

Parental and Peer Group Influence on Adolescent's Behavior

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Abstract:

This present study mainly aimed to uncover How parents and peer groups influence the behavior of adolescents. Parents and peer groups work as the primary agents of socialization in every individual's life and both the agents have crucial role in shaping of behavior of adolescent. As the key members of a family parents influence the behavior attitude, interest and overall personality of their adolescent. Again peer groups provide a sense of belongingness emotional security, environment of equality and freedom. At the same time peer groups may be proved as deliriant also to the adolescents. This study help to understand How peer groups and the parents influence the adolescents in behavioral aspect directly or indirectly and positively or negatively. This study is mainly based on reviewing of existing literature such as books, journal papers, reports, websites etc. Various research studies have documented that peer groups and parental influence may be the dominant factor of many behavioral issues in adolescent. Finally, the investigator proposed some recommendation for dealing with the issues related to the behavior of adolescent.

Key Words: Adolescent, Peer group, Parental Influence

Introduction:

In recent years within behavioral and developmental psychology, researchers have been showing on increasing interest in the development of behavior and the behavioral issues of adolescent. As the primary socializing agent, family and peer groups have substantial influence on the behavior and overall personality of the adolescent. Parents are the prime members of a family. Parents as well as the peer influence the adolescent learning, attitude, aspirations, values and his or her life style. Several research studies have shown that strong bonding within the family members are generally associated with a declination in adolescent's behavioral and emotional problems (e.g. Tergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Vieno, Nation Pastore & Santinello, 2009). It is revealed by various studies that the continuity of connection between family members and a secure emotional base is important for the psychological wellbeing and behavioral development of young people. Besides the family and parents peer groups also play a powerful role in every adolescent's life. As children approach adolescence, they prefer to spend on increasing amount of time with their peers. More particularly, the contribution and influence of peer have been stronger during adolescent. Peer groups work as an agent of socialization, help for identity formation and

influence the moral and emotional base of the adolescents. Peers have a direct influence in the preferences, attitudes and behavior of adolescents. Peer groups share some common notions, feelings, attitudes and ideals. Peer groups may provide encouragement, easy access and a suitable social setting for consumptions (Glaser, Shelton & Bree, 2010). Veno, 2004 showed that friendship is positively connected to psychological wellbeing, while a contending relation with peers negatively connected with health (haftman & Ostberg, 2006). Therefore, this research study attempts to understand how family especially the parents and peer groups influence the behavior of adolescents.

Research Objectives:

The present study attempts to explain the following subjects-

- To understand positive and negative parental influence on adolescent behavior
- To understand adolescent and their peer groups
- To discuss positive and negative peer relations
- To explain peer groups influence on behavior of adolescents

Research Significance:

Adolescence is the most crucial time of human life to identify the talent and possibilities and to develop them to its fullest. Though this stage comes with innumerable possibilities at the same time it may be considered as the most vulnerable period of an individual's life. The positive and negative impacts of all the experiences and the environments of the individuals play a determining role. These impacts determine what will be the behavioral traits and the overall personality of the individual as an adult. The adolescent's relationship with the parents and peers constitute these positive and negative impacts to a large extent and have a prolong effect in his entire life. Hence, to know the rootsof various behavioral issues of adolescent it is important to studythe peer and parental influence on him.

Methodology:

This study is purely based on review of existing literature. The Researcher reviews various journals, periodicals, books, reports, blogs and websites regarding the topic. Hence whatever information is revealed by this study is derived mainly from secondary source of data.

Operational Definition of variables:

1. Adolescent behavior

In the life cycle of every individual, adolescence is the most crucial period followed by a stage of profound psychological and biological changes. This is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Because of rapid rate of growth and development this stage bring lots of possibilities as well as challenges for adolescent and how the adolescent

cope up with the possibilities and the challenges determines his behavior to a great extent. Here, adolescent's behavior refers to those emotional, mental and cognitive characteristics manifested by the adolescent which may be overt or covert, internal and external, conscious or subconscious and voluntary or involuntary.

2. Peer Group

Peers are some children or adolescents who are about same age group and maturity level. Generally, a peer group indicates a group of individual of equal status. The adolescent peer group appears as a purposive assembly of individuals who experiences identical state of mental, emotional, cognitive and physical change as well as shares the developmental position of seeking and anticipating self-definition, prescription and integration (Seltzer, 1986).

