

Relationship of parenting and self-concept to academic achievement

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ABSTRACT

A study on relation of parenting and self-concept to academic achievement of pre-university course (PUC) students in science, commerce and arts colleges was done by using stratified random sampling technique. Total sample constituted of 360 students out of which 50 per cent were boys and 50 per cent were girls. Among all the parent-child relationships (PCR) dimensions mothers loving nature was the most significant contributing factor for academic achievement and alone contributed to the extent of 43 per cent. Majority of the students had above average and high self-concept. Students overall educational, intellectual and temperamental self-concept positively and significantly influenced academic achievement.

Keywords: Adolescence; self-concept; academic achievement; parenting

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period of heightened sensitivity for rapid learning and of critical acquisitions which determine the general style of adult life. This is the period of transition from a relatively dependant childhood to the psychological, social and economic self-sufficiency of adulthood. During this period the individual begins to develop a stance towards the world and many developmental changes take place in the individual like the way he thinks, looks and behaves. For the period there might be full of opportunity to enter into new

experience, to explore new relationship, to feel new resources of inner strength and ability (Jersild 1963). Academic achievement during this period can be a stepping stone for the forthcoming years. Academic achievement is directly related to students' growth and development of knowledge in an educational situation where teaching and learning process takes place. Adolescents with high academic achievement are considered to achieve their identity in the society, get good career opportunities, get acceptance from peer, parents and teachers, develop leadership qualities and enhance their self-confidence

and self-esteem whereas academic failure leads to frustration, stress, inferiority complex, rejection from the loved ones, increased number of suicides, discouragement and ultimately to dropping out (Ekstrom et al 1986, Steinberg et al 1984, Gadwa and Griggs 1985).

The choice of a career is one of the most crucial decisions an adolescent makes in his life. This often depends on social, psychological and educational variables such as vocational aspirations, interests, needs, aptitude and influence of close ones, parent's desires and many personality factors. Among them most significant factor that can influence academic performance is self-concept which is the picture the individual has of himself/herself. Self-concept is not innate but is developed or constructed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that interaction. This dynamic aspect of self-concept is important because it indicates that it can be modified or changed (Franken 1994). The way an individual views himself accounts to a large extent for his success. It was found that aspirations and the drive to succeed are good predictors of achievements (Hamachek 1971). Self-concept is not a substance but a process in which a conversation between the 'I' and 'Me' takes place. The 'Me' is the more or less integrated set of attitudes and ideas of other people which we have built together as our conscious experience and from which we

also choose roles to represent our own ideas of ourselves (Uma Devi et al 1998).

The child's ability to experience, decide, and control his own behavior through his decisions is dependent on many subtle and involuntary ways on his relationship and interaction with his parents. Parent-child interaction has long been considered a crucial influence on a child's academic performance and development (Barnard and Kelly 1990). It is a form of communication between a parent and a child; the combined reciprocal action of a parent and a child that has an effect on each other (Russo and Owens 1982). Those parents who place a high value on autonomy, independence, competence and achievement generally tend to be democratic and encouraging (Bailey et al 1970). The development of adequate personality has been found to be closely related to the development of adequate self-concept. A child who has an adequate self-concept is likely to follow the problem solving approach and tends to be spontaneous, creative and original. He trusts himself and is free to accept others without any negative feelings. As against this a child with distorted or inadequate self-concept does not come to grips with the problems of life. He/she tends to view himself as unwanted, unaccepted, incompetent, more anxious, less adjusted and less effective in groups and develops inferiority complex. He/she also likes to exhibit a large extent of anxiety in her/his behavior. Due to poor self-

concepts such children have lack of confidence in the mastery of environment that leads to academic failures. Thus individuals must choose a discipline and career which permits them to function in a role consistent with their self-concept which will help them to achieve their desired goal (Sood 2006). The child's views about himself are shaped by how his parents view him. This fact is well explained by an old saying "Children win the name if the parents wish the same". Hence the present study was undertaken to know the influence of parental relationship and self-concept on academic achievement of college students.

