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Study on Parental Influence on Academic Anxiety among Adolescents in Kottayam City, Kerala

U. Gowri¹ and K.C. Mathew²

ABSTRACT

Childhood and adolescence play a vital role in the development of personality. When genetic factors, biological factors, parental attitude and rearing practices, sibling relationship, school life, peer group discipline procedures, school activities, scholastic performance, and achievement in co-curricular activities are congenial and positive, personality becomes healthy and happy. But, when any factor either singly or in combination happens to be negative or deceit, a child or adolescent manifests some mental illness, impairment disability or handicap. It is commonly observed that anxiety is high in adolescence. Now-a-days, depression and suicide cases are much more because of anxiety provoking situations in the schooling years. Parental influence has an important influence on child's school success. Parenting is a complex activity which includes many specific behaviors, that work individually and to influence child's behavior. The parents are probably the most significant and major influence on adolescent's development, particularly during early adolescence. In this context, the present study was carried out to find out the level of parental influence on the academic anxiety in adolescents in Kottayam city. The study tries to suggest some measures to be taken by the parents, teachers, peers and social workers to pass through this phase in life marked by transition and search for identity.

Keywords: Academic Anxiety, Adolescence, Parental Influence, Study Habits.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is defined as a period of growth between childhood and adulthood. It is a period of rapid physiological and psychological change of intensive readjustment to the school work and social life. Adolescence is a special time with special changes. Adolescents must accept their full-grown body, acquire adult ways of thinking, attain intellectual and emotional independence, and develop more matured ways of relating to both sexes and construct identity. The atmosphere in the family and the relationship between parents and adolescents is very important for the well-being of the adolescent. School is an extension of the home supplementing and extending the training beyond what can be given within the family.

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Adolescence is transitional period marked by search for identity. When genetic biological factors, parental attitude and rearing practices, sibling relationships, peer group discipline procedures, school activities, scholastic performance and in co-curricular activities are congenial and positive, the personality becomes healthy and happy. Some of the common psychiatric disorders found among adolescents are anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder etc. Studies also indicate that mental health problems of the students are increasing in intensity and extent. Only a few of them require professional help from psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers and nurses, who make use of therapeutic efforts like therapy, rehabilitation etc. A majority of the students could be helped by teachers who are sensitive and trained in understanding the problems of children and adolescents and simple coping skills.

ACADEMIC ANXIETY

Academic anxiety is defined as an emotional reaction towards evaluation specifically tests and examinations, which are perceived as threatening. Academic anxiety consists of three interwoven component parts, which manifest in cognitive, emotional and psychological symptoms include pre-occupation during test taking, irrelevant thoughts about the test, the emotional symptom manifest in the form of apprehension, irrational excitement and tension about test. The existence of academic anxiety in the students is a fact throughout the world. Academic anxiety is a dimensional construct that has been defined as the set of phenomenological, physiological and behavioral responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences or failure on an exam or similar evaluative situation.

Parenting is a complex activity that includes many specific behaviors, which are performed individually and to influence child outcome. Parenting behavior as a social upbringing refers to privilege or responsibility of mother and father together in order to prepare the child for society and culture. The variety of parent adolescent relationship is as large that in any other type of interpersonal situation. Some adolescents have harmonious relationships with their parents, without experiencing any disagreements or blow-ups. Others bicker with their parents over all issues, which are small. Reciprocal influence between adolescents and parents can be seen in the form of discipline within a home, established in large part by parents, which influences the behavior of the adolescent. Parent influence actually declines as students grow up so that it is less in secondary school than in elementary. It is also observed that adolescents are facing a number of problems in regulating the teaching-learning process.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study about the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.
- To understand the study habits of the respondents.
- To ascertain the level academic anxiety of the respondents.
- To find out the parental influence on the academic anxiety of the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Kottayam city. The universe consists of 660 school students in class 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th. There are two public schools and 10 private schools in Kottayam city, out of which the researcher purposively selected one private and one public school for conducting the study. 32 students from each school (n=64) were selected through stratified proportionate random sampling technique. The present study is descriptive in nature. To assess the level of study habits and academic anxiety, a scale developed by Samsanantharaj was used to collect the required data. The collected data were analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques such as mean, chi-square and correlation. The obtained data are presented in the form of tables and discussed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was mainly concerned with finding out the level of study habits, academic anxiety and the influence of parents on the academic anxiety among school children. The socio economic characteristics of the respondents explain that little more than half the respondents (55%) were second born and have only one sibling. A vast majority of respondents (94%) belong to nuclear family. Majority (69 percent) of the students are residing in semi-urban area. Regarding the economic status, nearly half the respondents' parents' (45 percent) monthly income was below Rs. 3000. 38 percent of the respondents' parents have studied only up to pre-degree.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by their Level of Study Habits

