



Perceived Parenting During Adolescence in Context of Parents' and Adolescents' Sex

KEYWORDS

Parent- Adolescent Relationship, Boys, Girls, Fathers, Mothers.

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ABSTRACT *The present research focuses on perceived parent child relationship during adolescence. The sample for the study comprised of 100 families with either only male children or only female children in the age group of 11-18 years. The entire sample was drawn from the urban areas of Jammu, J & K. Random sampling technique was used for selection of the sample for the study. Tool used for gathering information was a standardized Parent-child Relationship Scale (Rao's), which were filled in by the adolescents. Results reveal that as far as adolescent's perceived parenting was concerned, some differences were found according to the sex of the parent but on the whole parenting as perceived by adolescent's remained more or less similar for mothers and fathers. Overall, whether they had sons or daughters most parents showed more positive parent-child relationship than negative. Parenting of both fathers as well as mothers however varied significantly according to the sex of their adolescent, as with daughters they were more protecting but with sons they were more punishing and strict. The findings highlight the significant influence of both parental as well as children's sex in shaping their mutual relationship.*

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is the process of raising a child from birth, until adulthood. Parents play a significant role in all around development of the children. Parent is not just a person who brings a child into the world and cares for him/her during the early years of life, but instead parents are the person who equip the child with the resources needed to meet the demands of life. Santrock (1983) refers to parenting as the way in which parents deal with children. The term "parenting" reflects modern insight into parental role which is more comprehensive view of the whole child rearing process.

Many parents find early adolescence to be significant period during the teenage years. As the adolescents grow older, their feelings about contact with parents become more positive. As they gain autonomy and develop more mature family relationship, adolescents continue to look at parents for comfort, support and advice (Fulgini and Eccles, 2001). Teenage is considered as a period of stress and storm. Family relationships at this particular stage of life become very sensitive and vulnerable. Family atmosphere is very important factor, which contributes to the parent – teen relationship. Family atmosphere may be characterized by the relationships that already exists in it and moreover by status of each family member specially the parents. It has been observed that these family relationships are different for sons and daughters. The parents act is a gender specific manner and the boys and girls are treated differently which leads to development of different self concepts and behaviours of boys and girls (Hoffman and Kloska, 1995). Several studies have also shown that children and parents have overlapping but discrete perceptions of their relationships or each other's behaviour.

Gender equality has achieved greater acceptance in society and one would expect parents to be more likely to treat their male and female children equally. Studies by sociologists and psychologists during the past 30 years, however, have documented consistent discrepancies between the behaviour of parents of sons and parents of daughters. Fathers who have sons are more involved with their children

(Harris and Morgan, 1991), while mothers of sons are more concerned about child obedience.

In the developmental process of child, majority parents feel that the adolescent years are the most difficult ones for child rearing. It is a period of physical and psychological maturity, when an individual is expected to establish his or her own identity and to develop necessary skills for socially responsible behaviour. Adolescent's transition to adulthood can be a smooth process facilitated by the guidance of caring, nurturing and understanding parents in an emotionally conducive environment (Goleman, 1995).

Children and adolescents perception about parent child relationships and parental relationships are more strongly linked to social and emotional outcomes. Parent-child sharing healthy and warm relationship are found to develop social and emotional potentialities and get an advantage of getting parental suggestions, ideas and communication skills and critical sense of security (Mehta, 1995).

From developmental point of view, parent- child agreement can be seen as one of the variables that characterize effective parenting. Children are influenced by their perceptions of parental attitudes and behaviours or those reported by their parents. Some studies have suggested that children's descriptions of their mothers' and fathers' parenting behaviors overlap considerably. Although little research has examined this issue, there is evidence that children may attribute the characteristics of one parent, possibly the dominant parent in the child's mind, to both parents i.e. when an adolescent rated a mother as authoritarian, the father was likely to be rated the same (Bartle et al, 1989).

With this as background the present study has been designed to assess the parent child relationship shared during adolescence as a byproduct of the sex of the parents and the children. How adolescents perceive their self parenting and further how adolescents perceive their parent's parenting has been analyzed. Studies of such nature are rare in the present geographical locale and results ob-

tained will be useful in understanding parent child relationship in a new perspective.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the nature of perceived Parent-child relationship during adolescence.
2. To assess differences if any in the parenting pattern according to sex of the child and sex of the parent.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. SAMPLE GROUP:

Sample: The sample comprised of 100 families with either only male or only female children. Adolescent boys and girls of selected families were the primary source of information.

Sample size: 50 families with only male children and 50 families with only female children selected from different parts of Jammu comprised the sample size.

Locale: The sample for the study was drawn from different parts of Jammu namely Nanak Nagar, Shastri Nagar, Preet Nagar and Digiana Camp.