METHODOLOGY

The study comprised of PUC arts, science and commerce college students. There are about 15 colleges in Dharwad city of Karnataka. Among them 6 colleges were randomly selected. Two colleges from each stream were chosen. From each college 60 students consisting of 30 from eleventh and 30 from twelfth standard were selected by stratified random sampling. Final sample constituted of 360 students out of which 50 per cent were boys and 50 per cent were girls. Among them 60.00 per cent of the students belonged to the age group of 17 years of which 10.60 per cent were boys and 12.20 per cent were girls. There was almost equal distribution of boys and girls found in 18 year age group (28.40 and 26.20% respectively). There were only 10.60 per cent boys and 12.20 per cent

girls in 16 year age group. Most of the students were from urban area (66.40%) of which 63.40 per cent were boys and 69.40 per cent were girls. 61.90 per cent of students were from nuclear families of which 60.60 per cent were boys and 63.40 per cent were girls. Thirty eight per cent of students were from joint families of which 39.40 per cent were boys and 36.60 per cent were girls. Parent-child relationship scale given by Rao (1989) was used to measure the relationship between parents and respondents. The study consisted of 100 items which were divided under ten dimensions viz protecting, symbolic punishment, object punishment, demanding, indifferent, symbolic reward, loving, object reward and neglecting to be scored for father and mother separately. To measure the self-concept the self-rated self-concept questionnaire developed by Saraswat (1992) consisting of 48 statements with six dimensions viz physical, social, temperamental, educational, moral and intellectual was used. The percentage and grades of students obtained in annual exam for two previous years have been taken as an index of academic achievement.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Students' perception of their parents

Fig 1 reveals the significant difference on students perception of their mothers and fathers relationship as the 't' values of symbolic punishment ($t= 2.58$, $P_{0.01}$, level), rejection ($t= 3.40$, $P_{0.01}$

level), object punishment ($t= 19.05$, $P_{.01}$ level), demanding behavior ($t= 8.26$, $P_{.01}$ level), indifferent behavior ($t= 3.72$, $P_{.01}$ level), loving behavior ($t= 5.90$, $P_{.01}$ level) and neglecting behavior ($t= 2.34$, $P_{.05}$ level) differed significantly. Students felt that their mothers were more loving (35.95) than fathers (33.33) whereas fathers exhibited more symbolic punishment (19.60), rejection (12.88), object punishment (14.70), demanding (32.73), indifferent (12.75) and neglecting behavior (14.20) as compared to mothers (18.41, 12.16, 10.92, 29.25, 12.03 and 13.64 respectively). Students experienced that their mothers were more protecting (34.71) than fathers (34.58). They received more object reward from mothers (24.12) than from fathers (24.06) but the results were statistically non-significant.

These findings reflected the universal pattern of parental role differentiation in which mother generally assumes the traditional role as the nurturing parent. This might be due to the fact that mothers in our culture are more attached to their children than fathers because of the necessity of physical care of the children. Despite modernization mothers are still the primary caregivers and are more involved in the day to day lives of their children. They also develop an intimate relationship with children and their expressive nature and interpersonal skills make them feel comfortable. The present findings are substantiated with studies of Larson and

Richards (1994) who reported that mother and father have unique and different relationship with their children. In other studies Singh (1984) and Barnard and Kelly (1990) found that mothers were more loving, protecting and less dominating and neglecting than the fathers. According to Badiger (1995) children felt that their mothers were more protecting and loving while fathers were demanding, indifferent and neglecting.

Students' level of self-concept

A glance at Table 1 reveals the distribution of students by the levels of self-concept on different components. Majority (72.80%) of the students had above average self-concept followed by high (20.00%) and average (7.00%) physical self-concept. None of the students came under below average category of physical self-concept. Similarly it was observed that none of them had below average, 60.60 per cent students had above average followed by high (28.90%) and average (10.60%) social self-concept. More than half (66.10%) of the students had above average whereas 16.40 per cent of the students had high and 17.50 per cent of the students had average temperamental self-concept. About 44.70 per cent students had above average followed by high (41.70%), average (12.50) and below average (1.10%) educational self-concept. In case of moral self-concept it was found that only 0.60 per cent of the students had below average self-concept. Around 6.10

