

Quality of Parent-Child Relationship, Psychological Flow and Neuroticism Among Adolescents

Muskaan Saksena^{1*}, Dr. Soni Kewalramani²

ABSTRACT

This study explores the connection between the quality of parent-child relationships, psychological flow, and neuroticism among 100 late-adolescents. The study strives to examine the quality of parental relationships (parent-child relationships), the ability to experience flow states (flow) and the tendency to encounter negative affect (neuroticism). To measure the variables, three scales were employed: the Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS), the General Flow Proneness Scale (GFPS) for flow and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised (EPQ-R) Neuroticism Scale for neuroticism. Results reveal several weak correlations between the quality of the parent-child relationship, psychological flow, and neuroticism among adolescents. Specifically, the dimension of indifference has a moderate positive correlation with neuroticism in adolescence for both parents. This study contributes to the field of positive psychology by exploring these domains, which contributes to a greater understanding of adolescents' overall well-being. Our study demonstrates that, to an extent, the quality of parent-child relationship influences psychological flow and neuroticism in adolescents.

Keywords: *Quality of Parent-Child Relationship, Neuroticism, Psychological Flow, Deep Immersion, Adolescents, Parental Relationship, Negative Affect*

The parent-child relationship is a crucial aspect of adolescent development and well-being, involving communication, support, and emotional connection. It differs from other relationships due to its intimacy. Previous research has shown that a supportive and nurturing bond is associated with higher self-esteem, emotional resilience, and better social adjustment among adolescents. The quality of the parent-child relationship is central to this dynamic, influencing various aspects of adolescent development. (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Adolescence is a period of significant transformations that significantly impact emotional regulation, self-perception, and mental health. One of the key aspects of adolescent well-being is the experience of psychological flow, a state of enjoyment, concentration, and low self-awareness resulting from active tasks. Flow experiences are linked to improved performance, creativity, and overall well-being across all age groups. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). Neuroticism, linked to emotional instability and negative affectivity, can negatively impact adolescents' mental health and adaptive functioning. It intensifies vulnerability and

¹Student, BA (Hons.) Applied Psychology, Amity University, Lucknow Campus, Uttar Pradesh, India

²Assistant Professor, Amity University, Lucknow Campus, Uttar Pradesh, India

*Corresponding Author

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distress and can impact quality of life, interpersonal connections, and overall functioning (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

This study explores the link between parent-child relationships, psychological flow, and neuroticism in adolescent development, aiming to understand how parental interactions influence adolescents' experiences and neurotic tendencies. Psychological flow is linked to self-motivation, academic success, and well-being. Acknowledging the parent-child connections can help determine their correlation with these positive outcomes. Understanding the relationship between neuroticism and psychological flow in teenagers can improve understanding of teenage growth and wellbeing. However, the exact relationship between parent-child connections and psychological flow and neuroticism is still inadequately understood. Hence, this study contributes to it by exploring these connections further.

Relationships between parents and children are essential to an adolescent's overall development. *Suri, A., et al. (2016)* conducted a study on 60 girls and 60 boys in the Ranchi region and it was discovered that among adolescents enrolled in school, boys' self-esteem and parent-child connections were higher than those of girls. It shows that greater levels of self-esteem in both boys and girls were linked to strong parent-child connections. Positive parent-child interactions foster adolescent creativity, whereas unfavourable relationships restrict it, according to *Dasgupta et al. (2011)*. These findings highlight the importance of fostering strong parent-child bonds for healthy adolescent development. The significance of nurturing robust parent-child relationships for the well-being of adolescents is underscored by these results. *Kalhotra, S. K. (2013)* directed a study that aimed to assess the parent-child relationship among high and low-achieving high school students. It was revealed that fathers of high achievers love them more than fathers of low achievers and give them the attention they need at home. Mothers consistently provide the same amount of affection to both high and low performers.

Psychological flow has previously been researched in India in relation to sports, teenage personalities, and well-being activities. Flow has previously been researched in India in relation to sports, teenage personalities, and well-being activities. According to *Ahmed et al. (2020)*, there was a significant positive association between male athletes' dispositional flow, drive to succeed, and sense of self-worth. *Annalakshmi, N. et al. (2020)* examined several personality factors that can predict adolescents' experiences of flow. Positive predictors of flow moods include characteristics like extraversion, honesty, humility, conscientiousness, and openness to new experiences. It was found that these characteristics might increase a person's chance of feeling flow, which is defined as a profound concentration or total immersion in an activity. *Bassi et al. (2014)* conclude that teens' general well-being and experiences in the flow can be greatly enhanced by encouraging curiosity and openness to new experiences. Nonetheless, there is not much research on psychological flow in relation to parent-child connections.

