



PARENTING AND DETERMINANTS OF WELL BEING AMONG ADOLESCENTS – A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Problems in parenting arise due to lack of skills, so parents can be trained in parenting (life skills training). Life skills training have a significant effect on positive mental health and self esteem of vulnerable adolescents. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of life skills training given to parents on psychological wellbeing of their adolescent children. Adolescents develop many habits, patterns of behavior and relationships that affect their future quality of life. Studies exploring self and health belief systems are keys to understanding the challenges to wholesome development of adolescents health status. Psychological well-being has been given special emphasis in their quality of life as it consists of meaningfulness and satisfaction in life, emotional stability and happiness in life. It is essential to help the adolescence to develop skills to handle a wide variety of choices, challenges and stressors in his/her life for better health. This study investigates health related behavior, health locus of control, self-esteem and resilience as predictors of psychological wellbeing among school and college going adolescents.

Keywords: Adolescents, Well-being, life skills training, locus of control, Parenting, resilience, self esteem.

Introduction

Parenting refers to the activity of raising a child rather than the biological relationship. A parenting style is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. Parenting style is affected by both the parent's and children's temperaments, and is largely based on the influence of one's own parents and culture. Diana Baumarind (1966) introduced three parenting styles authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. (Steinberg et. al 1994), (Hetherington et.al., 1999) added one more parenting style-Neglectful parenting. In traditional India, child rearing is women's responsibility with excessive indulgence by mother and female members of extended family. (M.Arulsubila, Dr.R.Subasree).

Parenting Adolescents

Adolescence is an exciting and dynamic period for young people. No developmental period brings with it such remarkable transformation in the child as adolescence. As adolescents are faced with physical changes and cognitive development they are constantly renegotiating their relationships with family, friends, school and community. It is transition from dependence to independent relationships with parents. The style of parenting can play an important role in helping the adolescents to face this great challenge. (Mckinney & Renk, 2008). In the current scenario, parents perceive that they have the best intentions in raising their children, most of the time they blame the children for being how they are. Unfortunately, it is the parents who had used unfavorable child rearing practices.

Parents learn child rearing practice good/unfavorable from their parents and implement it unconsciously or consciously on their children trying to bring out the best. Parents give least importance to the thought that the conditions in which they and the children are growing are different. In present times children grow up in nuclear family with no support from grandparents or at times with one or no siblings. They are now the centre of the parent's universe, where the children have to deal with pressures of fulfilling their parent's expectations which most of times are unrealistic. Many children today are alone or with Baby sitters most of the time. Parents try to substitute their presence with expensive toys or immediate gratification of their children's whims and fancies. Children today grow up watching television, playing violent video games, making them insensitive to others emotions and at times overexposure to media leading to various behavioral and conduct problems due to lack of proper supervision.

Parenting Style and Psychological Well-Being

Authoritarian parenting leads to adolescent aggressiveness, conduct disorders and rebellion. (Lanborn & Steinberg 1993). Children of indulgent parents had low hope, higher psychotism, involved in drug use, development of conduct disorder and antisocial personality (Baumrind, 1966). Adolescents from neglectful parents show symptoms of depression, behaviour problems (Crittenden et al., 1994), impulsive, involve in delinquent behaviour, drug abuse (Steinberg 2001).

Psychological Wellbeing

Well-being as a construct in recent times has sanctioned a flourishing place in the field of psychology and social sciences. Positive mental health is defined as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (WHO, 2001). It is seen that focusing on positive concepts like well being, can do to more to diminish mental and behavioural problems (Huppert, 2005). Research studies have shown that people high on positive emotions evaluate and perceive others more positively along with being more happy optimistic, confident, productive, socially engaged and tend to have higher incomes.(Forgas, 2002; Sedikides, 1995; Diener, 2000;). A study by Kasser and Ryan (1996) showed that enhanced subjective wellbeing was positively correlated with individual personal goals being more intrinsic in nature. Similarly people high on subjective well being have attritional styles that are more self enhancing than those who are low on subjective well being. The concept of subjective well being holds importance and is a major goal in the lives of individuals as it not only focuses on strengths, resources, problems and needs but provides a comprehensive picture of health rather than the traditional biological attribution of health. (Dr. A. Suresh, Malar Jayachander, Shloka Joshi)