S.No.	Level of Study Habits	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low level (≤ 63)	19	30
2.	Medium level (64-75)	31	48
3.	High level (76 and above)	14	22
	Total	64	100

Through this study it was found that 48 percent of the respondents are having high level of study habits and only 22 percent of the respondents are having low level of study habits. Again 30 percent of the respondents are having low level of study habits because majority of the respondents are from nuclear family, some are from low income group, and the parents' educational background was high.

Table 2: Association between the Educational Status of the Parents and the Level of Parental Influence

S.No.	Educational Status of Parents	Parental influence		
		Low (≤ 85)	Medium (86-94)	High (≥ 95)
1.	Below S.S.L.C.	4 (33.3%)	5 (41.7%)	3 (25%)
2.	S.S.L.C.	4 (23.5%)	8 (47.1%)	5 (29.4%)
3.	Pre-degree	5 (20.8%)	15 (62.5%)	4 (16.7%)
4.	Degree & above	5 (45.5%)	1 (9.1%)	5 (45.5%)
	Total	18 (28.1%)	29 (45.3%)	17 (26.6%)

Table value = 12.592 df = 6 Calculated value = 9.094 Sig. = .168

It is found from Table 2 that there is no significant association between the educational status of the parents and the level of parental influence.

Table 3: Association between the Level of Academic Anxiety and the Level of Parental Influence of the Respondents

S.No.	Academic anxiety	Parental influence		
		Low (≤ 85)	Medium (86-94)	High (≥ 95)
1.	Low	8 (47.1%)	9 (52.9%)	0 (0%)
2.	Medium	8 (28.6%)	12 (42.9%)	8 (28.6%)
3.	High	2 (10.5%)	8 (42.1%)	9 (47.4%)
	Total	18 (28.1%)	29 (45.3%)	17 (26.6%)

Table value = 9.488 df = 4 Calculated value = 12.214 Sig. = .016

It is seen from the Table 3 that there is a significant association between the level of academic anxiety and the level of parental influence.

Table 1: Correlation between the Study Habits, Academic Anxiety and Parental Influence

	<i>Study Habits</i>	<i>Academic Anxiety</i>	<i>Parental Influence</i>
<i>Study Habits</i>	–	.059	.347**
<i>Academic Anxiety</i>	–	–	.424**
<i>Parental Influence</i>	–	–	–

The results reveal that the study habits score is having high degree of positive correlation with parental influence and followed by academic anxiety. It gives the clear indication that parental influence is found to have positive correlation with academic anxiety.

Adolescents should be nurtured properly at home and in school so to develop in to a balanced personality. Therefore it is suggested that the parents, teachers and school should play a very crucial role to play.

IMPLICATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Workers shall demonstrate and disseminate the knowledge and understanding of adolescent development.

Workers shall create an understanding of and ability to assess the needs of adolescents; access to social institutions, organizations, and resources within a community that provide services for adolescents and their families; and advocate development of needed resources.

Workers shall demonstrate knowledge and understanding of family dynamics.

Workers shall demonstrate acceptance of and contribute to the development and maintenance of culturally competent service delivery. Social workers who work with adolescents shall learn and demonstrate an understanding of the values, attitudes, and behaviors of the adolescents and coworkers with whom they work, including the adolescents' lifestyle, origin, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or behavior.

Workers shall possess or have access to specialized knowledge of the legal, ethical, and administrative requirements and resources for youths and their

6. Social workers shall strive to empower adolescents. Social workers shall provide the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure the participation of and to encourage the decision-making skills of adolescents to empower those with whom they work.
7. Social workers shall advocate for an understanding of the needs of adolescents and for resources and cooperation among professionals and agencies to meet these needs.
8. Social workers shall participate in multidisciplinary case consultation and that provide services to adolescents and their families.
9. Social workers shall maintain confidentiality in their relationship with adolescents and of the information obtained within that relationship.
10. Social workers shall assume an active role in contributing to the improvement of the quality of the work environment, agency policies and practices with a view to their own professional development.

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