Adolescents' and their Mothers: Understanding the Needs

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ABSTRACT

The adolescence is indicative of being a stressful transitional stage of development. If pertinent attention or supervision is not provided at this point, it could give rise to certain behavioral and social maladjustments. This paper attempts to review various studies related to parenting style and its associated effects. A cross sectional survey was carried out among school going young adolescents and their mothers in Dhaka city. An insight into adolescence liking and disliking factors on school and home environment was noted. It was seen that 31.4 percent of the mothers followed the authoritative style of parenting. Among them, the mothers who were more approachable and shared views with children, their children were mostly responsive in sharing their feelings with parents.

The present scenario in today's world is at a critical juncture. On one hand, the rapid growth has brought about a lot of convenience in our lives. On the other, it has brought about adverse consequences. Frustrations and anxiety are some of the emotions a person has to deal with the changing demands (Nehra, 2014). Meeting up with the ups and downs are a major deal in the life of Adolescence (Doorn, Branje, & Meeus, 2010). The word 'adolescence' hails from the Latin verb 'adolescere', which means 'to grow to maturity' (Golinko, 1984). This phase marked by the onset of puberty is distinct because of the process of decision making and judgment. Judgment in this case encompasses of cognitive and psychosocial aspects that influence decisions whereas decision-making refer to the actual choices made (Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000). In Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development (1952), this phase is acknowledged by the fact that an individual moves to a relatively more mature level of functioning. From the biological perspective, this phase is distinct as the cerebral cortex of the brain reaches its highest level of gray matter production (Newman & Newman, 2006). Moreover, disciplines such as sociology, social work, developmental psychology, criminology, medicine, and psychiatry mark this as a

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critical stage of development (Smith, Ireland, & Thornberry, 2005). In addition, the beginnings of adolescence impact the feelings about themselves and their relationships with others (Allison, 2000).

Successful adaptation to stress includes various ways in which individuals manage their emotions, think constructively, regulate behavior, control autonomic arousal and act on the social and nonsocial environments to alter their sources of stress (Compas et al., 2001). The Adjustment process is generally influenced by two basic factors; individual and environmental. Individual element comprises of biological, psychological and socialization side. Whereas environmental include all other social aspects (Raju & Rahantulla, 2007). Several studies indicate comparative result that any substantiated maltreatment experience during adolescence increases the risk of general delinquency, violence, drug and alcohol-related abuse, internalizing and externalizing problems, depressive symptoms than those who have never been maltreated (Smith et al., 2005).

Various studies on family have put their concentration on children and adolescence (Maccoby 1980). In 2000, an estimated 199000 youth murder took place globally as a result of interpersonal violence (WHO, 2002). The factors of risk for youth violence has been explained on an individual level, on the level of family and peers and finally on the social, political and cultural level (WHO, 2002). This could be further expounded by the fact that child's violent behavior and later adolescent's delinquency are related to presence of the parents and quality of parental involvement (Wong, 2012).

Parenting Styles

Often it has been perceived that crime is related to poor parenting (Hoeve et al., 2009). According to World Health Organization (2002) the home environment is vital to the development of violent behaviour in young people. Some of the key family aspects associated with adolescent violence are; poor supervision, harsh physical punishment, parental conflict in early childhood, experiencing parental separation or divorce and a low level of family cohesion and low socioeconomic status (WHO, 2002). From the philosophical stand, John Locke reflects that one of the roles that parents play is to inculcate manners in their children and teach them appropriate ways of interacting with others in a given context (as cited in Gianoutsos, 2006, p. 4). They are expected to become an important influence on the emotional, cognitive and social development (Mensah & Kuranchie 2013). In a survey report for the Ministry of New Zealand (2014) regarding the perception about crime, it was seen that the poor parenting percentage seems to have increased from 73 to 76 percent from the year 2013 to 2014.

To support our views regarding different rearing practices by parents, Baumrind (1966) presented us the typology of parenting style which constitute of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive style. This typology is based on two dimensions, one is the level of responsiveness

and the other is the extent of demanding (Baumrind, 1967). Although these three styles have been comprehensively accepted, Maccoby and Martin (1983) made further distinction on the permissive style of parenting; i.e, permissive-indulgent and permissive uninvolved. Authoritative style is regarded as being high in responsiveness and high in demanding. The Authoritarian style is marked by less in responsiveness and high in demands. Permissive-Indulgent style is labeled by high responsiveness and low demanding, and finally, Permissive-Uninvolved style is labeled as low responsiveness and low demanding (Huver et al., 2010; Kusterer, 2009).