In the rapidly changing world of the 21st century, the adolescents undoubtedly remain the most affected and vulnerable segment of the population. There has been a great deal of interest in the adolescent ill being such a smoking , drinking habits, drug abuse, psychosomatic symptoms, (Ryff,1995; Heaven,2001).Even WHO expressed concern over adolescent well being and called for interventions in adolescence health issues. In such a scenario it is importance that the well being aspects of an adolescent’s life are looked into with a greater seriousness. Historically, it is around the ages 12-13 that children start

assuming adult roles and responsibilities. The adolescence phase is marked with constant tension between developing competencies, achieving new milestones, striving for independence, while trying to make one's place among new people and having to adapt to a completely different environment. They tend to experience failure, unhappiness, setbacks, worry, trauma's and anxiety which are usually of a much higher gradient than before. While the degrees of these emotions may vary between individuals, they seem to be a pervasive part of every adolescent's life. Here is where the notion of psychological well being becomes more pronounced. According to Huppert (2005), psychological well being is being able to feel good about oneself and to be able to function effectively. She posits that feeling good needn't necessarily mean presence of positive emotions like contentment and happiness but also presence of affection, confidence, interest and engagement. Being able to function effectively includes a range of things like having a sense of control over one's life, to be able to exploit one's potential, having a sense of purpose in life and experiencing positive relations with others. Bradburn(1969) on the other hand has viewed a person's position on the dimension of psychological well being as not just the excess of positive affect over the negative, but also frequency in the experiences of positive affect relative to the negative.

The term psychological well being (PWB) connotes a wide range of meanings, usually associated with wellness. Most studies in the past defined „wellness“ as not being sick, as an absence of anxiety, depression or other forms of mental problems. PWB includes esteem, positive affect, daily activities, satisfaction, absence of suicidal ideas, personal control, social support, absence of tension, and general efficiency (Bhogle and Prakash, 1995).

Significance of the study

Adolescence is a phase where many psychological factors dominantly mediate an adolescence sense of well being which ends up shaping / having a long range impact on the individual. This is typically a product of the array of challenges that an adolescent typically encounters during this period which impact their psycho social development. Adolescence growing up are at a risk of a number of outcomes as a result of poor academic performance, substance abuse, failed relationships. Often it's the unanticipated experiences of high school and college life makes the transition from adolescence to adulthood more dramatic. Therefore an understanding of psychological predictors of some of the components of well being can provide a framework for developing more effective interventions to cushion the components

of wellness. Every parent child relationship is different very personal as it is based on the interaction between two individuals, and each of whose personality is unique. Some children are easy to deal with some are difficult. The easy dealing child can be disciplined well and they never trouble their parents in any way. But some are born with a different temperament who cannot be disciplined with severe scolding, or punishing. So children should be understood based on their nature, their inherent personality and nurture their upbringing pattern. Problems in upbringing arise as the child does not have a role model or the parents are not around most of the time, the rules laid down are inconsistent. So parenting is not an instinctual knowledge. It is a science and an art that needs to be learnt. Problems in parenting arise due to lack of skills. These skills can be learnt through undergoing proper training. Parents can be trained in parenting that affirms the dignity and humanity of both parents and children.

Review of Literature

Madhu Gupta, Dimple mechtani (2015), in their study explained that child rearing patterns nurtures the child physically and contributes to overall well being. Their research findings indicated that an authoritative parenting style produced positive developmental outcomes. The study recommended parents to show concern to their children and develop Psychological and social positions in them.

Mohammad Reza et al., (2014) examined the relationship between Psychological wellbeing and parenting styles with students mental health. The results indicated that Psychological well being and authoritative parenting styles were significantly related with mental health and permissive parenting styles had significant positive relationship. Thus mental health is predicable by psychological well being and parenting styles.

Bamanjit Sandhu, Bikramjeat sing, Suninder Tung & Nidhi kundra (2012) investigated “Adolescent identity formation, psychological well being and parental attitudes”. Results revealed that adolescent boys high on identity achievement experience psychological well being while girls reflect less on identity. Parental acceptance is associated with identity achievement and avoidant parenting is related to lower identity. Status identity achievement is high in adolescent boys with both parental acceptance and concentration. The study recommends for development of identity enhancement programs for adolescents.

Chand N, Farrugia et al., (2013) did a study on promoting positive youth development through a brief parenting intervention program. Parents of adolescents completed pre and post intervention assessments of parenting and family relationships in order to examine the effects of participation on family functioning and positive youth development (PYD). The results suggest that brief parenting intervention may produce favorable outcomes for families with adolescent children, including the promotion of important aspects of PYD.

