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A Study on Parenting and Emotional Wellbeing of Adolescence

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ABSTRACT

Parenting plays a fundamental role in shaping the emotional well-being of adolescents. As teenagers navigate the complexities of growing up, the support, guidance, and understanding they receive from their parents significantly impact their mental and emotional health. This study aims to explore how different parenting styles — including authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful — influence the emotional well-being of adolescents aged 12 to 18 years. Through surveys and in-depth interviews conducted with both adolescents and their parents, the research delves into the everyday experiences, challenges, and emotional landscapes of young individuals. Special attention is given to understanding how family communication, emotional support, and parental involvement shape adolescents' resilience, self-esteem, and coping mechanisms.

The findings reveal that adolescents who experience authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, encouragement, and reasonable boundaries, tend to exhibit greater emotional stability and self-confidence. Conversely, those exposed to authoritarian or neglectful parenting often report heightened levels of anxiety, low self-worth, and difficulty managing their emotions. Permissive parenting, while fostering a sense of freedom, sometimes leads to challenges in self-regulation and decision-making. The study underscores the importance of fostering a nurturing and responsive family environment where adolescents feel heard, valued, and supported.

By shedding light on the intricate connection between parenting and adolescent emotional well-being, this research provides valuable insights for parents, educators, counsellors, and policymakers. The findings emphasize the need for family-centered interventions and mental health support programs that promote positive parenting practices and enhance adolescent resilience. Ultimately, the study advocates for building stronger family relationships that nurture emotional well-being and empower adolescents to thrive in all aspects of life.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transformative period marked by significant physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. As adolescents navigate their way toward independence, the role of parents remains crucial in providing the necessary support, guidance, and care. Parenting, often seen as a delicate balance of nurturing and discipline, shapes not only the behavior of adolescents but also their emotional well-being. Understanding how different parenting styles influence the emotional health of adolescents is essential for fostering resilience, self-confidence, and overall well-being.

Emotional well-being encompasses the ability to manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and adapt to life's challenges. During adolescence, young individuals are particularly susceptible to emotional fluctuations due to hormonal changes, academic pressures, peer influences, and self-identity formation. In this context, the quality of parenting can either provide a solid emotional foundation or contribute to mental and emotional distress.

Understanding Parenting Styles

Parenting styles, first identified by psychologist Diana Baumrind, offer a framework for understanding how parents interact with their children. These styles are generally classified into four categories:

1. **Authoritative Parenting:** Characterized by warmth, support, and firm but reasonable boundaries, authoritative parents foster open communication and mutual respect. Adolescents raised in such environments often exhibit higher levels of self-esteem, emotional regulation, and resilience.
2. **Authoritarian Parenting:** Marked by strict rules, high expectations, and low levels of warmth, authoritarian parents prioritize obedience and discipline. While this style may ensure structure, it often results in adolescents experiencing anxiety, low self-esteem, and difficulty expressing emotions.
3. **Permissive Parenting:** Permissive parents tend to be indulgent, offering minimal guidelines while showering children with affection. Although this may create a comfortable atmosphere, adolescents may struggle with self-regulation, impulsivity, and poor decision-making.

4. **Neglectful Parenting:** Neglectful parents provide little emotional support or guidance, often leaving adolescents feeling isolated and emotionally unsupported. This absence of parental involvement can lead to feelings of rejection, insecurity, and behavioural issues.

The Impact on Emotional Well-being

The influence of parenting styles on adolescent emotional well-being is profound. Authoritative parenting, which promotes healthy communication and emotional expression, has been consistently associated with positive mental health outcomes. Adolescents raised in supportive environments often demonstrate better coping mechanisms, higher self-confidence, and stronger interpersonal relationships. On the contrary, authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles can contribute to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Furthermore, permissive parenting, while seemingly lenient, can hinder an adolescent's ability to manage emotions effectively. Without clear boundaries, adolescents may struggle with self-discipline, leading to challenges in academic performance and social interactions.

Recognizing these dynamics, this study aims to explore the relationship between parenting styles and the emotional well-being of adolescents. By examining real-life experiences, parental approaches, and adolescent perspectives, the research will provide valuable insights into the factors that promote or hinder emotional well-being.

