

Influence of Parent Child Relationship, School Environment, Peer Relationship on Mental Health of Adolescents

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Abstract: *The main objective of the present study was to find out the influence of parent child relationship, school environment and peer relationship on mental health of adolescents. The study was conducted in Guntur town of Andhra Pradesh. Multistage random sampling was used to select 285 boys and 285 girls from 8th, 9th and 10th standards of selected high schools. Parent Child Relationship Scale, School Environment Inventory, Peer Relationship Scale and Mental Health Inventory were used to collect the necessary data. Results revealed that the School Environment contributed 9.36 percent of variance in the prediction of Mental Health Liabilities and 3.87 percent of variance in the prediction of Mental Health Assets. Peer Relationship contributed highest percent of variance (18.66) in the prediction of Mental Health Assets. Mother-Child Relationship accounted for 2.63 percent of variance in Mental Health Liabilities and Father-Child Relationship explained 2.45 percent of variance in the prediction of Mental Health Assets. Poor and unhealthy atmosphere of the school contributes towards development of mental health problems among adolescents. Hence appropriate measures are to be taken to maintain conducive environment in the school which contributes towards positive mental health of the adolescents.*

Keywords: Parent Child Relationship, School Environment, Peer Relationship, Mental Health, Adolescents

1. Introduction

Mental health is a growing problem of modern life. Mental health is one of the most pressing concerns for public health care systems worldwide. Adolescents experiencing difficulties with mental health also tend to have problems with physical health, relationships with family members and peers as well as with functioning at school (Jane-Llopis and Braddick, 2008).¹ In adolescence poor mental health is also associated with substance use and abuse, violence, depression, attention deficit disorders and suicide (Patel et al., 2007).²

It is estimated that around 20 percent of the world's adolescents have a mental health or behavioral problems at least half of them show impaired schooling and social development (UNICEF, 2011).³ The prevalence of mental disorders among adolescents has been increased in the past 20 – 30 years. This increase is attributed to disrupted family structures and family's unrealistic educational and vocational aspirations for their children.

2. Significance of the Study

The mental health of adolescents is a crucial issue as it has an impact not only on the health of this generation but on Nation's prosperity. The mental health problems that adolescents encounter not only disturb the productivity of an individual, it puts high burden on families and the community.

Family is the most important in the child's network because members of the family constitute the child's first environment and are the most significant people during the early formative years. It has a significant impact on the

child, affecting total personality i.e., beliefs, attitudes, behavior, aspirations, aptitude and self-esteem of the child. Shah (2012) carried out a study on "Familial relationships and adolescent wellbeing" and found significant positive correlation between parent child relation and adolescent wellbeing.⁴ Similar observation was made by Feldman *et al.*, (2013) that youth who had positive relationship with their parents had higher self-efficacy regarding their social behaviours.⁵

The school is the most significant social context in the life of a child in which the child learns the rules of morality, social conventions, attitudes and modes of relating to each other. School substitutes the home environment and often meets the emotional needs that are neglected in the home. The study of Thakur *et al.*, (2004) found the relationship of school environment with development of moral values.⁶ Singh (2015) observed that a teacher with bad mental health not only tends to incapacitate himself for the performance of his multifarious duties in the school but also creates difficulties and problem for his students.⁷ As per the study of Shalini *et al.*, (2012) majority of teachers are unaware of the adolescent problems where there is a need to conduct awareness programme regarding adolescent problems.⁸

During adolescence the peer group is becoming the primary context for socialization and emotional experience. These new bonds broaden and enrich the world of adolescents but also lead to higher interpersonal demands. As per Rose and Rudolph (2006) Peer group affiliation, social status and intimate close relationships become more important for adolescents.⁹ Rueger *et al.*, (2010) studied on "support from an adolescent", and found that peer group has consistently been associated with adjustment, specifically lower depression and hyperactivity, higher leadership, and better

social skills.¹⁰ The study of Rosen *et al.*, (2007) also revealed that peer victimization during adolescence is likely to result in mental health problems as addictive behavior and internalizing problems.¹¹

Thus the Child and adolescent mental health is a necessary priority for the healthy development of societies (World Health Organization, 2014).¹² Hence there is a need for research to identify the factors that may affect mental health. This helps to strengthen conditions which are conducive to positive mental health. The main thrust of the present investigation is to examine the influence of parent child relationship, school environment and peer relationship on mental health of adolescents.

