

An Explorative Study on Positive Family Environment and Adolescent's Behaviour Problems

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Abstract

The present study is to explore the associations between perceived family environment and adolescents' behaviour problem ratings for 13-14 years old adolescents in a sample of 30 adolescents studying in Govt. School. The descriptive method was utilized and the content as well as percentage analysis were carried out to find the relationship among them.

The adolescent period is generally said to be as the period of problems in the human span of life. There are several different areas through which the adolescent's boys and girls should go through successfully to achieve harmonious emotional development and adjustment. Some of the areas are the academic achievements in schools, developing emotionally well balanced individual, motivation to support the level of aspirations, developing creating skills, maintaining oneself free from delinquency, not getting maladjusted due to any discrimination by the parents, maintaining good relationship with parents, maintaining adjustment with peers and others in the school situation and in the playground. In this connection the present study was conducted to explore the possible

Adolescence marks an important turning point in the parent-child relationship. The biological, cognitive and emotional changes of the teenage years spark a transformation in the relationship. In many families the transition of the child into an adolescent coincides with the parent's transition into the midlife. This two introduces additional challenges into the family system that spill over into the parent child relationship. In such a scenario parents often end up feeling frustrated, helpless and anxious. Parents need helpful information on resolving these common adolescent's problems. They need to be equipped with practical skills to establish a healthy relationship with their children and maintain a stable and healthy family environmental.

Adolescence is a period of human development that is associated with multiple changes in the behavioural, cognitive, emotional and ideological realms. These changes occurring simultaneously often coexist with vigorous self-seeking, emotional instability, persistent questions about "Who am I? Where I am going?" new challenges and explorations, as well as conflicts, and misunderstandings within the family. The developmental outcomes of adolescence, a period of increased risk for emotional and behavioural problems, can greatly influence further personality maturation and functioning (Young blade & Theokas, 2006). Results of longitudinal research suggest that the long-term consequences of child and adolescent problem behaviour (especially externalizing problems) often encompass a wide spectrum of social maladaptation in adult life, including addiction, impaired family relationships, and criminal activity (Henderson, et al., 2006; Bongers, et.al, 2008). Consequently, the factors which contribute to healthy adolescent development or influence it negatively remain in need of further exploration. The present study examines the effect of family psychological environment and adolescents' behaviour problem. Analyzing and exploring

emotional and behavioural problems from the perspective of teachers. Emotional and behavioural problems as well as all other behaviours are considered to be the result of dynamic, bidirectional ecological interaction between a person and multiple levels of his or her environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). In the past two decades, significant empirical research has been done to develop comprehensive models of the role of multiple contextual domains (relations among individual characteristics, social relationships, and larger effects of communities and institutions) on adolescent behaviour and well-being, including both risk and protective factors (Compas, Hinden & Gerhardt, 1995; Ary, et al., 1999; Parke, 2004; Costa, et al., 2005). Jessor (1993) has proposed a theoretical framework to explain and explore the development of problem behaviour in adolescence. The model includes three major systems of explanatory variables: the perceived-environment system (social controls, models, and support), the personality system (values, expectations, beliefs, attitudes toward self and society), and the behavioural system (both problem behaviours and conventional behaviours). Each system is composed of variables that serve either as risk or protective factors for the development of problem behaviour (Jessor, 1993; Costa, et al., 2005). Jessor's (1993) model of the development of problem behaviour constitutes the theoretical framework of this research for examining of the association between adolescents' emotional and behavioural problems within the context of their perceived family

Family environment and adolescent developmental outcomes

The family is a primary socialization context and is therefore considered to be a very important factor influencing child development (White & Matawie, 2004). The both theoretical literature and empirical findings suggest that the family context plays a significant role in the adolescent's ability to successfully negotiate important developmental tasks. A positive family climate and nonconflictual family processes provide an emotionally supportive environment that helps the adolescent to feel secure enough to explore different values and beliefs, and to adjust to changes in the self, and to new environmental opportunities and demands (Pratt et al., 2003; Gutman & Eccles, 2007). Family environment is a widely used construct which makes it possible to conceptualize and study family systems and relationships. It includes such family relationship characteristics as expressiveness, cohesion, and level of conflict, and two essential characteristics of family system maintenance: organization and control (Moos, 1990). Within this construct, expressiveness refers to whether family members feeling free to express and discuss their feelings and emotions openly, cohesion is the extent to which family members are committed to the family unit, and conflict is assessed on the basis of frequency of to how often family interactions are angry and aggressive interactions. The two dimensions of system maintenance, organization and control, measure the degree of importance of clear organization and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities, as well as the extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run family life.