Neuroticism has been moderately studied in the context of Indian adolescents, particularly concerning its association with health-risk behaviours, social media, emotional maturity, COVID-19, and others. *Gaur, T. (2023)* found a strong link between neuroticism and smartphone preoccupation in school-age teenagers, suggesting higher neuroticism may lead to smartphone addiction and harmful usage behaviours in this population. *Kumar, S. et al. (2014)* concluded a strong negative association between teenage neuroticism and emotional maturity, indicating that a higher neuroticism score is linked to a lower emotional maturity score. Additionally, neuroticism showed up in the regression analysis as a predictor of

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emotional maturity together with agreeableness, demonstrating its significance in comprehending adolescent emotional development. *Savitha K et al. (2016)* conducted a study among post-graduate students to check the correlation between perceived parenting style and personality factors. The results reveal no significant difference between males and females in their personality factors and a significant difference in the perceived parenting styles of fathers and mothers.

Thus, the review of literature concluded that parent-child relationships do have a significant influence on the development of adolescents. Relationships between parents and children are very important in forming adolescents' social, emotional, and mental health. The degree of neuroticism and psychological flow is a major factor in defining the overall development of the adolescent.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Purpose

This paper aims to assess the presence of any relationship between the quality of the parent-child relationship, psychological flow, and neuroticism of adolescents.

Objectives

To assess the relationship between the quality of parent-child relationships, the level of psychological flow, and neuroticism in adolescents.

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the quality of the parent-child relationship and adolescents' psychological flow level.

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Variables

Three variables are studied in this study,

- 1. The Quality of Parent-Child Relationship:** The concept, originating from Bowlby's work, highlights the importance of secure parent-child bonds for healthy psychological development. It serves as a crucial variable in studying various child outcomes, alongside the quality of the parent-child relationship, contributing significantly to understanding human development.
- 2. Psychological Flow:** Psychological flow, coined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1970), denotes a state of peak experience characterized by intense focus, deep enjoyment, and effortless action. Individuals fully immerse themselves in tasks, experiencing heightened concentration and a distorted sense of time. This concept has become vital in positive psychology, applied across diverse domains.
- 3. Neuroticism:** 'Neuroticism,' coined by personality theorist Hans Eysenck, refers to a predisposition towards negative emotional states like anxiety, fear, and frustration. Assessed through tools like the NEO Personality Inventory, it's extensively utilized in psychology to predict behaviour, emotional stability, and responses to stress, impacting mental well-being and physical health.

Sample

The study used the purposive sampling method as a method of data collection. The sample consists of hundred late-adolescents. Late adolescents of ages 16 to 19, from different schools and colleges from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, were employed in the study.

Instruments

Three measures were used in this study,

1. **Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS):** It was developed by Dr. Nalini Rao in 1989. The Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS) consists of ten dimensions, each with 10 items, totalling 100 items. It demonstrates high test-retest reliability (0.77 to 0.87) and moderate validity (0.33 to 0.46), making it a reliable and valid measure for assessing parent-child relationship quality.
2. **The General Flow Proneness Scale (GFPS):** It was developed by Magdalena Elnes and Hermundur Sigmundsson in 2023. The General Flow Proneness Scale (GFPS) assesses flow proneness with 13 items. It exhibits high test-retest reliability (0.96) and moderate construct validity (0.57), indicating its validity in measuring flow propensity.
3. **Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised Neuroticism Scale:** It was developed by Hans Eysenck, Sybil Eysenck, and Glenn Wilson. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised Neuroticism Scale assesses neuroticism with 12 binary items. It exhibits high test-retest reliability (0.85) and strong validity, making it a stable and valid tool for measuring neuroticism.

Procedure

The questionnaires were given to adolescent participants in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, from various schools and colleges. It was administered by the student researcher. Clear instructions were provided to the participants. Proper written consent was taken by the participants. Data collection from the 100 participants was conducted within a timeframe of 25 to 30 minutes per questionnaire.

Scoring

1. The Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS) comprises 100 statements where participants rate their parents' behaviours. Scores range from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (always), indicating the frequency of observation. Scoring follows PCRS manual norms.
2. The General Flow Proneness Scale consists of 13 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The total score is calculated by summing item scores as per instructions. Greater scores indicate more flow experience, while lower scores imply less flow experience.
3. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised Neuroticism comprises 12 binary items requiring 'Yes' or 'No' responses. The total score, derived from manual norms, indicates the level of neuroticism: higher scores signify greater neuroticism, while lower scores signify lesser neuroticism.

