

An Orientation with Family and Self: An assessment of Challenges Faced by the Youth

Ramiro Jesus Do Carmo Luis

(Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, St. Xavier's College, Mapusa Goa - India;

Abstract: *As individuals mature, their need to interact with the outside world increases. In the process they face a myriad of tasks to be accomplished with due success and commitment. Education, social relationships, family bonds, interpersonal contact, and careers are among the few expectations of young adults. The present study aims to assess the effects of orientation with regard to family and self among working youth and college students. The sample of 144 participants with college students (18-20) and working youth (21-23) were equally divided. The Youth Problem Inventory by Dr. (Mrs.) M. Verma was used to gather the research data. The mean differences did not indicate any significant differences on both groups (college students or working adults) and no significant differences on gender. The qualitative analysis through participant interaction and feedback, however, did indicate that working youth faced more challenges with regard to their self and family. Females were observed to be more oriented towards family as compared to males.*

Keywords: Youth, Self, Family, Youth problems

1. Introduction

Youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. However, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment. Therefore 'youth' is often indicated as a person between the age where he/she may leave compulsory education, and the age at which he/she finds his/her first employment.

As individuals walk through the path of life they are confronted with various choices such as discovering oneself, building healthy interpersonal relationships, excelling in academics, searching a career that suits one's potential and satisfies one's interests. As the adolescent gradually grows into a young adult they find themselves trapped in a dilemma of prioritizing between the needs of self and following the expectations of family, thus it depends on the wise choices that they make after having analyzed the cause of their problem. This choice can then give them a chance to explore themselves which can change their lives to a successful one.

This research study focuses on the domains of family and the domain of self as the family is the foundation for self formation. In the family the parents have a major impact in molding the character of their children. Depending on the personality of the child certain behaviours are either encouraged by rewarding them or are discouraged by not approving them. Parents adopt different parenting styles to control and modify the child's behaviour. As the individual matures from adolescence to adulthood there is a transition that occurs from dependence to independence in the life of the youth.

2. The Self

'Self' refers to the totality of an individual's conscious experiences, ideas, thoughts and feelings with regard to herself or himself. These experiences and ideas define the

existence of an individual at the personal and social level. 'Self' lies at the core of personality thus 'self' and personality are intimately related. There are many aspects of behaviour related to 'self'.

The way individuals perceive themselves and the ideas they hold about their competencies and attributes is called Self-concept. It is the view one has of themselves, which includes physical description, social personal traits, and existential statements.

Self-esteem or self-worth refers to the extent to which we like, accept or approve of ourselves or how much we value ourselves involving a degree of evaluation and we may have either a positive or a negative view of ourselves. Self-esteem shows a strong relationship with one's everyday behavior.

According to humanistic psychologist, Carl Rogers, *real self* is the self that feels most true to what and who we really are. It is the honest self within us. *Ideal self* is the self we think we want to be, that we strive to be and that we feel we are expected to be. There is always a discrepancy between *real self* and *ideal self*. When there is a correspondence between the *real self* and *ideal self*, a person is generally happy. Discrepancy between the *real self* and *ideal self* often results in unhappiness and dissatisfaction.

In a study by Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer and Kilmartin (the researchers indicated that self-esteem plays a central role in mental health. Self-reported influences on self-esteem involving the media, sexual harassment, body image, family and peer relationships, and emotional expression were. Girls reported lower self-esteem than boys in early adolescence, and late adolescent boys reported lower self-esteem than younger boys. Large gender differences were present for emotional expression, with boys becoming more restrictive across adolescence. Girls reported more negative body image and media influence scores than did boys in late childhood and early adolescence. Body image appeared to mediate the relationships between certain predictors and self-esteem for girls, while gender and grade appeared to moderate the relationship between media influence and self-esteem for girls and boys.

3. The Family

The family is the most valued system in almost all spheres of life and human living. It is the only institution which provides the security and support without any rewards in return. According to Burgess and Locke, 'family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household interacting and intercommunicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister, creating a common culture'.