The Authoritative parenting style is usually known to chaperon their children to adhere to problem focused coping approach (Baumrind, 1991). These parents' tries to foster self-belief in their children. They make effort to instill similar kind of value system as their own, and in order to do so; they encourage their children to have discussions and shares rational behind their ideologies (Sharma, Sharma, & Yadava 2011; Baumrind, 1966). Children of these parents are more often involved in household chores and responsibilities as the parents try to inculcate respect for their work and traditions. Even though these parents recognize their children's interest and the need for autonomy, they might restrict it when required. Usually their disciplining approach is consistently firm and demanding yet it involves being responsive at the same time (Baumrind, 1966).

The Authoritarian parents are the kind that likes to set benchmark in shaping and evaluating their children's behavior (Baumrind, 1966). These parents are very directive and prefer one sided communication rather than indulging them in to discussion about instilling the right and wrong concept. They want their children to obey them without any query. And when the child misbehaves or does not follow the code of conduct they are penalized for it. These parents are enormously demanding and have level of expectation from their children. They are more controlling rather than being supportive (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013).

The Permissive - Indulgent sort of parents are usually confirmatory and easy going by nature. They are more tolerant towards their child's impulses and believe self-regulation as children's right. Moreover, a child is allowed to make their own choice which does not have to be followed according to the traditional standards. These parents do not consider punishment as a tool to control or shape behaviour. They feel that strict supervision and high demands can provoke rebelliousness in children (Baumrind, 1966; Baumrind, 1991; Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013).

The Uninvolved or the neglectful style is characterized by indifferent pattern of parenting (Huver et al., 2010). They neither monitor children's behavior nor is attentive towards their child. Setting guidelines and recognizing reasons for misbehavior becomes a difficult for them (Horwath, 2013). These parents are often detached from parental responsibility and the style of parenting seems to negatively correlate with parental involvement (Huver et al., 2010; Kusterer,

2009). It is also seen that recognizing children's age appropriate is a difficult task for these parents (Horwath, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study by Deshpande & Chhabriya (2013) posits that adolescents perceiving parental acceptance attitude have higher self-esteem than the adolescents perceiving concentration and avoidance attitude. Parental affection or support is positively related to adolescents' self-esteem. In another research carried out by Alizadeh et al., (2011) comprising of 681 mothers of children in Tehran confirms the typology of parenting style that directly influences children's behavior and symptoms of behavior. The study found Authoritative parenting style to be directly related to less children's internalizing and externalizing symptoms. In addition, Bronte et al., (2006) examined father's parenting style as predictors of first delinquency and substance use among adolescents in intact families. The analysis portrayed that having an authoritarian father is associated with an increased risk of engaging in delinquent activity and substance use. On the other hand, the negative effect of authoritarian parenting is reduced when fathers have a positive relationship with their adolescent. Permissive parenting also predicts less risky behavior when the father-child relationship is positive. This is stronger for male than for female adolescents. Moreover, Renk et al., (2005) studied 139 biological mother-father-adolescent triads that reported three most common topics of conflict in their relationships. Adolescents differed in the aspect of conflict from their mothers as compared to fathers. Agreement for topics selected by adolescents and their parents was not better for sons versus daughters or for adolescents of a particular age group. In addition, the results demonstrate parent-adolescent conflict frequency of occurrence and intensity.

Consequently, a research by Allison (2000) indicates that parent-adolescent conflict increases during the middle school years. During this period, conflict has been found to be most evident in interactions between adolescents and their mothers. The prevalence of parent-adolescent conflict during the early adolescent years has direct implications for middle school programs. This could present an opportunity for family and consumer sciences teachers to address the real-life problems and concerns of students.

