

# Parent-Child Relationship and Emotional Maturity of City College Girls

Dr. Waheeda Matheen

Associate Professor

Department of Applied Psychology  
and Behavioural Research,  
JBAS College for Women, Chennai,

## ABSTRACT

The present study discusses on the dynamics of parent child relationship and emotional maturity of the young girls. The sample was drawn from city college students in the age group of 19-22. Data was collected on the two main measures – a) Parent-Child Relationship and b) Emotional Maturity. Certain socio-demographic information such as birth order, number of siblings, religion, parent education, family type and parental status was examined for their contribution on both emotional maturity and parent-child relationship. Both of the main variables were explored for their inter-relationship.

**Keywords:** Parenting Styles, Parent Child Relationship, Emotions, Adolescent Psychology, and Family Influences

## INTRODUCTION

Today's youth, unlike generations before them are presented with arduous challenges in life, such as, the family fabric loosening; the parent-child relationships increasingly and seemingly impinged due to work demands of the parents; lesser and lesser time spent with family; and subcultures and peer groups influence. At the same time, parents of adolescents usually are working on their own midlife marital and career issues while they are trying to understand and meet the adolescent needs. Quite naturally, different kinds of parenting practices impact the development differently on the adolescents. Again, differences in family patterns and constituents between one and another family comes to be viewed as a major source of variation from individual to individual in the aspects of personality and psycho-social development of adolescents. Recognizing that many of today's young people spend a lot of time growing up with their family, it is important to review carefully what a healthy family life does for an adolescent (George, 1995). Parents and other significant members in the family have major role in contributing to healthy development of an adolescent. It is necessary for the parents to provide best possible environment at home, so as to create a conducive, fostering and supportive experiences for smooth transition from adolescence into adulthood (Vyas, 2008).

Of many different relationships an adolescent may form over the course of their developmental span, the relationship between parent and child is among most important. More emphatically, parent child relationship is a great source of reference to determining the personality and psychosocial development of children, especially so when it comes to dealing with adolescents. Parent child relationships are subsumed by various factors such as gender stereotypes, socio-cultural contexts and parents own childhood experiences. The nuances of reward and punishment; nature of discipline; amount of permissiveness; bonding and interaction in a parent child relationship have been stressed upon the healthy development of the child (Rao, 1989). Also, these patterns do not remain constant and in fact they continuously evolve and change to suit the individual needs

of the growing child. For to say, a young child may need a relationship with their parents to attend, discipline and participate, whereas, adolescents responsiveness are much better with parents who practice listening, sharing and encouraging personal space. Moreover, knowing to what extent the parents encourage social competencies of their adolescent children will be more salient to understanding and describing positive development. On the other hand, Emotional Maturity is a single effective determinant to shaping the personality, attitudes and behaviour of the adolescents into accepting responsibility, making decisions, teaming with groups, developing healthy relationships and enhancing self worth. Emotional stability is one of the seven important indicators of mental health.

Of all species, human brains take the longest time to fully mature. While each area of the brain develops at a different rate during childhood, the onset of puberty marks one of the most sweeping periods of pruning throughout the brain. Several brain areas critical for emotional life is among the slowest to mature. While the sensory areas mature during early childhood, and the limbic system by puberty, the frontal lobes-seat of emotional self-control, understanding, and artful response continue to develop into late adolescence, until somewhere between sixteen and eighteen years of age (Goleman, 1995). While adolescence is the time of growth, change and opportunity, transitioning into adulthood can bring moments of insecurity, helplessness, frustration, uselessness and isolation (Linda, 2009). Early adolescence marks an important turning point in the parent child relationship, due to increased sense of identity in adolescent stage; it is usual and inevitable to develop parent-adolescent conflicts. The relationship an adolescent has with his parent is most important to determining his ability to mature emotionally. The influence of parent has long lasting effects on the psychological and social maturation of the adolescents. Empirical researches have strongly substantiated the implications of parental antecedent variables as of invaluable contributions to the emotional maturity of their adolescents. As the young adult strives to establish a sense of emotional autonomy, they may challenge parents' authority.