Ultimately, understanding the intricate connection between parenting and adolescent mental health can inform parents, educators, and mental health professionals. Through fostering nurturing, communicative, and supportive family environments, it is possible to empower adolescents to navigate the complexities of growing up with confidence and resilience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Kaufmann et al. (2000):** Study examining how authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles affect elementary school children's socio-emotional adjustment from the parents' perspective, some interesting findings emerged. Authoritative parenting, which combines warmth and structure, was linked to fewer behavioural problems and better adjustment, as reported by both parents and teachers. In contrast, the relationship between authoritarian parenting, which is more strict and less responsive, and children's adjustment was either weak or not significant. The study's regression analyses showed that authoritative parenting was a stronger predictor of children's competence, explaining 22% of the variance, compared to 10% for maladaptation. This means that children with authoritative parents were more likely to develop skills and behaviors that help them succeed. Notably, the effects of parenting style on adjustment were consistent across different demographic variables, such as the child's gender, grade level, ethnicity, and family income. This highlights the broad benefits of authoritative parenting in fostering positive socio-emotional outcomes in children, regardless of their background.
2. **Desphande and Chhabria (2013):** Desphande and Chhabria discuss how parenting styles affect adolescents' self-esteem. Adolescents undergo significant changes during puberty, developing their sexual, gender, and ethnic identities. Peer relationships and social acceptance become crucial as teens strive for independence from their parents. This period brings unique challenges, and parents play a vital role in supporting their teens. Building a good relationship with teens, based on respect, understanding, and trust, can help them succeed and maintain a positive self-image. The research aims to understand how parenting attitudes influence adolescents' self-esteem.
3. **Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Batenhorst, and Wilkinson (2010):** Carlo et al. examined the relationships among parenting styles, parental practices, sympathy, and prosocial behaviors in adolescents. The study involved 233 adolescents from public high schools in the Midwestern U.S. The findings showed that parenting practices were significantly associated with adolescents' prosocial behaviors, mostly through indirect relations with sympathy. The associations between parenting practices and prosocial behaviors varied depending on the specific parenting practice and prosocial behavior. The study discusses the implications for future research on prosocial development and parenting among adolescents.
4. **Powers, Hauser, and Kilner (1989):** Powers et al. discuss current research themes relevant to adolescent mental health. They focus on analysing individual differences in adaptation to adolescence, integrating biological, psychological, social, and cultural variables, and emphasizing the developmental aspects of mental health. The article reviews empirical studies of adolescent mental health and development within the family context.
5. **Duggal and Bagasrawala (2019):** Duggal and Bagasrawala discuss the mental health needs of adolescents and young people in India. Adolescence and youth are critical developmental stages marking the transition from childhood to adulthood. The prevalence of psychological disorders among these age groups is increasing, but comprehensive data on these disorders are limited. The chapter aims to provide a detailed overview of the mental health status of adolescents and youth in India, based on a meta-analysis of epidemiological studies over the past 15 years. It highlights the prevalence of psychological disorders and the associated risk and protective factors, corroborated by inputs from mental health professionals and experts. The chapter also addresses cross-cutting issues such as stigma, discrimination, and vulnerable populations. It concludes with recommendations for future research and proposals to enhance mental health services for adolescents and youth in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES:

- To observe various parenting styles in different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- To measure how different parenting styles influence adolescents' emotional well-being.
- To explore the link between parenting behaviors (such as discipline, emotional support, and communication) and adolescents' ability to handle emotions.
- To examine how external factors (such as financial status, cultural background, and education level) modify the effects of parenting styles on emotional well-being.

UNIVERSE:

The study focuses on adolescents aged 14-18 years who are currently studying in 9th to 12th grades in Vadodara city.

SAMPLE SIZE:

The study includes a sample size is 50.

METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTION:

Convenient sampling was used, where 50 students from different schools were selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate.