Irshad.K. (2012) examined the effect of life skills training on mental well being and self esteem among vulnerable adolescents. The effect of life skills on 40 trained and untrained vulnerable adolescents mental well being and self-esteem were compared. The results revealed that life skills training have a significant effect on positive mental health and self esteem of vulnerable adolescents. The research emphasizes the need for life skills intervention to reach vulnerable adolescents.

May Lim et al., (2005) tried to investigate “A one session intervention for parents of young adolescence”. It was a 2 hour parenting program. The results based on self reports and observer ratings reflected a trend toward greater parental involvement among parents in experimental group compared to parents in the control group. The findings further revealed that intervention even for a brief period of 2 hours can be effective at motivating parents to change behaviour.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the relationship among health behavior, health locus of control, self esteem, and resilience in relation to psychological well being among adolescents
2. To explore the psychological predictors of well being among adolescents.
3. To find the relationship between mother’s and father’s parenting style among adolescents.
4. To find the influence of parenting on adolescent’s psychological wellbeing and life skills.

Methodology

The study was using secondary data. This paper tries to summaries the relationship among health behavior, health locus of control, self esteem, and resilience in relation to psychological well being among adolescents. Secondary is collected through various sources such as websites, books and journals.

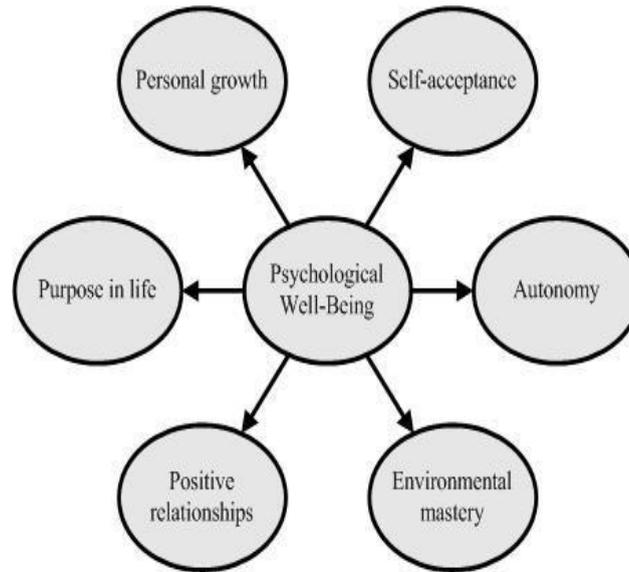
Current Status of Adolescents

Adolescents today encounter difficulties and more life challenges than previous generation, yet they are provided less guidance and intervention for their personal development. (Pajares & Urda, 2004). The biological and psychological turmoil within the adolescent and other factors like family system, parenting, poverty, child abuse, socioeconomic status, school environment, peer pressure etc. aggravates the problems faced by adolescents. Thus mental, social and behavioral correlates of health problems have resulted in lowered quality of life. A variety of signs may point to mental health problems or serious emotional disturbances in adolescents, leading to disruption of emotional and adjustment functioning. According to report by UNICEF 2012, each year 20 percent of adolescents experience mental health problems. As per report by Social inclusion of youth with mental health conditions, 20 percent of youth experience mental health condition each year on a global level. (United nations children's fund 2012). UNICEF 2009 states that young people below 25 years of age represent almost 50 percent of the world's population.

India has the largest population of adolescents in the world with 243 million individuals aged between 10 -19 years. If such a large population is at the threshold of suffering from mental illness, this requires immediate attention for some intervention strategies.

Carol Ryff (1988) proposed well being model with six components -Self acceptance, Purpose in life, Personal growth, Positive relation with others, Environmental mastery, Autonomy. Parenting style influences psychological well being and personality of adolescents.

Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being



Some cross cultural studies indicate that children with high subjective well being, reported less strain, higher personal control, resorted to higher problem oriented coping and less emotional oriented coping strategies (Grob et al., 1999). Shapiro, Schwartz and Austin, (1996) say that belief of individuals about their sense of controllability over what happens to them in their life is a core element into understanding how they live in the world. Primary control or attempting to control through a person's direct intervention is associated with the internal locus of control and is seen to be linked with academic success, higher self motivation, social maturity, lower incidence of stress and depression , and longer life span . Secondary control on the other hand is likened to external locus of control where an individual attributes a sense of control to an outside party for being responsible to mediate her emotional responses. People with high application of external locus of control are seen to suffer from higher levels of psychological distress , susceptibility to depression along with poorer responsiveness to anti-depressants and higher rates of suicide (Marks, 1998). Locus of control has been linked to many developmental outcomes among adolescence like self esteem ,school satisfaction among adolescence and levels of perceived stress .