Young adults should learn to deal with their expanding social universe and necessarily attain certain degree of emotional maturity to ward off deviances, as this period is also characterized by increased involvement of health risk behaviours (Jossey Bass, 2009). Over recent decades, there have been dramatic changes in the employment patterns of men and women, categorically patterns of parental employment can be understood to impact the outcomes of the young adults. The effect of household income, socio economic circumstances, the provision of a role model and parent-child relationships and interactions intercept the maturation of emotional self of young adults (Linda, 2009). It is an essential task of parents and the surrounding adults, to provide them with love, support, self

confidence to grow fully into their lives, thereby bringing them to maturity with their emotional centers intact and accessible (Glennon, 2000). Morler (2002) said while emotional intelligence can be learned, emotional maturity is a choice. Beyond adolescence, an individual has to choose maturity and to enable this choice, they need supportive adults. The study of emotional life of adolescents is gaining more attention in the recent times, and is emerging as a scientific branch of study.

In light of the above discussion, the researcher has attempted to study the relationship between the emotional maturity and the parent-child relationships of the sample, i.e., college girls. The null hypothesis for the present study stated that-

H0: The emotional maturity and the parent child relationships are unrelated.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive design and selected certain variables such as age, birth order, parent status, living arrangement, and number of siblings, parent education and religion to describe the socio-demographic information of the sample. The main variables of the study were emotional maturity included by its five dimensions emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personal disintegration, and lack of independence, and parent child relationships of both parents, described by its ten dimensions namely protecting, symbolic punishment, rejecting, object punishment, demanding, indifferent, symbolic reward, loving, object reward, and neglecting.

**SAMPLE**

TABLE 1: SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE SAMPLE (IN COUNTS)

	BIRTH ORDER	FATHER QUALIFICATION	MOTHER QUALIFICATION	LIVING ARRANGEMENT	MARITAL STATUS	RELIGION	SIBLINGS
17	First born	24 School pass	14 School pass	23 joint	9 Intact	45 Hindu	31 None
23	Second born	16 Graduates	20 Graduates	15 nuclear	39 Separated	1 Christian	5 one
8	others	9 masters	2 masters	1	Widowed	2 Muslim	13 two
		Professionals	4 advanced degrees	1			More than two
		Others	1 Others	1			11

**TOOLS**

The following were the tools used in the study.

(a)Parent-Child Relationship Scale: This scale was developed by Dr.Nalini Rao. It contained 100 items categorized into ten dimensions namely protecting, symbolic punishment, rejecting, object punishment, demanding, indifferent, symbolic reward, loving, object reward, and neglecting. The respondent scored for both father and mother separately. It is a self report five point rating scale ranging from 'always' to 'very rarely' weighted 5,4,3,2,1 on the scale points. The scale is found very useful and effective to study the problems involving social, psychological and school factors. The scale was standardized for boys and girls in the age group of 13 to 16 years. In the present study, the tool was investigated for its reliability on the sample, and is presented in the table below.

Dimensions	Father (N=48)	Mother (N=49)
	Cronbach's Alpha	
Protecting	0.91	0.9
Symbolic Punishment	0.87	0.81
Rejecting	0.88	0.99
Object Punishment	0.94	0.94
Demanding	0.88	0.83
Indifferent	0.66	0.72
Symbolic Reward	0.95	0.94
Loving	0.93	0.93
Object Reward	0.92	0.91
Neglecting	0.88	0.85

(b)Emotional Maturity Scale: This scale was developed by Dr.Yashvir Singh & Dr.Mahesh Bhargava. It contained 48 items under the five categories emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personal disintegration, and lack of independence. It is a self report measure of five point rating with options namely very much, much, undecided, probably, and never weighted on 5, 4,3,2,1 on the scale points. The scale was standardized for college students and the norms were established as- (50-80)-Extremely stable, (81-88)-Moderately stable, (89-106)-Unstable, and (107-240)-Extremely unstable.

**PROCEDURE**

The data of all the included variables for the sample were collected, and based on preliminary findings; the missing data was excluded from the analysis. Since the data from socio-demographic information rendered skewed distribution, they were not used for further analyses. The main variables namely emotional maturity and the parent child relationships were explored for their inter-correlation using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results are further discussed in the following section.

**RESULTS**

The results of the investigation are arranged under the headings as (1) Parent-Child Relationships, (2) Emotional Maturity, and (3) Association between Parent Child Relationship and Emotional Maturity.