Sampling technique: Random sampling technique was used for selecting sample for the study. Data was collected from adolescent boys and girls through school visits. Central and Southern Jammu (as per municipal demarcation) was especially chosen for selecting the sample. A list of high and higher secondary schools was prepared. Then randomly 10 schools were selected and from each school 10 adolescents fulfilling the sampling criteria were drawn.

2. TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION:

i) **Parent Child Relationship Scale:** Parent child relationship scale developed by Dr. Nalini Rao (1989) was used. In order to find out the kind of relationship the children have with their parents (mothers and fathers), PCRS was employed on the children. Children rated their parents i.e. fathers and mothers separately on a 5 point scale, Always to Rarely weighted 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 on the scale points. The tool parent child relationship scale (PCRS) contains 100 items categorized into 10 dimensions namely Protecting (PRO), Symbolic Punishment (SP), Rejecting (REJ), Objective Punishment (OP), Demanding (DEM), Indifferent (IND), Symbolic Reward (SR), Loving (LOV), Object Reward (OR) and Neglecting (NEG).

3. DATA ANALYSIS: Data was analyzed by using both qualitative and quantitative measures. Content analysis was done for descriptive data whereas for quantitative data various statistical procedures were applied. It includes calculation of Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Results of the study are discussed as follows:

1. Analysis of Son's Perceived Parenting of Fathers and Mothers

**Table no.1
Son's Perceived Parenting of Fathers and Mothers**

DIMENSIONS	Father's rating	Father's rating	Mother's rating	Mother's rating	t-value
	Mean	± S.D	Mean	±S.D	
PRO	35.40	±5.06	38.08	±5.71	2.999*
SP	29.86	±6.01	30.94	±7.06	0.995

REJ	26.10	±5.32	25.2	±4.44	1.079
OP	27.22	±6.74	27.7	±7.86	0.466
DEM	33.60	±6.59	33.62	±4.109	0.020
IND	26.34	±4.59	27.92	±6.07	1.742*
SR	32.86	±7.39	35.1	±5.75	2.148*
LOV	35.16	±6.53	35.76	±5.27	0.819
OR	32.70	±7.01	32.3	±6.65	0.408
NEG	25.58	±6.24	25.06	±6.95	0.561

***significant at p< 0.05**

Table1 depicts the comparative analysis of perceived parenting by the male adolescents of their respective fathers and mothers. The calculated t –value shows significant differences at 0.05% level in dimensions such as protecting, indifference and symbolic reward. The mean value of mothers was higher in all these dimensions than the father for the sample boys, indicating that the sample mothers were more protecting but at same time more indifferent and used more symbolic reward.

On all the other dimensions the fathers and mothers were rated almost equally by their adolescent sons. For boys exclusively, the parents jointly score lower on dimensions namely neglecting, rejecting, object punishment and indifference but scored higher on protecting, loving and symbolic reward dimensions. The results highlight that for sons the sample parents whether mothers or fathers were more positive than negative in their parenting.

2. Analysis of Daughter's Perceived Parenting of Fathers and Mothers

**Table no.2
Daughter's Perceived Parenting of Fathers and Mothers**

DIMENSIONS	Father's rating	Father's rating	Mother's rating	Mother's rating	t-value
	Mean	± S.D	Mean	±S.D	
PRO	38.68	±5.06	40.54	±5.71	2.778*
SP	26.86	±6.01	28.02	±7.06	1.255
REJ	21.96	±5.32	22.88	±4.44	1.178
OP	22.3	±6.74	22.96	±7.86	0.780
DEM	32.34	±6.59	33.64	±4.109	1.239
IND	25.52	±4.59	26.44	±6.07	1.065
SR	36.36	±7.39	36.66	±5.75	0.450
LOV	36.72	±6.53	37.24	±5.27	0.582
OR	30.86	±7.01	31.62	±6.65	0.969
NEG	22.84	±6.24	23.00	±6.95	0.226

***significant at p< 0.05**

When the adolescent girls rating of their mothers and fathers were compared, significant differences were obtained only on the dimensions of protecting. Here, also the mothers were found to be more protective than the fathers. On the rest of the dimensions however, no significant difference were obtained indicating that the sample girls felt that usually their fathers and mothers had similar parenting pattern in dealing with them.

Just as the sons, for daughters also the parents on the whole showed more positive behaviour such as protecting,

loving and symbolic rewards than the negative behaviour such as neglecting, rejecting, object punishment.