3. Parental Influences

Parental influence can be defined as any action, attitude or opinion that somehow buildor shapes the child's attitude, behavior or may be the overall personality. An individual's earliest exposure comes from parents. Hence, the parents behavior, attitude, relation with the child, relation with other family members, their marital relationship, child-rearing style, guidance they provide etc. influence the individual's psychological world as well as his or her behavior to a large extent which can be described as parental influences.

Parental Influence on Behavior of Adolescent's:

Bodman & Peterson described family as some complex social entities and whose members like parents, grand parents, adolescents and siblings are connected together as part of a larger relationship whole. A good family system provide freedom for identity exploration stable environments, daily security and a sense of order. Parents are the key members of the family and have a great influence on their adolescent's life. Parental influence is described as any attitude, action or opinion which somehow molds or shapes the personality of the child. Parental influence may cover many dimensions like parental support, parenting style or child rearing process, parental behavior, parent-adolescent relationship, marital relationship of the parents etc. and every of these dimensions has unique and different influence on adolescent's behavior. Few of them can be discussed as follows-

Parent adolescent relationship:

The quality of the parent-adolescent relationship is an important dimension's which influence the behavior of adolescent to a great extent. The parent adolescent relationship refers to an emotional atmosphere or climate in the relationship between the adolescent and parent. Adolescent who have a good relationship with their parents they are more likely to tell them about their day to day activities, to communicate with them and to disclouse to the parents about their thought and feelings. Various researched findings have revealed that higher level of adolescent's disclouser were closely associated with lower levels of deviate

behaviour, delinquency and norm breaking behaviour (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Another study reported that a negative relationship (e.g. a low level of emotional bonding and a high level of conflict) between parents and adolescents is corresponded to higher level of externalizing problem behaviour (Decovic, 1999). Snyder and Huntley, 1990 showed that there was a positive correlation between antisocial adolescents and parents who had a lack of mutuality a lack of intimacy with their children and who expressed more blaming, defensiveness and anger. On the other hand a positive relationship of the adolescents with their parents may work as a protection against delinquency and anti-social behaviour in adolescents.

Parenting style:

It can be undoubtedly said that parenting style have a direct impact on adolescents behaviour. Parents who are members of a family structure influence adolescent behaviour as well as well as their development through various child rearing approaches can be conceptualized as parenting styles. The most widely used set of parenting style was developed by psychologist Diana Baumrind (1978, 1991) and they were referred to as authoritarian, permissive and authoritative approach. Authoritarian parents are them who use quite strict and very harsh control to encourage unquestioning obedience in children. Punitive and harsh control is used to impose the parents' will. Affection, open communication and reasoning are either not used or used very sparingly. The second parenting style, permissive parenting indicate parents who rarely seek to have control on adolescents and make few demands upon them. These parents use more moderate forms of control. Permissive parenting style has two sub types, they are indifferent and indulgent parenting style. Indifferent parents are neither controlling or supportive and can be rightly described as being disinterest in their child. Indulgent parents are supportive in nature, foster trust, emphasize democracy, but use little control with their child. The authoritarian style refers to those parents who value both external control and autonomous self-will from their children. They use firm control on their children to implement a consistent set of principles.

Many research has been done which examined the connection between parenting style and adolescents' behaviour. Many of them reported that adolescents who were brought up in authoritative homes tend to have more adjustable behaviour, to perform well in schools and to relate themselves more effectively with their peers and others (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg, Dornbusch & Darling, Lamborn, 1992). Another studies have shown that adolescents who are from authoritarian home environment are more inclined to be passive and dependent in behaviour. They were more conforming, less creative, less socially adept and less self assured than other adolescents.

Regarding permissive style of parenting many research studies reported that the adolescents of indulgent parents more likely to be irresponsible, immature and to confirm more readily to their peers. Again, neglectful or indifferent parenting tends to develop involvement in delinquency and higher rates of impulsivity as well as early indulgence in substance use and sexual activity (Fulgini & Eccles, 1993; Baumrind 1991; Lamborn, mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch 1991; Kurdek & Fine, 1994; Steinberg, 2001 etc.)

Moreover , it can be conduced that parental support, close relationship with their children and communication on the part of parent as well as determining limits of behaviour, observing what they do or experience, supervise their levels of autonomy can influence the behaviour of the adolescents in a positive way. Again, parental warmth and encouragement and behavioural control may be predicting factors which can protect the adolescents from many behavioural issues or problem behaviour like aggression, use of addictive substance or consumption of alcohol, delinquency etc. (Hoskins, 2014).