Statement of Problem

Influence of Parent Child Relationship, School Environment, Peer Relationship on Mental Health of Adolescents

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are to find out

- 1) The contribution of parent-child relationship in the prediction of mental health of adolescents.
- 2) The contribution of school environment in the prediction of mental health of adolescents.
- 3) The contribution of peer relationship in the prediction of mental health of adolescents.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for verification:

- 1) Parent child relationship would explain variance in the prediction of mental health of adolescents.
- 2) School environment would explain variance in the prediction of mental health of adolescents.
- 3) Peer relationship would explain variance in the prediction of mental health of adolescents.

Delimitation

- The study was limited to 8th, 9th and 10th class students only.
- Study was delimited to only government, minority and private schools in Guntur city.

3. Methodology

Research Approach and Design

The research approach was quantitative approach with descriptive – correlation design.

Variables:

Dependent Variable: Mental Health of Adolescents

Independent Variable: Parent Child Relationship, School Environment, Peer Relationship

Associate Variables: Selected demographic variables.

Research Setting:

The study was conducted at selected Government, Private and minority Schools in Guntur city.

Population:

The population chosen for the study was adolescents studying 8th, 9th and 10th classes in selected Government, Private and minority Schools in Guntur city.

Sample:

A total of 570 adolescents were selected for the study out of which 285 were boys and 285 were girls.

Sampling Technique:

Multistage Random sampling Technique was adopted to select the samples.

Development and Description of the tool:

Four tools were used to collect the data as mentioned below:

Mental Health Inventory (MHI)

Parent Child Relationship Scale (PCRS)

School Environment Inventory (SEI)

Peer Relationship Scale (PRS)

Mental Health Inventory (MHI)

Mental health inventory (Manjuvani, 1995) which was an adopted version of Thorpe and Clarke (1959) was used to assess mental health. It consists of 100 questions classified into two broad categories i.e., assets and liabilities. Assets are attitudes, beliefs and aspirations, skills and achievements which contribute to a sense of well-being. Mental health liabilities are threats to emotional security which impede the attainment of needed satisfactions and objectives. For questions of assets one mark was assigned for 'yes' response and zero to 'no' response. This pattern was reversed for questions belonging to liabilities where one mark was given to 'no' response and zero to 'yes' response. High scores on the assets component signify the presence of these qualities to a higher degree, while high scores on the liabilities component imply an absence or freedom from liabilities. Thus both categories are scaled in the same direction.

Parent Child Relationship Scale (PCRS)

The relationship between parent and child was assessed by using parent child relationship scale developed by Nalini Rao (1971). PCRS consists of 100 items categorized into ten dimensions namely, protecting, symbolic punishment, rejecting, object punishment, demanding, indifferent, symbolic reward, loving, object reward neglecting. Items of the scale are arranged in the same order as the dimensions and they rotate in a cycle through the scale. Each respondent score the tool for both father and mother separately. Children are asked to respond with 'many times' or 'some times' or 'rarely' on the statement to express their own perception of their relationship with either father or mother. The scale is scored separately for each of the parent.

School Environment Inventory

School environment inventory measures the student's perception of social, emotional and physical climate of school in which the subject is studying. Two response categories 'yes' or 'no' have been provided for each question. The correct answers of the items have been provided a score of one (1) or otherwise zero. Thus the maximum possible obtainable score on school environment inventory is 73 and minimum is zero.

Peer Relationship Scale (PRS)

Peer relationship scale measure the subject’s perception of relationship with his/her friends on seven dimensions namely encouragement, enjoyment, acceptance, trust, respect, understanding and spontaneity. Two response categories ‘yes’ or ‘no’ have been provided against each question. The correct answers of the items have been provided a score of one (1) or otherwise zero (0). Thus the maximum possible obtainable score of PRS is 56 and minimum is zero (0).

4. Results

The collected data was analyzed by using co-relation and stepwise multiple regression analysis and the results were interpreted under the following headings.

Section A: Co-relation between Parent Child Relationship, School Environment, Peer Relationship and Mental health of Adolescents.

Section B: Prediction of Mental Health Assets from Parent Child Relationship, School Environment and Peer Relationship Scores.

Section C: Prediction of Mental Health Liabilities from Parent Child Relationship, School Environment and Peer Relationship Scores

Section A: Co-relation between Parent Child Relationship, School Environment, Peer Relationship and Mental Health of Adolescents

An attempt was made to explore the relation between parent child relationship, school environment, peer relationship and mental health of the adolescents with the help of correlation analysis. The correlation matrix results are presented in table 1.