FINDINGS

- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 78 percent (n=39), reported that their parents talk to them about good behaviour "Sometimes," "Often," or "Always." In contrast, 22 percent (n=11) indicated that their parents "Never" or "Occasionally" discuss good behaviour with them.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 84 percent (n=42), reported that their parents encourage them to do their best in school "Sometimes," "Often," or "Always." In contrast, 16 percent (n=8) indicated that their parents "Never" or "Occasionally" provide such encouragement.
- From the present study, it has been observed that parental involvement in schoolwork varies among respondents. A significant portion, accounting for 36 percent, reported that their parents "Sometimes" assist them, while 24 percent receive frequent support. Additionally, 18 percent of students indicated receiving consistent help from their parents. However, 12 percent reported never receiving assistance, and 10 percent stated receiving help only "Occasionally," indicating areas where parental involvement could be enhanced.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 78 percent (n=39), receive comfort from their parents when they are upset. However, a small percentage of respondents reported either not receiving comfort or not expressing their distress to their parents, highlighting areas for further exploration into family dynamics and emotional support systems.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 90 percent (n=45), feel supported by their parents when facing challenges, reporting feeling "Slightly Supported," "Very Supported," or "Extremely Supported." In contrast, 10 percent (n=5) indicated feeling "Not Supportive at all," suggesting the need for further investigation into factors influencing this perception and opportunities to enhance parental support.
- From the present study, it has been observed that the majority of respondents, accounting for 82 percent (n=41), receive praise or rewards from their parents "Sometimes," "Often," or "Always." However, 18 percent (n=9) reported that they either never or rarely receive praise, indicating a potential area for further exploration into the factors influencing parental behavior and its impact on children.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 72 percent (n=36), experience disciplinary actions from their parents through the removal of privileges or grounding "Sometimes," "Often," or "Always." In contrast, 12 percent (n=6) reported that their parents never use this method, while 14 percent (n=7) stated it is rarely used. Additionally, 2 percent (n=1) were unsure about its frequency, indicating diverse experiences of parental discipline and suggesting areas for further exploration into its effectiveness and impact.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 62 percent (n=31), believe that the rules set by their parents are fair. However, 36 percent (n=18) disagreed, indicating differing perceptions of parental guidelines. Additionally, 2 percent (n=1) expressed mixed feelings, suggesting areas for further exploration into the factors influencing these views and potential ways to address concerns regarding parental rules.
- From the present study, it has been observed that the majority of respondents, accounting for 72 percent (n=36), believe their parents place significant importance on knowing and respecting cultural traditions, considering them "Very important" or "Extremely important." In contrast, 28 percent (n=14) perceive cultural traditions as "Not important" or "Slightly important" to their parents, indicating varying perspectives and suggesting areas for further exploration into the factors influencing these views.

- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 68 percent (n=34), feel "Very comfortable" or "Extremely comfortable" when meeting new people. However, 32 percent (n=16) reported lower levels of comfort, indicating that a considerable minority may experience challenges in social situations.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 80 percent (n=40), spend time with their friends "Sometimes," "Often," or "Always." In contrast, 20 percent (n=10) reported spending little to no time with their friends, indicating potential areas for further exploration into the factors influencing social behavior and connections.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a majority of respondents, accounting for 62 percent (n=31), feel "Very confident" or "Extremely confident" in their problem-solving abilities. However, 38 percent (n=19) reported lower levels of confidence, with 10 percent feeling "Not confident at all" and 28 percent feeling "Slightly confident," indicating varying degrees of self-efficacy and suggesting areas for further exploration into the factors influencing problem-solving confidence.
- From the present study, it has been observed that social media significantly influences the self-image of 62 percent (n=31) of respondents, who reported its impact as "Quite a bit" or "A lot." In contrast, 38 percent (n=19) indicated that social media influences their self-image "Not at all" or "A little," suggesting a more neutral or limited effect.
- The data suggests that a significant majority of respondents experience some level of pressure to fit in with their friends or peers, with 76% (38 individuals) indicating that they feel pressure "A little," "Quite a bit," or "A lot." This highlights the commonality of social pressures among the respondents. On the other hand, 24% (12 individuals) reported feeling no pressure to fit in, suggesting that a notable portion of individuals are confident in their individuality and are less affected by peer influence. These findings provide valuable insights into the social dynamics and pressures experienced by the respondents and underscore the importance of addressing social anxiety and promoting self-confidence.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 72 percent (n=36), feel "Quite a bit" or "Completely" supported by their family when facing challenges. However, 28 percent (n=14) reported feeling only a little or no support, indicating areas for further exploration into the factors influencing these perceptions and opportunities to strengthen family support systems.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 54 percent (n=27), find it "Easy" or "Very Easy" to make new friends, reflecting a generally positive social ease. In contrast, 20 percent (n=10) reported difficulties in forming new friendships, while 26 percent (n=13) expressed a neutral stance, indicating a balanced perspective on social interactions.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 86 percent (n=43), can manage to calm themselves when upset "Sometimes," "Often," or "Always," reflecting strong self-regulation skills. However, 14 percent (n=7) reported "Never" or "Rarely" finding ways to calm themselves, indicating areas for further exploration into the factors affecting self-regulation and potential interventions to enhance these coping abilities.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a slight majority of respondents, accounting for 52 percent (n=26), do not feel comfortable expressing their emotions to others. In contrast, 46 percent (n=23) reported feeling comfortable sharing their emotions, while 2 percent (n=1) expressed comfort only with certain people. These findings highlight the need to foster supportive environments that encourage emotional expression and explore the barriers that hinder open communication.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 74 percent (n=37), experience stress or feeling overwhelmed "Sometimes," "Often," or "Always." In contrast, 26 percent (n=13) reported feeling stressed or overwhelmed "Never" or "Rarely," suggesting that a notable portion effectively manages stress. These findings emphasize the need for stress management strategies and mental health support to assist individuals in coping with stress.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant proportion of respondents, accounting for 82 percent (n=41), have a neutral to positive perception of their ability to handle stressful situations. In contrast, 18 percent (n=9) reported handling stress poorly or very poorly, highlighting areas for further exploration into stress management strategies and support systems.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a majority of respondents, accounting for 56 percent (n=28), perceive their parents' rules as fair. However, 42 percent (n=21) consider these rules unfair, while 2 percent (n=1) remain undecided. These findings indicate differing perspectives on parental rule-setting, emphasizing the need for further exploration into the factors influencing these views and ways to improve parent-child communication and understanding.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a majority of respondents' parents, accounting for 62 percent (n=31), rely on extended family for support "Sometimes," "Often," or "Always." In contrast, 36 percent (n=18) reported that their parents "Never" or "Rarely" seek support from extended family, while 2 percent (n=1) were unsure. These findings highlight the diverse roles extended family members play in providing support and suggest areas for further exploration into the factors influencing this reliance.
- From the present study, it has been observed that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 78 percent (n=39), feel accepted and supported by their peers to some extent. However, 22 percent (n=11) reported feeling accepted and supported "Never" or "Rarely." These findings underscore the importance of peer acceptance in the respondents' lives and suggest areas for further exploration into the factors influencing peer relationships and ways to create a more inclusive and supportive environment.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that parenting plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' emotional well-being, self-esteem, and resilience. Supportive and communicative parenting, particularly characterized by an authoritative style, fosters emotional stability and confidence. Adolescents raised in such environments demonstrate stronger coping skills and emotional regulation. In contrast, authoritarian parenting, marked by strict control with minimal emotional connection, often results in heightened stress and lower self-esteem. Similarly, permissive parenting can lead to challenges in emotional management and responsible decision-making, while neglectful parenting significantly increases the risk of anxiety, social withdrawal, and emotional instability.

Socioeconomic and cultural factors also influence parenting approaches, with financial stress and cultural expectations shaping parental behaviors. Economic hardships may reduce the quality of emotional support provided, while cultural norms dictate varying definitions of good parenting. Therefore, promoting culturally sensitive parenting strategies is essential for supporting adolescent emotional health.

Furthermore, external influences like peer relationships, school environments, and digital exposure contribute to adolescents' emotional development. Open communication between parents and children helps adolescents navigate these external pressures effectively. The study highlights the importance of fostering emotional resilience through consistent parental support, which enables adolescents to manage stress, build self-regulation skills, and develop a positive self-image. Balancing discipline with emotional availability remains key to nurturing emotionally resilient adolescents.

SUGGESTION

To foster healthier adolescent emotional well-being, it's essential to support parents in adopting positive parenting practices. Promoting authoritative parenting, which combines warmth, guidance, and clear boundaries, can be encouraged through workshops and community programs. Providing counselling services for parents, particularly those facing financial stress, can also improve their ability to offer emotional support. Schools can play a significant role by introducing programs that teach adolescents coping skills, emotional regulation, and resilience. Additionally, creating community-based support networks can offer parents a space to share experiences and learn from one another. Encouraging open communication between parents and children through interactive workshops can strengthen family bonds and build trust. Recognizing the influence of cultural values is equally important, ensuring that parenting resources are respectful and tailored to diverse backgrounds. Given the growing impact of digital exposure, parents can benefit from guidance on maintaining balanced screen time and supporting their children in navigating online interactions safely. Lastly, promoting stress management strategies for both parents and adolescents can enhance emotional resilience, creating a more supportive and understanding home environment. By implementing these approaches, families can build stronger connections, and adolescents can grow into emotionally resilient and confident individuals.

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