The family interactions play an important role in the development of an individual. These interactions and interpersonal relationships are seen between members of the family. Every member in a family is important. The healthy functioning of these interactive patterns enhances mental health of the individual. The quality of relationships in the family is reflected in the adolescent's relationships with friends and later with neighbors, fellow citizens, colleagues, lovers. The family teaches moral and social values which the adolescent learns and forms their own beliefs about what is right or wrong, decent and fair. These values which they absorb, guides and helps them to gain control over their lives.

Family relationships become less important as the adolescent spends more time outside the home and develops a strong need for peer support and acceptance. Adolescents on one hand, may desire independence but may also be afraid of it and show a great deal of dependence on their parents. The young adult often spend a considerable time and invests a lot of energy in the upkeep of the family. The family in return also provides them love, care, support and helps them to develop their 'self' by encouraging, motivating, boosting their confidence and making them aware of their self-worth.

A study was conducted to examine the relationship between youth and parent perceptions of family environment and social anxiety by Jeffrey B Caster, Heidi M Inderbitzen and Debra Hope (1999). Adolescents reporting higher levels of social anxiety perceived their parents as being more socially isolating, overly concerned about others' opinions, ashamed of their shyness and poor performance, and less socially active than did youth reporting lower levels of social anxiety. Parent perceptions of child-rearing styles and family environment, however, did not differ between parents of socially anxious and non-socially anxious adolescents

Studies indicate that parents play a great role in enhancing youth's mental state. Many of the problems that youth face are largely of psychological nature and they result from their unhealthy thinking, negative attitude towards people and self and undesirable patterns of behavior. Although youth may find these problems too serious to handle, yet they can find effective solutions through psychological analysis of these problems.

4. Methodology

Aim

To study the orientations with regards to family and self among working youth and college students.

Hypotheses

- 1) Working youth will have more problems as compared to college students with regard to Family concerns.
- 2) Working youth will have more problems as compared to college students with regard to self.
- 3) Females will indicate more problems as compared to males with regard to family.
- 4) Males will indicate more problems as compared to Females with regard to self.

Research Design

A sample of 144 participants including college students (18-20) and working youth (21-23) were part of the study and were equally divided. The sample was derived from North Goa and South Goa with equal gender distribution. The consent of the participants was taken before they were involved in the research study. The Youth Problem Inventory by Dr. (Mrs.) M. Verma was the research tool used in the study. The questionnaire measures 4 areas but we have included items that measure 2 areas i.e. Family and Self. Higher scores indicate more problems in a given domain.

The research was exploratory in nature. Relevant literature was reviewed and the research design was formulated. The participants who were selected for the study were youth who were equally divided among the college students and the working youth residing at different areas, North Goa and South Goa respectively, considering the criteria of age, gender and religion. Data was collected and responses were scored in a manner which was specified by the scale manual. The responses were analyzed quantitatively by using mean scores and t-scores and were discussed qualitatively as well.

5. Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1: Working youth will have more problems as compared to college students with regard to Family concerns.

Table 1: Indicates the Mean Scores of Working Youth and College Students with regard to Family of Youth Problem Inventory.

Dimensions	Groups	Mean
Family	Working youth	16.88
	College students	16.22

It is observed from the Table 1 that the working youth have obtained a slightly higher mean score of 16.88 as compared to college students who have obtained a mean score of 16.22 on the family dimension of Youth Problem Inventory. Higher mean score indicates more problems. The mean differences were, however, insignificant. Youth is an age when people explore various possibilities in education, work and love as they move towards making enduring choices.

Through trying out these different possibilities, they develop a more definite identity, including an understanding of who they are, what their capabilities and limitations are, what their beliefs and values are, and how they fit into the society around them. These explorations, however, also make it the age and phase of instability. As they try different possibilities they move from one place or aspect to another. 'Feeling in-between' is another distinctive feature of youth, as they feel that they are neither adolescents nor fully matured adults. Higher mean score indicates more problems, thereby supporting the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Working youth will have more problems as compared to college students with regard to self.

Table 2: Indicates the Mean Scores of Working Youth and College Students with regard to Self

Dimensions	Groups	Mean
Self	Working youth	14.92
	College students	13.61

It is observed from the Table 2 that the working youth have obtained a mean score of 14.92 whereas the college students have obtained a mean score of 13.61 on dimension of Self of the Youth Problem Inventory. The mean differences indicate that working youth tend to face more problems with regard to self as compared to college students. When teens enter young adulthood, their thinking capacities, relationship skills, and ability to regulate emotions are unlikely to be at a developmental level where they can cope easily with the demands of a diverse, global, technological, rapidly-changing world. The changes in young adulthood build on changes that have taken place in adolescence. These changes and demands could contribute towards the development of issues towards self. Higher mean score indicates more problems, thereby supporting the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Females will indicate more problems as compared to males with regard to family.