Table 1:Co-relation between Parent Child Relationship, School Environment, Peer Relationship and Mental Health of Adolescents

	Mental Health	Parent Child Relationship	School Environment	Peer Relationship
Mental Health	-	0.030@	0.408**	0.356**
Parent Child Relationship		-	0.023@	0.026@
School Environment			-	0.484**
Peer Relationship				-

** Correlation was significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As per the above results it was observed that there was a positive correlation between school environment (r= 0.408**) and mental health of adolescents. From the above table it was also observed positive correlation between peer relationship (r = 0.356**) and mental health of adolescents. It was surprising to note that there was no significant relation between parent child relationship and mental health of adolescents. It also can be observed that school environment and peer relationship were correlated

significantly with each other and the level of significance was at 0.01 level.

With above discussion it was known factor that healthy school environment paves the ground for the adolescent to choose and develop healthy friends. Interactions with the friends are more intensified as adolescent has to spend large amount of time in the school. In turn healthy friendships encourage the adolescent to succeed in studies, to develop good attitudes and behaviors. Thus school environment and peer relationship together contributes for the positive mental health of adolescents.

Section B: Prediction of Mental Health Assets from Parent Child Relationship, School Environment and Peer Relationship Scores

Step-wise multiple regression analysis was carried out in order to examine the relative contribution of father child relationship, mother child relationship, school environment and peer relationship on the prediction of mental health assets and the results were presented in table 2.

Table 2: Prediction of Mental Health Assets from Parent Child Relationship, School Environment and Peer Relationship Scores

Step No.	Independent Variable	R	R ²	SE for R	F-Value for R	% of Variance
1.	Peer Relationship	0.432	0.187	4.352	130.682 (1,568)**	18.66
2.	Father-child Relationship	0.456	0.208	4.300	74.261 (2,567)**	18.35 2.45
3.	School Environment	0.469	0.220	4.27	53.187 (3,566)**	15.72 2.40 3.87

The above results showed that out of 4 independent variables i.e., father child relationship, mother child relationship, school environment and peer relationship, three variables viz., peer relationship, father child relationship and school environment have predicted the assets. Among three variables the highest contribution was explained by peer relationship in the prediction of assets (18.7 percent of variance). Mother child relationship was not entered into the regression analysis in predicting the mental health assets of adolescents.

Section C: - Prediction of Mental Health Liabilities from Parent Child Relationship, School Environment and Peer

Relationship Scores

The contribution of father child relationship, mother child relationship, school environment and peer relationship on mental health liabilities was observed with the help of step-wise multiple regression analysis and the results were presented in table 3.

Table 3: Prediction of Mental Health Liabilities from Parent Child Relationship, School Environment and Peer Relationship Scores

Step No.	Independent Variable	R	R ²	SE for R	F-Value for R	% of Variance
1.	School Environment	0.306	0.093	6.267	58.485 (1,568)**	9.36
2.	Mother child Relationship	0.342	0.117	6.19	37.523 (2,567)**	9.07

From the above results it could be seen that out of four independent variables only two variables viz., school environment (9.36 percent of variance) and mother child relationship (9.07 percent of variance) entered in to the regression analysis in the prediction of liabilities. Remaining two variables viz., father child relationship and peer relationship did not show variance in predicting mental health liabilities.

5. Conclusion

- School environment showed a major role in determining mental health of adolescents as it contributed in the prediction of both mental health assets and liabilities. Hence measures are to be taken to maintain healthy school environment that promote mental health of adolescents.
- Next to school environment, peer relationship had significant role in determining the mental health of adolescents. Highest contribution was from peer relationship in the prediction of assets. But it did not account variance in the liabilities. Hence the role of peers is more important in cultivating positive aspects of mental health than limiting the mental health liabilities. Parents and teachers are responsible to help the child to develop and maintain healthy friendships which ultimately contributes towards positive mental health of adolescents.
- As per the results of regression analysis it was surprising to observe the contribution of parent child relationship in the prediction of mental health of adolescents is low. Still the parents are considered important in helping the child to develop positive mental health as they are the first socializing agent for the child to teach healthy behavior.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the results of the study.

- A comparative study can be done on urban and rural children to determine the influence of parent-child relationship, school environment and peer relationship on mental health of children.
- A similar study can be conducted on children studying intermediate and degree in order to assess the influence of parent-child relationship, school environment and peer relationship on mental health of children.
- An exploratory study can be conducted to assess the mental health problems of children and influencing factors.

- A similar study can be conducted on parents, teachers and friends of adolescent in order to examine their perception towards the adolescent.

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