Boer & Tranent (2013) investigated the relationship between adolescent self-esteem and maternal parenting style on the dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness. The researchers concluded that considering responsiveness and demandingness as separate dimensions provided more accurate concept between maternal parenting style and adolescent self-esteem. In addition, Mensah & Kuranchie (2013) led a survey that showed majority of the parents adapting to authoritative style of parenting. It was inferred that authoritative parenting promoted pro-social behaviour while authoritarian parenting resulted in anti-social behaviour.

A longitudinal study by Doorn, Branje & Meeus (2010) investigated conflict resolution styles which was positive problem solving, conflict engagement, and withdrawal in parent–adolescent relationships. Adolescents' reported increased use of positive problem solving with mothers. However, adolescents' use of conflict engagement and withdrawal was found to temporarily increase with mothers as compared to fathers. These results indicate that conflict resolution in parent–adolescent relationships gradually change to a more favourable relationship.

Adding to other research, Cauffman & Steinberg (2000) investigated responsibility, perspective, and temperance aspects on maturity of judgment on legal decisions involving juveniles. The study discloses that socially responsible decision making is significantly more common among young adults than among adolescents. Individuals exhibiting higher levels of responsibility, perspective, and temperance displayed more mature decision-making than those with lower scores on these psychosocial factors. Adolescents on an average scored significantly lower than adults but individual differences in judgment within each adolescent age group were considerable. Also, Wong's (2012) investigated the impacts of family climates on young adults' well-being through mediations or moderations of psychosocial maturity. This led to the findings that expressiveness and active-recreational orientation were stronger predictors of well-being than did cohesion and conflict.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was used to perform the study. The population for this study was mothers and their children residing in Dhaka city, chosen by convenient sampling. A total of 62 participants i.e., 31 mothers and their adolescent child within the age group of 11-16 were studied. Out of which 15 were girls and 16 were boys. Mothers were identified through their children. All the respondents belonged to the middle income group. And the study was conducted during October to December of 2016.

The relevant data of the study were obtained using two forms of semi structured questionnaire. One set of questionnaire were intended for the mothers and another was for their children. The questions encompassed of both open ended and close ended type of questions. The researchers interviewed the respondents in accordance to the questionnaire after obtaining verbal consent from them. Subsequently, their children were interviewed separately. This was done right after interviewing their mothers to avoid bias in providing information. Rapport was established between the researchers and the respondents that led to high response rate. The data was processed and analyzed using the statistical software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.

DISCUSSION

One of the objectives of the study was to explore the variety of difficulties adolescents face. As seen in the literature review, the two aspects that influence adolescent's adjustment process are

individual and the environment (Raju & Rahantulla, *2007).* The kind of problems that this study wanted to assess was divided into two areas; the school environment and the home environment. It is believed that the individual liking or disliking factor to an extent is shaped by their environment (Bandura, 1999). These factors were studied on the basis of perception about their parents and friends.

Table 1: Adolescents perception on home and school environment

Adolescents perception of home environment				Adolescents perception of school environment			
Reasons behind disliking parents	%	Reasons behind liking parents	%	Liking/ Disliking factors about school	%	Disliking factors for a counterpart at school	%
Like everything	17.1	Dislike everything	2.9	Dislike study	5.7	Talkative & annoying	14.3
Restricts in using mobile	2.9	Sacrificing, understanding & caring	51.4	Distance of School	2.9	Complain to teacher	2.9
Strict about studies	14.3	Makes them happy	2.9	Pressure of studies	2.9	Disturbing	5.7
Over caring	5.7	Fulfill dreams	17.1	Cannot watch cartoon	2.9	Quarrelsome & lazy	2.9
Become angry for no reason	2.9	Love their children	2.9	Disturbance by others	2.9	Strict, Rude & Upright	5.7
Parents quarrel with each other	8.6	Shopping & outing	5.7	Like teachers	5.7	Steal stuffs	2.9
Scold	17.1			Hate memorizing	2.9	Bullying, teasing & fighting	14.3
Don't understand	5.7			Learn new things	2.9	Competition	2.9
Annoying & boring	5.7			Like or love study	8.6	Scold	2.9
Do not allow to play outside	5.7			Meet with friends, play & have fun	42.9		
Do not give gifts	2.9						
Missing System	11.4	Missing System	17.1	Missing System	20.0	Missing System	45.7
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