RESULTS

Table No. 1 Correlation between the Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS) (Father), the General Flow Proneness Scale (GFPS) and the EPQ-R Neuroticism Scale as well as the mean and standard deviation.

PCRS (Father)	GFPS	EPQ-R (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Protecting	.135	-.141	37.25	8.22214
Symbolic Punishment	-.084	-.016	27.89	7.83916
Rejecting	.021	.014	23.64	8.47606
Object Punishment	-.028	.131	21.04	8.97800
Demanding	-.196	-.076	29.26	9.90421
Indifferent	.049	-.208*	28.30	7.03598

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PCRS (Father)	GFPS	EPQ-R (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Symbolic Reward	.085	.013	33.75	8.04203
Loving	.041	.031	33.72	9.12880
Object Reward	.060	.036	31.72	9.78153
Neglecting	-.089	.149	24.08	8.00212
Father Total	.020	-.089	290.65	41.820776

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) (N in mean and standard deviation=100)

The study reveals a strong correlation between neuroticism and the indifferent dimension of the father-child relationship. Fathers who exhibit indifference or lack emotional involvement may have children with high neuroticism. Flow proneness and demanding fathers have weak positive and negative correlations, while neuroticism has a weak negative correlation. Fathers who use object punishment techniques may have children with higher neuroticism.

Table No. 2 Correlation between the Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS) (Mother), the General Flow Proneness Scale (GFPS) and the EPQ-R Neuroticism Scale as well as the mean and standard deviation.

PCRS (Mother)	GFPS	EPQ-R (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Protecting	.084	.004	38.3800	6.88107
Symbolic Punishment	-.058	.054	28.9600	6.42740
Rejecting	-.122	.024	20.3300	6.99069
Object Punishment	.046	-.047	19.8300	6.88147
Demanding	.055	-.087	28.8400	7.72340
Indifferent	.042	.206*	28.2800	5.64985
Symbolic Reward	-.032	-.038	35.5859	6.82285
Loving	.072	-.151	36.7800	8.14711
Object Reward	-.090	-.008	33.7600	8.09180
Neglecting	-.166	.196	22.6500	7.51077
Mother Total	.036	-.041	296.72000	35.166007

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) (N in mean and standard deviation=100)

Neuroticism is positively correlated with the indifferent dimension of the mother-child relationship, with children often showing high levels of neuroticism. Conversely, a weak negative correlation exists between flow proneness and rejecting, and neglecting dimensions, suggesting children with higher rejection or critical mothers may have lower psychological flow. Conversely, a positive but non-significant correlation exists between neuroticism and neglecting dimension. Lastly, A negative but non-significant correlation exists between neuroticism and loving dimension.

Table No. 3 Regression Analysis of the Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS) (Father), the General Flow Proneness Scale (GFPS) and the EPQ-R Neuroticism Scale as well as mean and standard deviation

Dependent Variable	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Mean	Standard Deviation
Flow	.325	.106	.005	7.06819	43.0500	6.79776
EPQ-R (N)	.315	.099	-.002	3.21421	6.5900	3.14978

Note. Predictor: (Constant), Father Total, Neglecting, Indifferent, Object Punishment, Object Reward, Protecting, Symbolic Reward, Loving, Demanding, Symbolic Punishment, Rejecting

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The study found a moderate positive correlation between parent-child relationship quality and psychological flow, with 10.6% of variance explained by the relationship's quality. Additionally, about 9.9% of the neuroticism variance can be attributed to the relationship.

Table No. 4 Regression Analysis of the Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS) (Mother), the General Flow Proneness Scale (GFPS) and the EPQ-R Neuroticism Scale as well as mean and standard deviation

Dependent Variable	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Mean	Standard Deviation
Flow	.197	.039	-.069	7.32732	43.0500	6.79776
EPQ-R (N)	.369	.136	.039	3.14764	6.5900	3.14978

Note. Predictor: (Constant), Mother Total, Neglecting, Indifferent, Object Punishment, Object Reward, Protecting, Symbolic Reward, Loving, Demanding, Symbolic Punishment, Rejecting

The study reveals a weak positive correlation between independent variables and psychological flow, explaining 3.9% of its variance, and a moderate positive correlation with neuroticism, explaining 13.6% of its variance, with an R-squared value of 0.136.

The above results provide essential findings into the different dimensions of parental relationships and adolescents' psychological flow and neuroticism. Since parent-child relationships, psychological flow and neuroticism have limitedly been studied together in the past in relation to adolescents. Research is quite thin in exploring how these factors interact and influence each other.

