



## Effect of Conscious Parenting on Adjustment in Adolescents

### KEYWORDS

Adjustment, Parental bonding, Conscious Parenting, Optimal Parenting, Adolescents.

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**ABSTRACT** A study was done with the objectives of assessing the levels of adjustment and parental bonding and ascertaining the effect of conscious parenting on a sample of randomly selected adolescents. The sample consisted of 35 students (18 male and 17 female) who were randomly selected after being screened for poor adjustment using AISS (Adjustment Inventory for School Students, (Sinha and Singh, 1998). These 35 students were assessed for parental bonding using PBI (Parental Bonding Instrument, Parker, Tupling and Brown, 1997). The mothers of the student participants underwent sessions on Conscious Parenting. After a stipulated number of sessions of 21 days, all the student participants were reassessed using AISS and PBI. The study revealed the following: the difference in mean emotional and social adjustments of the student participants before and after Conscious Parenting were statistically significant; there was a statistically significant difference in total adjustment before and after Conscious Parenting; the mean Parental Bonding of the participants before and after Conscious Parenting was statistically significant.

### Introduction

Adolescence is the age when the individual becomes integrated into the society of adults, the age when the child no longer feels that he/she is below the level of his/her elders but equal, at least in rights. This integration into adult society has many affective aspects, more or less linked with puberty. It also includes very profound intellectual changes. These intellectual transitions enable him/her to achieve integration into the social relationships of adults (Qaisy and Turki, 2011).

There are marked psychological changes during adolescence. The main change is the development of an integrated and internalized sense of identity. Adolescence is fraught with a lot of changes, which the child does as he/she grows and adapts to the changes around him/her. Various factors such as parenting, peer pressure and physical development of the child are involved in shaping the adjustment of the child (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003).

The adolescence is marked with heightened emotionality. This increases the burden of the adolescent to adjust positively to various changing situations of life. The support and understanding from family members during this phase is crucial in enabling them meet the challenges. Researchers have shown that secured attachment to parents facilitate children's adaptive adjustment. Securely attached children perceive their parents as available and responsive to their needs. This security fosters adaptive exploration and buffers children from stress (Doyle, Moretti, Brendgen and Bukowski, 2004). In contrast children who perceive their parents as unavailable, unresponsive or rejecting become insecurely attached, and avoid relying on their parents for support. These avoidant-attached children derive little protection or guidance within their relationship with their parents. Adolescents spent more time with their mothers and are more likely to share feelings with them. In contrast adolescents commonly view fathers as relatively distant figures to be consulted primarily for information and material support (Lerner, Lauren and Steinberg, 2004).

The present action research is attempted at studying the effect of 'Conscious Parenting' on the adjustment of the selected adolescent school children. The methodology involved screening adolescents for adjustment using a standardized psychological tool. The mothers of the adolescents having moderate to poor adjustment were given 'Conscious Parenting Course'. After a month the same group of adolescents was reassessed for adjustment to find out the effect of conscious parenting in their adjustment.

### Method

#### Null Hypotheses

- Conscious parenting does not have any effect on the level of adjustment of the sample.
- Conscious parenting does not have any effect on the level of parental bonding of the sample.

#### Participants

From St. Joseph's High School, Pushpagiri, Kannur, Kerala, out of 90 students screened using Adjustment Inventory for School Students, 35 students with unsatisfactory to very unsatisfactory adjustment were randomly selected to serve as the sample of the study. The sample consisted of 18 male and 17 female students.

#### Tools

- Case Study Schedule
- Adjustment Inventory for School Students (Sinha and Singh, 1998)
- Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker, Tupling and Brown, 1997)

Case study schedule was used to collect the personal information and information regarding demographic factors of the sample. AISS (Adjustment Inventory for School Students) developed by Sinha and Singh (1998) was used to assess the adjustment of the student participants. AISS consisted of 60 items. There were two possible responses to each item namely, 'Yes' and 'No'. The validity of AISS is 0.51 and reliability is 0.95. PBI (Parental Bonding Instrument) developed by Parker, Tupling and Brown

(1997) was used to measure fundamental parental styles as perceived by child. PBI consisted of 25 items, of which 12 items are related to 'care' and 13 items are related to 'overprotection' and 'control'. There were four possible responses to each item namely, 'very likely', 'moderately likely', 'moderately unlikely' and 'very unlikely'. The validity of PBI is 0.76 (care), 0.63 (protection) and the reliability is 0.88 (care) and 0.74 (protection).

**Procedure**

Form St. Joseph's School, Pushpagiri, Kannur, Kerala, 90 students of VII, VIII and IX standards were screened for adjustment using AISS. Out of them, 35 students with unsatisfactory to very unsatisfactory adjustment were

randomly selected to serve as the sample of the study. These 35 students were assessed for parental bonding using PBI. The mothers of the 35 student participants were given four sessions of Conscious Parenting. Each session lasted for 2 hours when the mothers were also allowed to have interaction with the researcher at the end of each session. After 21 days all the student participants were re-assessed using AISS and PBI.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1: Showing the Level of Total Adjustment of Adolescent Participants before and after Conscious Parenting(N=35)**

Total Adjustment	Before Conscious Parenting				After Conscious Parenting			
	Male (n=18)		Female (n=17)		Male (n=18)		Female (n=17)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Unsatisfactory (Male: 21-30 Female: 16-25)	10	56	4	24	14	78	3	18
Very unsatisfactory (Male: 31 and above Female:26 and above)	8	44	13	76	4	22	14	83

Percentages are rounded off

Table 1 shows the level of total adjustment of the sample before and after Conscious Parenting. Before Conscious Parenting, 56% of male and 24% of female of the sample had scored 'unsatisfactory' and 44% of male and 76% of female 'very unsatisfactory' level of total adjustment. And after Conscious Parenting 78% of male and 18% of female have scored 'unsatisfactory' and 22% of male and 83% of female 'very unsatisfactory' level total adjustment.