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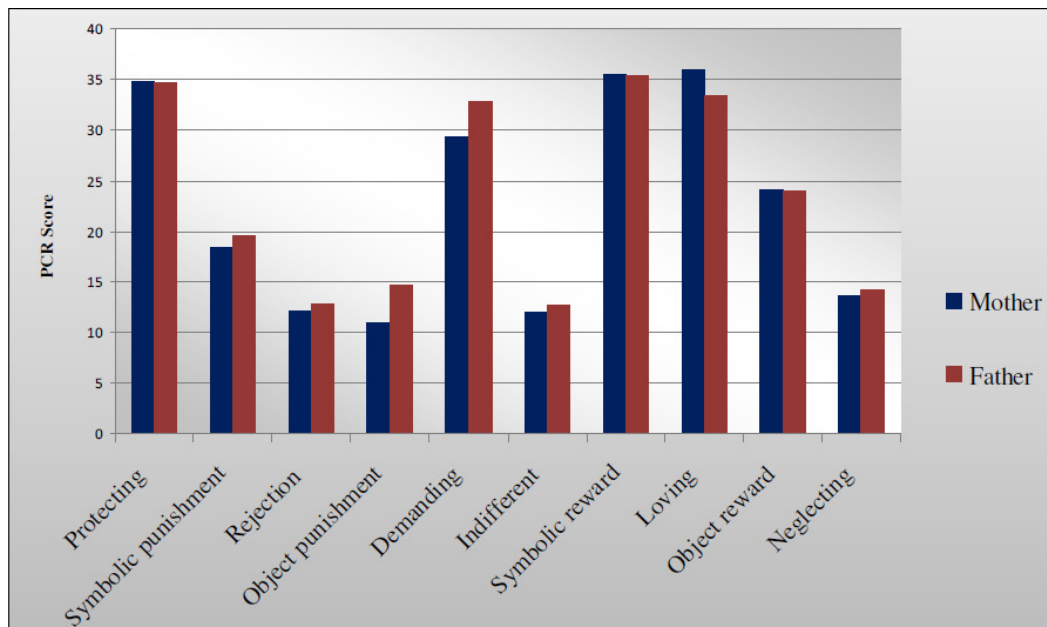


Figure 1. Perception of students' about mothers and fathers relationship

Table 1. Distribution of students by dimensions of self-concept

Dimension of self-concept	High	Above average	Average	Below average
Physical	72 (20.00)	262 (72.80)	26 (7.20) -	
Social	104 (28.80)	218 (60.60)	38 (10.60)	-
Temperamental	59 (16.40)	238 (66.10)	63 (17.50)	-
Educational	150 (41.70)	161 (44.70)	45 (12.50)	4 (1.10)
Moral	101 (28.10)	235 (65.20)	22 (6.10)	2 (0.60)
Intellectual	55 (15.30)	206 (57.20)	98 (27.20)	1 (0.30)
Overall self-concept	168 (46.60)	190 (52.80)	2 (0.60) -	

Values in parentheses are per cent values

per cent had average, 65.20 per cent had above average whereas 28.10 per cent had high moral self-concept.

It is noted that 57.20 per cent students had above average followed by average (27.20%), high (15.30%) and

below average (0.30%) intellectual self-concept. Majority (52.80%) of them had above average followed by high (46.60%) and average (0.60%) overall self-concept.

The results are in accordance with the findings of Taygi and Kaur (2001) who reported that respondents in general have positive self-concept towards themselves. The self-concept depends upon how others react towards the child. The other constitute parents, friends and teachers (Tyagi and Kaur 2001). In the present investigation good parenting was observed which might have played a pivotal role in the development of adequate self-concept.

Students' academic achievement

Fig 2 shows the distribution of students on academic achievement. It is evident from the figure that 43, 44, 9 and 4 per cent students had excellent, good, average and poor academic achievement respectively. This might be because of their school and college environment, teaching faculty, conducive home environment, good parenting, their interest in study, confidence and hard work. Parents and college might have provided extra facilities in the form of tuitions and extra coaching classes.

Influence of parental relations on academic achievement

The data in Table 2 reveal that among all the PCR dimensions mothers loving nature was the most significant contributing factor for academic achievement. It alone contributed to

academic achievement to the extent of 43 per cent. Symbolic rewards from both the parents along with mothers loving nature contributed 51 per cent. The symbolic punishment from both the parents along with two former factors contributed 54 per cent of total variation of academic achievement. Demanding attitude expressed from both the parents along with above three dimensions contributed about 57 per cent. Father's neglecting dimension along with preceding four together contributed 58 per cent of the total variation of academic achievement.

Rao (1989) reported that loving behavior of mother is characterized with expression of fondness, devoted attachment and amiableness shown to the children which develop the feeling of security and confidence among the latter and these might promote the students academic achievement. Symbolic reward is characterized with expression of appreciation for emotional and psychological security of the child. It indicates parent's acceptance of the child which is the precursor for the child to achieve, aspire and advance. Rewards stimulates, strengthens right impulses and directs the student towards desirable channels. Demanding behavior of the parents indicates expression of authority which might have developed seriousness towards study. Symbolic punishment and neglecting behavior of parents might leave the child to devalue himself/herself which leads to the development of inferiority