Table 3: Indicates the Mean Scores of Males and Females with regard to Family

Dimensions	Groups	Mean
Family	Males	14.87
	Females	18.22

Table 3 indicates that the males have obtained a mean score of 14.87 whereas the females have obtained a mean score of 18.22 on dimensions of family of Youth Problem Inventory. This indicates that females tend to have more problems with regard to family as compared to males. One possible explanation for why females exhibit problems in response to family conflict is that there may be differences in how females and males cope with conflict in the home. There are established differences in coping styles between adolescent females and males, where females are more likely to respond to stress by directly avoiding problems (avoidant coping style) compared to males. A second explanation could be related to gender differences in perceptions of conflict-related stress, in that females and males may be attuned to different stressors. It has been demonstrated that compared to males, females are more sensitive to stressors related to

their families (Mazerolle, 1998). Higher mean score indicates more problems, thereby supporting the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: Males will indicate more problems as compared to Females with regard to Self.

Table 4: Indicates the Mean Scores of Males and Females with regard to Self

Dimensions	Groups	Mean
Self	Males	14.30
	Females	14.22

It is observed from the Table 4 that the males have obtained a mean score of 14.30 whereas the females have obtained a mean score of 14.22 on dimension of self of Youth Problem Inventory. The above mean scores indicate that males tend to have more problems with regard to self as compared to females. In a contradictory study by Harter et al., (1997) it was reported that young girls feel more intensively the problems and limitations that usually accompany women in the society they live in. Imitating their mothers' roles, they may start to understand the place women have in society, which, despite the achievements obtained, often implies a complex set of problems including professionals' fulfillment and other's expectations about women's social role. The results reported that women communicate having more conflicts as they build their self-images. Higher mean score indicates more problems, thereby supporting the hypothesis.

6. Conclusion

As adolescents are learners, they try to make sense of the world around them by they rely on their own individual experiences and prior knowledge but the youth are more interested in real life experiences and authentic learning opportunities. Adolescents tend to be more inquisitive about adults and are keen to observe and imitate their behaviour. The youth have the ability to anticipate their own needs, develop personal goals and enhance their future. The effectiveness of the coping efforts depends on the type of stress or conflict, the individual is facing.

References

- [1] Baron, R., & Byrne, D. (2003). *Social Psychology*. New Delhi: Ashok Ghosh Publishers.
- [2] Baron, R., Byrne, D., & Branscombe, N. (2006). *Social Psychology*. South Asia: Pearson Education Publishers.
- [3] Burgess, E. W., & Locke, H. J. (1953). *The family, from institution to companionship*. New York: American Book Company.
- [4] Caster, J., Inderbitzen, H., & Hope, D. (1999). The relationship between youth and parent perceptions of family environment and social anxiety. *Journal of anxiety disorders*, 13 (3), 237-251
- [5] Harter, S., Bresnick, S., Bouche, H. A., & Whitesell, N. R. (1997). The development of multiple role-related selves during adolescence. *Developmental Psychopathology*, 4, 835-853.
- [6] Kort-Butler, L. A. (2009). Coping styles and sex differences in depressive symptoms and delinquent behavior. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 38(1):122-36.

- [7] Mazerolle, P. (1998). Gender, general strain, and delinquency: An empirical examination. *Justice Quarterly*, 15:65–91.
- [8] Morrish, J., Kennedy, P. & Groff, P. (2011). *Parental influence over teen risk-taking: A review of the literature*. Toronto: Smartrisk.
- [9] Polce-Lynch, M., Myers, B. J., Kliewer, W. (2001). Adolescent Self-Esteem and Gender: Exploring Relations to Sexual Harassment, Body Image, Media Influence, and Emotional Expression. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 30: 225-244
- [10] Verma, M. (2004). *Youth Problem Inventory*. Agra: National Psychological Corporation.