**Table 2: Showing the Significant Difference in Mean Emotional, Social and Educational Adjustment of the Adolescent Participants before and after Conscious Parenting**

Variable	Condition	Male			Female		
		Mean	SD	t	Mean	SD	t
Emotional Adjustment	Before Conscious Parenting	6.39		3.15**	6.29	2.97	1.92*
	After Conscious Parenting	3.22	3.11		4.59	1.94	
Social Adjustment	Before Conscious Parenting	11.83	2.04	1.50 <sup>ns</sup>	12.29	2.26	2.65*
	After Conscious Parenting	11.00	1.03		10.35	1.87	
Educational Adjustment	Before Conscious Parenting	11.44	1.92	1.70*	12.06	2.73	1.06 <sup>ns</sup>
	After Conscious Parenting	12.61	2.06		13.00	2.26	
Total Adjustment	Before Conscious Parenting	28.61	4.64	1.17 <sup>ns</sup>	28.18	4.50	0.16 <sup>ns</sup>
	After Conscious Parenting	26.83	4.13		27.94	3.75	

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level  
\* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows that the difference in mean adjustments of the adolescent participants before and after Conscious Parenting, emotional adjustment in male is statistically significant at 0.01, educational adjustment in male and educational and social in female is statistically significant at 0.05 and social and total adjustment in male and educational and total adjustment in female does not have any significance. Hence the null hypothesis 'Conscious parenting does not have any effect on the level of adjustment of the sample' is rejected. The relationship between parenting styles and children's academic achievement was examined by Besharat, Azizi and Poursharifi (2011) in a sample of Iranian families. Results indicated that both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles were negatively associated with children's academic achievement. Permissive parenting style showed no significant association with children's academic achievement.

**Table 3: Showing the Level of Parental Bonding of the Adolescent Participants before and after Conscious Parenting N=35**

Parental Bonding	Before Conscious Parenting		After Conscious Parenting	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Affectionate constraint (Care: above 27 Protection: above 13.5)	11	31	12	34
Optimal parenting (Care: above 27 Protection: below 13.2)	10	29	12	34
Affectionless control (Care: below 27 Protection: above 13.5)	10	29	10	29
Neglectful parenting (Care: below 27 Protection:below 13.5)	4	11	1	3

Table 3 shows the level of parental bonding of the sample before and after Conscious Parenting. It can be noted that 31%, 29%, 29% and 11% of the sample had affectionate

constraint, optimal parenting, affectionless control and neglectful parenting respectively before Conscious Parenting. Poor parental bonding of the sample may be due to the lack of awareness of the parents about Conscious Parenting.

After Conscious Parenting, the sample showed improvement in the three aspects of parental bonding namely affectionate constraint, optimal and neglectful parenting. Affectionless control alone continued to be the same after Conscious Parenting. The awareness brought in the parents after Conscious Parenting seemed to have brought about an attitudinal change in their behavior towards their children and that in turn was perceived as positive by the children. Affectionless control has remained the same probably due to the fact that many South Indian households believe in not showing too much of affection and spoil their children.

Latzman, Elkovitch and Clark (2009) investigated the interrelations among maternal and adolescent personality, and parenting practices that have been implicated in the development of disruptive behavior problems. Significant correlations were found between parenting practices and both maternal and adolescent personality.

**Table 4: Showing the Significant Difference in Mean Parental Bonding of the Adolescent Participants before and after Conscious Parenting**

Variable	Condition	Mean	Standard-Deviation	t
Parental Bonding	Before Conscious Parenting	2.2286	1.00252	1.785 **
	After Conscious Parenting	2.0571	.87255	

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 shows the mean Parental Bonding of the sample before and after Conscious Parenting. The t value is statistically significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis, 'Conscious parenting does not have any effect on the level of parental bonding of the sample' is rejected.

Based on obstetric and psychological evidence, Fine and Fine (2009) reveal how bonding begins in utero and that the physical and mental preparation of both the father and mother, even before conception, sets the tone for the future well-being of the child. They show how sustained physical contact and simple ways of consciously interacting with your infant-eye contact with the newborn, baby-wearing instead of stroller use, and co-sleeping-have an observable positive effect. They also show that the "green parenting" practices of breast-feeding, contact with nature, and simple low-tech creative play not only provide a more hands-on and intimate approach to parenting but also are more economical and environmentally sustainable.

#### Recommendations

- School psychologists should be appointed in every school to help the teachers, parents and students.
- Parents should be given awareness programmes on Conscious Parenting.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

- Longitudinal researches can be conducted on larger sample of parents applying Conscious Parenting.
- Researches can be conducted involving Conscious Parenting and other variables such as well-being, stress, gratitude, subjective happiness, spirituality, etc.

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