**(1)PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS**

The table 2 demonstrates the mean and standard deviation of the sample in their parent child relationship as described by their ten dimensions

	NEGLECTING	SYMBOLIC PUNISHMENT	REJECTING	OBJECT PUNISHMENT	DEMANDING	INDIFFERENT	SYMBOLIC REWARD	LOVING	OBJECT REWARD
	26.10 ± 8.53	29.06 ± 8.79	26.04 ± 11.93	23.67 ± 10.95	28.22 ± 8.51	28.31 ± 5.51	32.84 ± 10.65	33.94 ± 10.77	30.04 ± 10.01
	26.78 ± 7.74	30.33 ± 6.39	26.29 ± 10.99	24.65 ± 10.78	29.29 ± 7.23	28.59 ± 5.64	32.47 ± 9.59	33.08 ± 10.08	29.41 ± 9.22

From the above data, the differences in the mean of the parent-child relationship appear minor, but mother-child show a better score when compared to father-child in all the nine dimensions except the object reward.

**(1)EMOTIONAL MATURITY**

(a)Mean and standard deviations of emotional maturity among the sample is presented in table 3.

N = 50	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
EMOTIONAL UNSTABILITY	28.72	8.266
EMOTIONAL REGRESSION	27.48	8.931
SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT	28.38	6.596
PERSONAL DISINTEGRATION	24.98	8.854
LACK OF INDEPENDENCE	21.00	5.406
EMOTIONAL MATURITY	130.56	33.637

There exist modest differences in the mean, looking at the five categories, and the personal disintegration and lack of independence show lower scores when compared with other three categories i.e., emotional instability, emotional regression, and social maladjustment.



showed negative correlation with emotional maturity at  $p < 0.05$ .

**vii. Father indifferent and Mother indifferent did not show any significant relationship at all with all the five categories of emotional maturity.**

#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings show that there is alarming presence of extremely unstable emotional maturity in the sample. All the dimensions except 'indifferent' of parent child relationships i.e., both father's and mother's relate significantly with the emotional maturity of the sample. There exist both positive and negative correlations at both 1% and 5% significant levels, in nine dimensions of the parent-child relationships with the five categories of emotional maturity.

The results prove the statistical significance of the relationship between emotional maturity and the parent child relationships, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis  $H_0$ : The emotional maturity and the parent child relationships are unrelated, at ( $p < 0.01$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and concluding the alternative hypothesis that-

$H_1$ : There are both positive and negative relationships among the nine dimensions of parent-child relationships (protecting, symbolic punishment, rejecting, object punishment, demanding, symbolic reward, loving, object reward, and neglecting) of both father's and mother's with the emotional maturity including its five categories emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personal disintegration, and lack of independence.

The study also warrants further evaluation of the high risk nature of the emotional maturity of the sample. The implication would be to refer them for more screening of emotional disturbances and parent training appears imperative, to enhance their relationships with their children, thereby improving the emotional maturity of the sample.

#### REFERENCES

- Homes, George.R. (1995). Helping Teenagers into Adulthood. Greenwood Press.
- Vyas, C. (2008). A Comparative Study of Anxiety, Emotional Maturity, Security-Insecurity among Adolescents of Co-Education and Unisex Education Schools. Retrieved May 20, 2011, from [http://www.indianmba.com/Faculty\\_Column/FC773/fc773.html](http://www.indianmba.com/Faculty_Column/FC773/fc773.html)
- Rao, N. (1989). Manual for Parent Child Relationship Scale. Psychological Test Materials, National Psychological Corporation, India
- Goleman, D. Emotional Intelligence. New York Times.
- Linda, C. (2009). Studies in Cash and Care: Impact of Parental Employment. Ashgate Publishing. Chapter 4
- Jossey-Bass. (2009). Adolescent health: Understanding and Preventing Risk Behaviours,
- Linda, C. (2009). Studies in Cash and Care: Impact of Parental Employment. Ashgate Publishing. Chapter 7
- Glennon, W. (2000). 200 Ways to Raise a Boy's Emotional Intelligence, An Indispensable Guide for Parents, Teachers & Other Concerned Caregivers. Conari Press
- Morler, E, E. (2002). Emotional Maturity is a Conscious Choice. Retrieved May 20, 2011, from [http://www.morler.com/emotional\\_maturity.pdf](http://www.morler.com/emotional_maturity.pdf)