The findings of the present study indicate that there are several weak and moderate positive correlations between the dimensions of the parent-child relationship scale and the neuroticism scale. A significant relationship between the indifference dimension and neuroticism in adolescence was found. Numerous weak correlations can be found between the parent-child relationship and psychological flow. Specifically, there is a negative correlation between the dimensions of demanding, neglecting and rejecting.

The present study concludes findings of a positive and significant correlation between neuroticism and the indifferent dimension of the father-child relationship. Fathers who show indifference may have offspring with high levels of neuroticism. Flow proneness has a positive correlation with the protecting dimension, but not with the demanding dimension. Children with higher demanding mothers may have a lower psychological flow. Neuroticism has a negative but weak correlation with the protecting dimension. Fathers who use object punishment techniques may have children with higher neuroticism. Lastly, neuroticism has a positive but non-significant correlation with neglecting, suggesting that children with neglectful fathers may have higher levels of neuroticism. These findings suggest that father-child relationships can impact children's psychological well-being.

It found a positive and significant correlation between neuroticism and the indifferent dimension of the mother-child relationship. Mothers who show indifference often have offspring with high levels of neuroticism. A weak negative correlation exists between flow proneness and the rejecting dimension, suggesting children with higher levels of rejection or criticism may have lower psychological flow. A negative correlation exists between flow proneness and the neglecting dimension, suggesting children with higher levels of neglect may have lower psychological flow. Loving and neglecting the mother-child connection

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component also show a negative association with neuroticism, suggesting children with more loving mothers may be less neurotic.

Both maternal and paternal indifference and protection have significant positive correlations with neuroticism in parent-child relationships. Fathers who provide more protection may foster a more positive psychological flow environment. Conversely, mothers with higher rejection may experience lower flow. Neglect and object punishment also have non-significant positive correlations with neuroticism. The study emphasises the importance of parental involvement, affection, and support in shaping adolescents' emotional well-being.

Several factors may account for our inability to obtain statistically significant correlations in our study. It is essential to consider the potential influence of contextual factors on the relationship between the quality of the parent-child relationship and adolescent psychological outcomes.

Adolescents' development has evolved significantly due to the rise of social media and internet access, as discussed by Gaur, T. (2023), more neuroticism has been found in adolescents who excessively use their smartphones. The addictive nature of social media can disrupt sleep patterns, social interactions, and offline activities. While the parent-child relationship remains crucial, adolescents are now striving to assert their individuality, leading to changes in the dynamics of the parent-child dynamic. Peer groups, school environments, and societal norms also play a role in shaping adolescent attitudes and behaviors. Academic stress, peer pressure, media influence, and societal expectations can also influence neuroticism levels in adolescents, as discussed by Soenens, B. et al (2018). Post-pandemic media influence has exacerbated neuroticism by perpetuating unrealistic standards, promoting fear-inducing content, and disrupting offline experiences (Joseph, S. et al. 2023). Individual differences, such as personality traits, coping mechanisms, and past experiences, may also influence adolescents' propensity to experience psychological flow (Bassi, M., et al. 2014) independently of the parent-child relationship, making it difficult to detect significant correlations.

CONCLUSION

Parent-child relationships involve emotional and behavioural interactions between parents and their children, influencing their emotional well-being, social skills, and psychological adjustment. Psychological flow, a state of deep engagement and enjoyment, is associated with optimal performance and intrinsic motivation. Neuroticism, a personality trait linked to negative emotions like anxiety and worry, is associated with mood swings, irrational thoughts, and increased sensitivity to stressors, increasing the likelihood of developing psychological disorders. Our study resort to find the relationship between these complex variables.

Studies reveal parent-child relationships play a crucial role in determining the adolescent's holistic development. Our study found moderate and weak correlations between the variables and contribute to the field of positive psychology and a greater understanding of the complexity of adolescent psychological well-being and the multitude of factors that contribute to it. The parent-child relationship undoubtedly plays a crucial role in shaping adolescent development, but our study suggests that its impact on psychological flow and neuroticism may be more nuanced than previously thought. It also highlights the importance of understanding the parent-child relationship in adolescent psychological outcomes. Future research should explore interactions between parents and adolescents, considering factors like

peer relationships and societal influences. This will enable more effective interventions and improved mental health outcomes.

Scope for further study:

- Larger and more diverse sample size should be utilized.
- Longitudinal studies recommended to fully grasp parental relationship dynamics, neuroticism, and psychological flow

Delimitation:

- The sample size is small and only limited to one area, potentially affecting generalizability.
- Caution is advised in generalizing findings to larger populations.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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