aim:** The aim is to study the Moderating Role of Adjustment in relation to Homesickness and Psychological Wellbeing in young adults.

### **Objective:**

1. To study the effect of Homesickness on Psychological Wellbeing.
2. How does Adjustment as a moderator affect the relationship between Homesickness and Psychological Wellbeing.

### **Hypothesis:**

1. Lower levels of Homesickness predict a good psychological wellbeing among young adults.
2. Adjustment provides a moderating affect and predicts the consequence on the Psychological Wellbeing young adults when coupled with Homesickness.

**Sample:**

The sample included 115 university students (N= 115, 26 Males, 86 Females and 3 others) aging from 19-35 (Mean Age = 21.55) years.

**Sampling Technique:**

The sampling technique included “Random Stratified Sampling”.

**Statistical Tools:**

The study was a Quantitative Study. The statistical tools included computation of Z-scores and a Continuous Moderation Analysis using Statistical tool for Social Sciences (SPSS).

**Research Tools:****Homesickness and Contentment (HC) Scale:**

**Introduction:** The scale is used as a psychological instrument for measuring Homesickness, Contentment, Loneliness and Depression of the individual. The scale is 20-item scale and uses a 5-point Likert scale. It measures emotional psychological adjustment to new culture and examining the symptoms of homesickness and contentment.

**Reliability:** The reliability coefficients are: Global Scale (0.79), Homesickness sub-scale (0.86) and contentment (0.93).

**Validity:** The homesickness scale was significantly correlated with convergent variables in the hypothesized direction. The contentment scale was significantly related to only the personality and social network adjustment scale indicating weak convergent validity.

**Brief Adjustment Scale-6 (BASE-6):**

**Introduction:** BASE-6 is a recently developed psychological measure to measure overall psychological adjustment. It is a 6-item questionnaire which is scored on a 7-point Likert

Scale. It was used to measure pre and post treatment changes and significant linear changes in multi-level growth modelling.

**Reliability:** The Cronbach's alpha for BASE 6 would be 0.89, indicating high reliability.

**Validity:** BASE-6 scores were positively correlated with Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) total score indicating good convergent validity.

### **Brief Mental Health Outcome Measure:**

**Introduction:** Schwartz Outcomes Scale-10 (SOS-10) is a 10-item scale developed to measure the effectiveness of psychiatric treatments. The scale represents broad construct related to multiple aspects of psychological wellbeing and can be used with a diverse range of populations within a wide range of clinical settings.

**Reliability:** The Cronbach's alpha for SOS-10 was 0.92, indicating high reliability.

**Validity:** Moderate to strong correlations were present between SOS-10 and Measure of subjective quality of life (SQUALA). A negative correlation was obtained for Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI), Clinical Global Impression Scale (CGI).

### **Procedure:**

The complete sets of questionnaires were presented to the participants via "GOOGLE FORMS". Initially, the participants were asked to fill in the preliminary details such as age and qualification and consent was taken.

HC scale was presented which contained 20 items, followed by BASE-6 which had 6 items and at last, SOS-10 appeared which had 10 items.

## **RESULT & DISCUSSION**

The study considered the moderation analysis in-order to predict that 'Adjustment' has a moderating effect on 'Homesickness' and 'Psychological Wellbeing'. Psychological wellbeing became the **Dependent Variable**, Homesickness became the **Independent Variable** and Adjustment is the **Moderating Variable**.

The table 1 reveals that the majority of the subjects are 'Females', who account for 74.78% of the total population. The female participants had a mean age of 20.93. The male population had a mean age of 23.38. The average age of the sample was 22.32 years.

**Table 1: Demographic Details of the subject**

Gender	Number	Percentage	Mean Age
Male	26	22.60%	23.38
Female	86	74.78%	20.93
Prefer not to say	3	2.60%	22.66

A **moderate to strong positive correlation** was present between Homesickness and Adjustment when compared with psychological wellbeing (as it was a dependent variable) indicated by  $R=0.6081$ . 36.98% of the **Variance** in Psychological wellbeing in the model initiated by Homesickness and Adjustment which is represented by R square. (Table 2)

**Table 2: Moderation Analysis Summary by Andrew F. Hayes**

R	R-square	MSE	F	dF1	dF2	P
0.6081	0.3698	0.6473	21.7090	3.0000	111.000	0.000

A Mean Squared Error i.e.  $0.6473$  shows **moderate** difference between the outcome and the predicted scores generated by the model. F statistic of  $21.70$  indicates that the overall model is **highly statistically significant**. dF1 and dF2 are 3 and 111 respectively representing degrees of freedom associated with the model and the residuals. The P-value was  $<0.001$  indicating **high significance** and **highly low possibility** of null hypothesis being true.

**Table 3: Model A Analysis by Andrew F. Hayes**

	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	0.1132	0.0797	1.4207	0.1582	-0.0447	0.2710
Z-score Homesickness	-0.2803	0.0849	-3.3008	0.0013	-0.4486	-0.1120
Z-score Adjustment	0.3480	0.0852	4.0847	0.0001	0.1792	0.5168
Interaction	0.2477	0.0586	4.2239	0.0000	0.1315	0.3639

The overall model brings into light that the relationship between ‘Homesickness’ and ‘Psychological Wellbeing’ is being moderated by ‘Adjustment’. The impact of homesickness on psychological wellbeing changes by the effect of adjustment of the person.

From the research analysis it can be said that, as adjustment increases, the negative impact of homesickness on psychological wellbeing decreases, leading to better outcomes for the individuals who might even be slightly homesick (Table 3).

An individual suffering from homesickness may have developed a disturbed sleeping pattern, might get angry, nervous or nauseous, withdrawn and insecure as well as might have low self-esteem. Staying connected with home, exploring new surroundings, taking care of one and working out can be the options one can consider if they feel homesick.

Psychological Wellbeing covers a variety of domains of an individual life which further provides with a feeling that an individual is in-charge of one's life. Henceforth, the research on Psychological Wellbeing, Adjustment and Homesickness where Adjustment forms the moderator shows that Adjustment acts as a strong moderator between the Psychological Wellbeing and Homesickness. The impact of homesickness on psychological wellbeing changes by the effect of adjustment of the person.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Homesickness can precipitate into a lurking and huge mental health issue such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, separation anxiety, Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD).

Things that can help include: Maintaining ties to the home, participating in the events, Personalize your background, Exploring new surroundings, Self-care, Working Out, Journaling, Mindfulness and Meditations.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, we may state that Homesickness and Psychological wellbeing are the two opposite sides of the coin. There exists a negative correlation between homesickness and psychological wellbeing which can be seen by the negative coefficient. The young adults try and maximize their adjustment in a new environment; this in-turn predicts an increase in the psychological wellbeing of an individual. The findings even suggest that there is a positive correlation between adjustment and psychological wellbeing. The interaction of homesickness and adjustment with psychological development being the dependent variable shows a positive correlation and thus predicting a positive influence.

Thus, the overall findings show that adjustment acts as a moderator predicting a positive relationship between homesickness and psychological wellbeing. It can be stated that the hypothesis (*Adjustment provides a moderating affect and predicts the consequence on the Psychological Wellbeing young adults when coupled with Homesickness*) stands true.

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