% - refers to percent

Table 1 discusses the factor of liking and disliking the home and the school environment. The perception regarding home environment, in this case, parenting style was assessed. Under the given topic the factor that has been discussed in the table is the characteristics of the parents that

made their children like or dislike them. When asked to these adolescents what do they like most about their parents, it was constructive to find more than 50 percent of them responded their parents as understanding, caring and sacrificing. They felt their parent's effort in their upbringing is enormous. However, around 17 percent of the adolescents felt dissatisfied of being scolding at. The reason pointed out for scolding was mostly studies which includes 14 percent of the responses. The third major response around 8.6 percent said that their parents quarrel with each other. Studies have shown that conflict between parents is a major cause that brought about a feeling of insecurity and aggression in children. A major outcome of marital conflict is emotional as well as behavioural difficulties in a child (Cummings & Davies., 2002).

However, it was positive to know the perception on school environment. The majority of the respondents, around 60 percent of them either liked or loved going to school. Nevertheless, 28.6 percent of the adolescents stated that they disliked going to school. In this instance, both liking and disliking factors were associated with the people around them. Respondents liked going to school because they could meet and play with friends. This possibility achieved approximately 50 percent of the total responses. Adversely, the reason for which they shunned going to school was also because of the people around them. A significant number about 14.3 percent mentioned their class/ school mates were very talkative and annoying. Some of them were victimized due to bullying, teasing and getting into fights in their school. Results of Crime and Safety surveys of 2015 reveal that more than one out of every five, i.e., 20.8 percent students report as being bullied (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2016).

Table 2: Response on feelings sharing by adolescents and their mother's

| | | Adolescents share feelings with parents | | | | Total |
		Very often	Often	Rarely	Never	
Adolescents Share daily experience (Mother's opinion)	Yes	11	4	3	1	19
	No	0	1	7	3	11
Total		11	5	10	4	30

** p < .003

Table 2 represents the cross tabulation on the aspect of feelings sharing by the adolescents. These adolescents were inquired on how often they share their feelings or thoughts with their parents. The information was further authenticated by asking the same question from mothers. The information holds significance at the level 0.05 which means children who mentioned about either sharing or not sharing feelings with their parents, their mothers mostly provided equivalent information. It was revealed that majority of these adolescents shared their daily experiences with their mother or father or with both. Moreover, mothers who discussed their concerns with the children and applied problem focused solving approach, their children have a relatively high tendency to be responsive with parents. Nevertheless, even though the number is bleak yet we came in contact with participants who never share their feeling or experiences with their parents.

This possibility for not doing so could be being too strict, having conflict in between parents or for not understanding their children's point of view.

Table 3: Percentage showing practice of different Parenting style

	Parenting Styles					
	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive (Indulgent)	Uninvolved	Missing system	Total
Percent	17.1	31.4	25.7	11.4	85.7	100

The above table indicated as table 3 shows the kind of parenting style that these mothers usually adhere. This was analyzed on the basis of how these mothers address their child's problem or needs. Around 17 percent of the respondents fell on the authoritarian style of parenting which is characterized as high in demand but low in responsiveness. Their children mostly mentioned about not expressing their feeling with parents. Certain children also stated over caring and over reacting are some of the aspect they disliked about their parents. This was considered as the Permissive indulgent kind of parents. The parents are highly responsive but not demanding by nature. In this study, the percentage of indulgent mothers constitute of 25.7. Whereas, the percentage of uninvolved kind of mothers that came across the study was 11.4 percent. Some of these mothers had interpersonal issues because of which they could not concentrate on their children's needs. And lastly, the majority fell heavy on the authoritative style of parenting. This style of parenting is characterized by high in demand and also high in responsiveness. The authoritative kind of mothers tends to set guidelines and also understand their children's age wise needs. These mothers were more aware and open to their child's needs.

CONCLUSION

The present study catered to the intended objectives and found significant results. Studies were reviewed to get an impression on parenting style and its associate linkages. Even though the sample size was small and only adolescent and their mothers were addressed, notable findings came about regarding adolescent problem areas and mother's parenting style.

Findings from the study tell us that parenting style is associated with children's behavioral problems. It therefore makes parents aware of the negative and positive aspects of parenting styles. Not only mothers but both the parent should be educated on the importance of adopting the required parenting style and the benefits of counseling that would aid their child's development.

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