Adolescence is characterized by transformations in family relationships as parents' and adolescents' expectations about each other change (Lerner & Galambos, 1998). Families that are cohesive (i.e., open, communicative, and flexible) can accommodate better to the changing needs of family members during this time. Thus, it is suggested that adolescents from more cohesive families should be less inclined to resort to aggressive and delinquent behaviours than adolescents in families that have trouble negotiating these issues (Richmond & Stocker, 2006).

Previous studies examining the role of family environment in adolescent development indicate that family environment influences adolescent's psychological

adjustment and problem solving strategies (Aydin, & Oztutuncu, 2001; Jarvis, & Lohman, 2000), sense of well-being (DuBois, et al., 1992), as well as self-confidence and ability to set clear goals concerning their personal and professional future (Strage, 1998). Adolescents' internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems are related to their perception of their family environment (Gutman & Eccles, 2007). Family cohesion and supportive relationships between family members facilitate adolescent psychological adaptation and decrease the probability of depression (Herman, Ostrander, & Tucker, 2007), and reduce the negative influence of stressful eventson adolescent' well-being (DuBois, et al., 1992; Jarvis, & Lohman, 2000). These empirical findings suggest that a cohesive and supportive family environment serves as a secure base for adolescents' to develop effective coping strategies and the ability to manage the challenges they face. Research regarding level of family conflict suggests that a higher level of parental conflict causes adolescents' insecurity and psychological distress, and negatively influences self-confidence (Dunkle, Fondacaro, & Pathak, 1998). A conflictual family environment is associated with aggressive behaviour and with conduct disorder (Jenkins, et al., 2005; George, Herman, & Ostrander, 2006), as well as with adolescents' avoidant coping (Jarvis, & Lohman, 2000) and depression (Herman, Ostrander, & Tucker, 2007).

Families with high cohesion and expressiveness, high levels of organization and low or medium levels of parental control generally tend to be associated with positive outcomes for adolescent development. In contrast, families that are high in conflict and control and low in cohesion and expressiveness are generally associated with more negative outcomes (Hamid, Leung, & Dong Yue, 2003).

The present study

Examination of the existing literature suggests that there are definite associations between family environment, the quality of relationships within the family, and adolescent behaviour problem.

There is a high level of agreement about the importance of positive family environment for the development of a child's positive self-concept, self-confidence and self-efficacy in various domains of life. Also the empirical studies mentioned the positive associations between self concept characteristics and adolescent behaviour. This allows suggesting that the impact of positive characteristics of family environment, such as family cohesion and low conflict level, will be both direct and indirect, mediated by perceived self-efficacy. The goal of the present study was to explore the associations between perceived family environment and adolescents' behaviour problem ratings for 13-14 years old adolescents in a sample.

Objectives of the study

To find out the family environment of the adolescence and family type

To find out the effect of family environment on adolescence's behaviour

To know about the behaviour problem of the adolescence

Research Method

Sample

The study sample included 30 adolescents (14 males, 16 females) studying 9th std. of secondary school. The participants were 13 to 14 years in age. . The study sample was chosen so as to include representatives from semi urban area near Sriperumbudur, and from various socioeconomic status families.

Measures

Family Environment The tool used in the study was a standardized scale. To assess different characteristics of adolescents’ family psychological environment the Family Environment Scale (FES; Moos & Moos, 2002) was used. The FES contains 90 declarative statements which are rated true or false in the original version. The subscales of the FES are grouped into three dimensions: Relationships (Cohesion, Expressiveness, and Conflict); Personal Growth (Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, and Moral—Religious Emphasis); and System Maintenance (Organization, Control).

