

Generation and Gender Differences of Teenage Behaviour and Habits

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Abstract: Adolescence, commonly known as teenage is a period of increased behavioural changes, influenced by both external environmental and internal factors. This study was aimed to determine generation and gender differences regarding some common behaviour and habits of teenagers. The respondents were divided into six groups, i. e. teenage girl, teenage boy, mother of a teenage girl, mother of a teenage boy, father of a teenage girl and father of a teenage boy. The data was collected using an online questionnaire and subjected to statistical analysis. A wide variability was noted in the responses of different groups of respondents when enquired about the common behaviour and habits of teenagers. However, studies on a larger scale with greater sample size are required in future to validate the findings of the present study.

Keywords: Gender, Teenage, Habits

1. Introduction

Adolescence refers to the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Historically, this typically spans from 12 to 18 years of age, which roughly corresponds to the time from pubertal onset (i. e., specific hormonal changes) to guardian independence (i. e., the legal definition of “adulthood” in many countries).¹ Adolescence coincides with puberty, a biological phenomenon defined by a constellation of events that are driven by increases in adrenal and gonadal hormones, including the development of secondary sex characteristics and modulations in muscle and fat.² It is associated with a period of increased behavioural changes and increased emotional reactivity. These behavioural changes occur in the context of developmental changes that are influenced by both external environmental and internal factors that elicit and reinforce behaviours.³ The gender intensification hypothesis, proposed by Hill and Lynch (1983), states that beginning in adolescence, girls and boys face increased pressure to conform to culturally sanctioned gender roles. These pressures come from a variety of sources that convey messages about appropriate gender roles, such as parents, peers, educators, and the media. In the face of these pressures, adolescents are thought to become more differentiated in their gender - role identities, which presumably will be adaptive for their adult roles as women and men.⁴ The present study was conducted to evaluate the generation as well as gender differences in some common behaviour and habits of adolescents (teenagers).

Aims and Objectives

- 1) To understand common habits and behaviour of teenage boys
- 2) To understand common habits and behaviour of teenage girls
- 3) To study differences between genders if any
- 4) Parents perception of teenage behaviour and habits

2. Methodology

Sampling method: Convenient sample.

The study was conducted as an online survey among adolescents and their parents to identify similarities or differences between teen boys and girls and between teens and their parents about some common behaviour and habits of adolescents, which included pocket money, preferred timings to return home, dining out with friends, ordering food from outside, importance of sports, fine arts, cooking and driving, involvement in household chores, use of gadgets, pet ownership and outstation trip with friends.

The study population was divided into following groups:

- 1) Teen Girls (TG)
- 2) Teen Boys (TB)
- 3) Mother of Teenage Girl (MTG)
- 4) Mother of Teenage Boy (MTB)
- 5) Father of Teenage Girl (FTG)
- 6) Father of Teenage Boys (FTB)

An online Google survey form was shared in different WhatsApp groups and Facebook. Same questions were asked from all of the above groups. The data was tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 25.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp. The significance of level adopted was 5%.

3. Results

There were total 381 respondents in the present study. Their distribution into six groups has been depicted in the graph below:

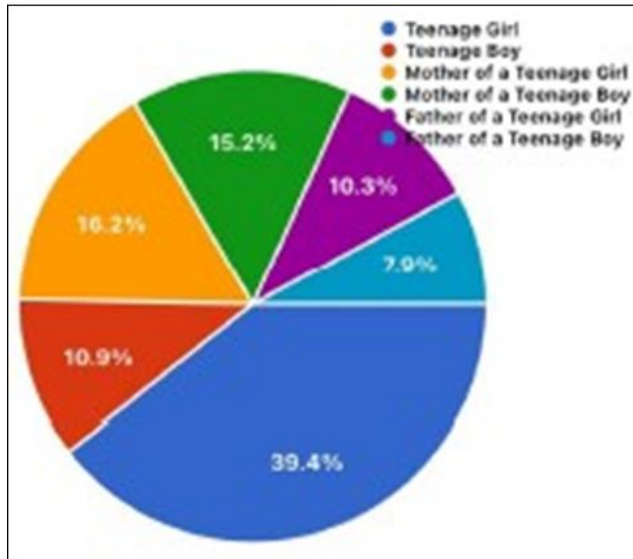


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents

- In the present survey, 42.8% teenage girls and 39.3% teenage boys had preference for taking as much pocket money as they wanted but it was observed that the parents of teenage girls and teenage boys had a preference for giving less than 3000 per month as pocket money.
- Parents of both teenage girls and teenage boys preferred that their children should be back by 9 pm. This was stronger for teenage girls. On the other hand, 24.7% teenage girls and 31.2% teenage boys preferred to be allowed to come home anytime they wanted. A tendency to come back a little later was noted in teenage boys.
- It was observed that more relaxation was given to boys for eating out with friends. 23.4% teenage girls responded that they were never allowed to eat out with a friend. However, majority of parents believed that children should be allowed to eat outside once a month.
- Majority of responses were in favour of occasional delivery of food from restaurants. It was noticed that teenage boys more often got food delivered at home.