William James posed that self-esteem was an important contributor to mental health as it was a product of perceived competence in domains of importance. Maslow (1954) looks at self esteem as the path towards self actualization Contemporary Psychologists view self esteem as the subjective viewing, evaluating and valuing of oneself which generally is seen to remain more or less static over time.

In the study of Chapman and Mullis (1999), analyzed the relation between coping strategies and self-esteem among adolescents and it was found that with a higher self esteem showed much less avoidance coping strategies than children with a low self esteem. A famous study among 675 second-year undergraduate students showed inverse relation between high self-esteem in academic life and stress . Hence people with high self esteem not only display positive emotions like happiness, optimism but also significantly less of anxiety depression, stress and negative mood (Pyszczynski et al.,2004).

Often the consequences of anxiety, loneliness, stress, depression, academic performance underachievement, issues with friends and family, vulnerability to drug and alcohol misuse and other non productive, self destructive behavior can be significantly reduced if a person has a tendency to rapidly cope with these negative effects and resilience. Resilience refers to the ability to bounce back from stressful experiences quickly and effectively while also being able to return to the original level of emotional well being after facing times of adversities.

People high on resilience are also seen as more optimistic when confronted with situations of adversities which in turn leads to a higher psychological well being (Rutter, 2006). There has been ample research that has shown the cyclical relationship between resilience as a contributor to positive experiences and vice versa. Studies show that people high on resilience not only trigger/perpetuate positive emotions like optimism, creative exploration, humor effective coping and relaxation within themselves but also evoke positive emotions among others. Fredrickson, B.L. (2004) shows how people high on resilience exhibit faster cardiovascular recovery as a result of negative emotional arousal viz- a-viz their less- resilient counterparts. So resilience among adolescence is seen as how they recoup from adversities while approaching to a healthy development in spite of risk exposure. There is a shift in the understanding of resilience as a particular trait, to resilience as dynamic process where family, community and other interactive factors gain preeminence. Promoting resilience is therefore important, as it is seen to propel so many other positive outcomes especially in children and adolescence, in a way producing its own domino effect.

Adolescence is a phase where people are susceptible to many risky health behaviours. Health behaviour is *“any activity undertaken by a person believing him or herself to be healthy for the purpose of preventing disease or detecting it at an asymptomatic stage”*(Kasl and Cobb, 1966). Brener and Collins (1998) study showed that adolescence aged 14 years did

not show any risk promoting behavior while 41% of adolescence aged 14-17 did not engage in health risk behaviours like smoking, alcohol and drug use. The job of the researches studying this area is to find out the factors which might affect health behaviours, the process involved in understanding the behavior and modification of health behaviour in order to optimize healthstatus. Adolescents develop many habits, patterns of behaviour, and relationships that affect their future quality of life. Unfortunately There is an urgent need to provide today's youth with a set of ways and skills to deal with demands and challenges of life. It is essential and must to help the adolescence to develop skills to handle a wide variety of choices, challenges and stressors in his/her life and work towards better health.

Conclusion

Psychological well being and life skills are promoted by positive parenting. Children reared by this parenting style will be happy and confident and face challenges of life, thus will contribute to healthy well being and progress of the nation. Adolescents today encounter difficulties and more life challenges than previous generation, yet they are provided less guidance and intervention for their personal development. The biological and psychological turmoil within the adolescent and other factors like family system, parenting, poverty, child abuse, socioeconomic status, school environment, peer pressure etc. aggravates the problems faced by adolescents. The present study concludes that, interventions of life skills when given to parents will influences their Parenting style and thus improve life skills of adolescents and enhance psychological well being. There is an urgent need to provide today's youth with a set of ways and skills to deal with demands and challenges of life. It is essential and must to help the adolescence to develop skills to handle a wide variety of choices, challenges and stressors in his/her life and work towards better health. The study recommends for parenting programs for parents of adolescents for transforming adolescents into physically and psychologically healthy adults.

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