Reliability: A correlation of at least .80 is suggested for at least one type of reliability as evidence; however, standards range from .5 to .9 depending on the intended use and context for the instrument

Child behaviour Checklist- Teacher report form

The **Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)** is a component of the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA). The ASEBA is used to detect behavioural and emotional problems in children and adolescents. Teacher report form a semi structured schedule was administered from the class teacher of the students who answer family environment scale. The teacher report form contains 100 statements. The checklist was divided into 8 dimensions namely anxious, depressed, somatic complaints, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, rule-breaking behaviour, and aggressive behaviour.

Procedure

A researcher distributed the questionnaires to groups of 30 pupils during a classroom period when the teacher was not present. The questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher during the same period. The clear instructions were given to them. Since student are from semi urban area the questions were translated if needed. The teacher forms were given to know the problem behaviour of students. The entire class cannot be given as teachers are time pressed to finish their task. So the random sampling was done to choose 6 students from the class to find the problem behaviour using a structured interview schedule.

Results and Interpretations:

Table-1 indicates the result of the family environment of the students

S. No.	Family Type	% of students
1	Independence oriented family	13.33
2	Achievement oriented family	33.33
3	Intellectual	16.66
4	Moral religious family	3.33
5	Support oriented family	13.33
6	Conflict oriented family	-
7	Disorganised family	20

Table-1 indicates that the family types of the students. While analysing the data it is found that 33.33% students comes under achievement oriented family.16.33% students comes under intellectual oriented family. Independence oriented family and support oriented family percentage is same with 13.33%. Compare to other family types moral religious family students have less percentage with 3.33%. And no one comes under conflict oriented family type. But 20% students come under disorganised family.

The result shows that after achievement oriented family, disorganised family students are more in numbers than other family type. The students from the semi urban family and they don't have exposure to accomplish and possess high aspirations. But parents are very much into children education and they expect a lot from them as the competition is very high now- a- days. The achievement oriented and intelligence oriented both are reflected and which is also result of each other. The results from teacher's perception about student's problem behaviour also reflected on anxious, attention and thought orientation.

Table-2 indicates the result of the student's behaviour from teacher's perception

S.No.	DOMAINS	INTERPRETATION	MALE	FEMALE
1	ANXIOUS	HIGH	16%	32%
		AVERAGE	32%	16%
		LOW	-	-
2	DEPRESSED	HIGH	-	32%
		AVERAGE	16 %	16%
		LOW	32%	-
3	SOMATIC COMPLAINTS	HIGH	-	32%
		AVERAGE	-	16%
		LOW	50%	-
4	SOCIAL PROBLEMS	HIGH	32%	-
		AVERAGE	-	16%
		LOW	16%	32%
5	THOUGHT PROBLEMS	HIGH	-	-
		AVERAGE	32%	50%
		LOW	16%	-
6	ATTENTION PROBLEMS	HIGH	-	-
		AVERAGE	50%	32%
		LOW	-	16%
7	RULE-BREAKING	HIGH	32%	-
		AVERAGE	16%	-
		LOW	-	50%
8	AGGRESIVE	HIGH	16%	16%
		AVERAGE	32%	-
		LOW	-	32%

Interpretation

Table -2 shows the result of child behaviour checklist which is answered by the class teacher of the students. And it is found that in the anxious domain compare to boys girls are more anxious. In the depressed domain boys got average and low interpretation but girls got high and average interpretation. In the somatic complaints girls got high percentage compare to boys. In the social problems domain boys have more problems compare to girls. In the thought problem domain both boys and girls have got average. In the attention problem domain all boys got average but girls have low attention problem compare to boys. In the rule breaking domain all girls got low interpretation but boys are highly involved in this behaviour problem. In the aggressive behaviour domain boys are more aggressive compare to girls.

Conclusions:

The present study the students are from achievement oriented and intelligent oriented family so the behaviour problems are also reflected in that respect like the family is more disorganized and demands are also high this may be the reason for aggressive and anxious as well as role breaking behaviour. The informal discussion with the consent teachers were asked about the results of the research and their

The teachers' perception also goes along with the result of student's family environment.

Limitation of the study

The study was focused solely on the family environment context. There are many other contexts which influence adolescent development for example peer relationships and school environment which are influential during the adolescent period need to be included to explore the most dominant factor and design interventions based on the factor.

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