Table 1: Responses of each category regarding frequency of food delivery from restaurants (in percentage)

| Group | Occasionally | Once or twice per week | Three to five times per week | Almost everyday |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Teenage Girl | 68.0 | 26.2 | 3.8 | 1.9 |
| Teenage Boy | 37.5 | 34.3 | 18.7 | 9.3 |
| Mother of Teenage Girl | 55.1 | 34.7 | 8.2 | 2.0 |
| Father of Teenage Girl | 56.6 | 40.0 | 3.3 | 0 |
| Mother of Teenage Boy | 43.5 | 50.0 | 4.3 | 2.1 |
| Father of Teenage Boy | 54.2 | 29.1 | 16.7 | 0 |

- 22.6% teenage girls and 43.7% teenage boys believed that it was not important at all to take part in sports. However, none of the parents agreed to this. Majority of parents believed that sports was must for career and fitness. The others responded it to be based on the interest of child.
- As far as importance of learning fine arts was concerned, most of the respondents believed that it should be based on the interest.
- As for cooking, most respondents, across all categories, felt it was must for teenagers to know cooking. 92.7% mothers of teenage boys and 58.3% fathers of teenage boys wanted their sons to know cooking.
- As far as importance of learning driving was considered overwhelming majority was of the opinion that learning driving was a must. Hardly anybody was of the opinion that it's not important at all. This was true for teenage boys as well as girls.
- Most of the parents believed that their children should own gadgets based on the requirement for their education. 12.1% teenage girls and 25% teenage boys preferred to own as many gadgets as they wanted. However, some respondents in all categories felt just a smart phone was sufficient.
- Extending help with household work was done on daily basis by 50.8% teenage girls whereas majority of teenage boys and parents accepted that teenagers should extend help with household works on special occasions like on festivals and when guests were there. 15.7% teenage girls and 20.6% teenage boys were helpful on weekends.
- As far as pet ownership was concerned, almost one fourth across all categories, already owned a pet. The

most of teenagers who already had a pet, were involved in taking care of their pets routinely while remaining helped on weekends or when the pets were sick.

- Teenage girls were less often allowed to go for outstation trip with friends. 65.7% teenage girls and 46.3% teenage boys responded that they were never allowed for outstation trip. It was noted that mothers of teenage girls as well as boys were less permissive about allowing their teenage children to go for an outstation trip with friends. 53.3% fathers of teenage girls and 65.2% fathers of teenage boys were of the opinion that children should be allowed for outstation trip once or twice a year.

4. Discussion

The pocket money has a positive and significant effect on adolescent consumption behaviour, where if the amount of pocket money increases, the consumption behaviour of adolescents also increases, and vice versa, if the amount of pocket money increases decreases, consumption behaviour also decreases, as elucidated by Hidayah N et al.⁵ Although most of children want pocket money according to their preference, we observed that parents wanted to give a limited amount to their children. Teenagers have a high ability to consume because they are more inclined and more enthusiastic to be the trend center in consumption activities. Current consumption activities are no longer to meet the needs of the youth's life, but consumption activities have been carried out to fulfill the desire to fulfill their lifestyle.⁶

Adolescent eating behaviour is a function of individual and environmental influences. Individual influences are

psychological as well as biological, whereas, environmental influences include immediate social environments such as family, friend, and peer networks and other factors such as school meals and fast food outlets. In addition, another important factor is social system or macrosystem which includes mass media, marketing and advertising, social and cultural norms of the society. A wide variability was noted in the present study regarding responses of eating out with friends or ordering food from outside in all categories of respondents.⁷We noticed that teenage girls were less likely to order food from outside. Adolescent girls become sensitive to their changing body size, shape, and physical appearance and are more prone to dietary modifications.⁸

Despite the progress towards gender equality over recent decades, some gender differences are still observed. Wight et al showed that female teenagers are more active in domestic chores, reading and doing homework, while male teenagers are more involved in screen - based activities.⁹ Kagesten et al showed a strong persistence in adolescents' gendered roles across countries with different policy and cultural contexts.¹⁰ The differences in gender and generation were implicated in responses related to household work, use of gadgets, outings with friends, learning driving, cooking and fine arts in this survey.

The findings of study by Lagestad P et al showed that adolescents who participated in organized sport preserved their cardiorespiratory fitness better compared with adolescents who participated in unorganized physical activity and adolescents with no weekly physical activity.¹¹ Majority of parents in the survey were of the same belief that sports was must for career and fitness. However, 22.6% teenage girls and 43.7% teenage boys believed that it was not important at all to take part in sports.

5. Conclusion

This survey highlights the differences in common behaviour and habits of teenagers based on their gender. The interview of parents on the same questions and topics gives an overview of generation differences also. A wide variability was noted in the responses of different groups of respondents when enquired about the common behaviour and habits of teenagers. However, studies on a larger scale with greater sample size are required in future to validate the findings of the present study.

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