In sum, table 1 and 2 reveals that overall as well as separately for sons and daughters, there were significant differences in some dimensions such as protecting, loving and symbolic rewards with mothers scoring higher than the fathers. Also, overall the parents scored higher on the positive dimensions of the parenting than on negative dimensions and further, this trend continued for adolescent boys and girls

3. Analysis of Fathers Parenting as Perceived By Adolescent Daughters and Sons

Table no.3
Fathers Parenting as Perceived By Adolescent Daughters and Sons

DIMENSIONS	Daughters	Daughters	Sons	Sons	t- Value
	Rating	Rating	Rating	Rating	
	Mean	± S.D	Mean	±S.D	
PRO	38.68	±5.06	35.40	±7.64	2.685*
SP	26.86	±6.01	29.86	±6.76	2.258*
REJ	21.96	±5.32	26.10	±6.32	3.128*
OP	22.3	±6.74	27.22	±6.55	3.512*
DEM	32.34	±6.59	33.60	±6.95	0.871
IND	25.52	±4.59	26.34	±4.42	0.860
SR	36.36	±7.39	32.86	±7.69	2.144*
LOV	36.72	±6.53	35.16	±7.57	1.168
OR	30.86	±7.01	32.70	±7.57	1.307
NEG	22.84	±6.24	25.58	±5.80	2.001*

*significant at p < 0.05

The perceived parenting pattern of fathers by their adolescent daughters and sons was compared. The results reveal highly significant differences on the dimensions of object punishment, rejecting, protecting, symbolic punishment, symbolic reward and neglecting. The fathers of daughters were found to be more protective and used more symbolic rewards than the fathers with sons. On the other hand, fathers of boys were found to score higher on object punishment, rejecting, symbolic punishment, and neglecting. The boys reported that their fathers were more controlling and dominating when it came to them. These results highlight that the father's parenting varied according to the sex of their children. With daughters they were more protecting, while with sons they were more strict and demanding.

4. Analysis of Mothers Parenting as Perceived By Adolescent Daughters and Sons

Table no.4
Mothers Parenting as Perceived By Adolescent Daughters and Sons

DIMENSIONS	Daughters	Daughters	Sons	Sons	t- Value
	Rating	Rating	Rating	Rating	
	Mean	± S.D	Mean	±S.D	
PRO	40.58	±5.71	38.08	±7.76	1.83*
SP	28.02	±7.06	30.94	±7.33	1.93*
REJ	22.88	±7.44	25.20	±6.52	1.58

OP	22.96	±7.86	27.77	±7.96	2.69*
DEM	33.64	±6.59	33.62	±6.94	0.01
IND	26.44	±6.07	27.92	±5.22	1.29
SR	36.66	±5.75	35.10	±8.08	1.03
LOV	37.24	±5.27	35.76	±8.08	1.31
OR	31.62	±6.65	32.30	±8.22	0.46
NEG	23.00	±6.95	25.06	±6.85	1.35

*significant at p < 0.05

The perceived parenting of mothers of adolescent girls and boys were also compared. The results reveal significant differences in the three dimensions namely object punishment, protecting and symbolic punishment. While the sample girls reported that their mothers were protective of them; the boys reported that their mothers used more symbolic punishment and object punishment with them. This result implies that use of punishment in its various forms by mothers is more common for boys than the girls.

From table no.3 and 4 it is clear that father's and mother's parenting of their adolescents was influenced to some extent by the sex of their child.

CONCLUSION:

The present study was conducted to assess the parent child relationship during adolescence. The sample comprised of 100 families with either only male or only female children. The results reveal that overall the parents that is, both the mothers as well as the fathers were perceived by their respective adolescent children to score higher on the positive dimensions than the negative dimensions. Devore and Ginsburg (2005) had also demonstrated the positivity of the parent child relationship during adolescence. When the adolescent's perceived parenting was analyzed some differences were found according to the sex of the parent. Mothers were found to be more protecting but at the same time more indifferent and used more symbolic reward. Male adolescents felt that fathers and mothers varied in dimensions such as protecting, indifference and symbolic reward; while female adolescents felt that their fathers and mothers had similar parenting with them. Choo (2005) in his study had also found that the adolescent's mothers were more nurturing, protective and supporting. Collins and Russell (1991) show that fathers and mothers interact differently with their middle childhood to adolescent children than with younger children. Fathers generally interact with the adolescents through focusing on instrumental goals and objective issues, while mothers' interactions with adolescents are more marked by discussion on personal issues.

The sample adolescents' rating of their fathers showed that according to sex of the adolescents, fathers parenting changed in some areas namely protecting, symbolic punishment, object punishment, symbolic reward and neglecting. They felt that with girls fathers were more protecting but with boys they were more strict, punishing, rejecting and neglecting. Bronstein (1988) reported that sons experience higher amounts of parental authoritarian control and instrumental directives than daughters. Fathers were harsh with sons but gentle with daughters. As far as mothers parenting were concerned again they were more protecting towards the daughters. Leaper et al (1998) also found differences in maternal and paternal communication with sons and daughters.

Overall, these results imply that parenting of both fathers and mothers changed according to the sex of their adolescents. In sum, for the sample adolescents, parenting did vary to some extent according to sex of the children. Though during adolescence parent-child relationship was found to be more positive yet adolescents perceived that their fathers and mothers treated them differently taking their sex as a determining factor.

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