Parental Behaviour:

Parental behaviour influence the behaviour of their children also in both positive and negative way. Parental behaviour is most frequently studied in few dimensions as autonomy granting behaviour, parental support or warmth, intrusive control, monitoring, reasoning and punitiveness and every aspects has different impact of adolescents behaviour. Research has shown that parents' warm behaviour, supportiveness, accepting and nurturant behaviour is closely connected with the development of socially competent behaviour in adolescents (Peterson and Rollins, 1987, Peterson, Bush & Supple, 1999; Maccoby & Martin,1983; Barber & Thomas, 1986). Parental support generally refers to some parental behaviour like – kissing, hugging, touching, praising, encouraging, approving and spending quality time with adolescents (fuligni & Eccles, 1993. Rohner, 1986; Barber & Thomas, 1986). A large number of research shown that parental support is related with various positive characteristics in adolescent's behaviour like identity formation, higher self-esteem, agreeableness to parents etc. adolescents having a good parental support often report lower amount of depression, anxiety and behaviour problems (Peterson & Rollins, 1987; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Peterson & Hann, 1999).

Monitoring or supervision is one of the important aspects of parental behaviour. Here, monitoring indicates the extent to which parents are concern about their adolescent's activities and behaviour (kerr & Stattin, 2000). It refers to the efforts made by the parents to have concern or become aware of and maintain their adolescent's activities, physical whereabouts, peer associations and their time

schedules etc. A successful monitoring has a great effect on shaping adolescent behaviour. It can prevent the drift of adolescents towards problematic peer relationship, deviant activities and risk behaviour. Again a good monitoring can limit the adolescents dating and physical relationships, prevent from the symptoms of drug use and reduce the access of popular media used by the adolescents, prevent from deviant peer associations and anti-social behaviour (small, 1990; Patterson & Capaldi, 1991; Patterson, 1986; Fuligni & Eccles, 1991 Barber, Olsen & Shagle, 1994).

Autonomy granting is another aspect of parental behaviour. It refers the extent to which parents apply democratic discipline, non-coercive behaviour and encouragement for their adolescents to express their true individuality within families (Stimberg & Gray, 1991) Allowing autonomy in this way often encourages the development of self-confidence, self-worth and self-competent behaviour (Barber, 1996).

Intrusive control through which parents invalidate adolescent's emotion and feelings, withdraw love, constrain verbal expression, attempt to induce guilt by reasoning. Often use of this behaviour by parents found linked with some internalized behavioural issues in adolescents like loneliness, depression, withdrawal, eating disorder, lower self-efficacy, less adequate perception of self and less effective identity development etc. (Barber, 1996).

Punitiveness is one of the commonly practiced parental behaviour. It indicates to arbitrary physical or verbal attempts to influence the behaviour and inner qualities of adolescents. Punitiveness differs from name calling to corporal punishment, nagging or violence (Peterson, Day, Mc-Cracken, 1998; Straus, 1994) Verbal or physical punitiveness on a frequent basis often leads the teen to resistant behaviour, hostile feeling and tendencies by the adolescents to neglect the parental authority for a long time. Many research have shown that the use of punitive and rude behaviour by the parents is linked with adolescents who have depression, lower self-esteem, lower achievement in school, less moral development, but higher rates of delinquent activities and substance use (Straus, 1994; Eckenrode, Larid & Dories, 1993; Eisenberg, 1989). But a mild form of punitiveness is necessary to reduce the deviant and unacceptable behaviour in adolescence and it do not always lead the adolescent to behavioural problem (Baumrind, Cowan, & Larzelere, 2000).

Interparental and Marital conflict:

Interparental or Marital conflict is one of the forms of family conflict. It has substantial consequences on the development process of adolescent and this issue has received increasing attention in research literature. The interparental or marital conflict has both a direct and indirect influence on adolescent's behaviour. Some of

related literature refers to interparental conflicts in two types, they are overt or covert conflict. Overt conflict can be described as inimical behaviour which is indicative of a negative relation between parents. It indicates various hostile behaviours like contempt, derision, hitting, slapping, screaming, insulting, threatening etc. (Mchale, 1997; Gerard & Pemberton, 1997). Again, covert conflict refers to inimical behaviour that reflects the indirect ways of expressing conflict between parents (Trotter and Buehler, 1990). This kind of conflict behaviour of parents encompasses scapegoating the adolescent, denigrating each other in front of the adolescent, trying to influence the adolescent to take side of a particular parent etc. Again, severity and frequency are two important aspects of interparental conflict behaviour. Severe and frequent parental conflict places the adolescent in threatening, anxiety provoking and disturbing psychological circumstances. Some research evidences show that in comparison to frequency of parental conflict severity of the conflict between parents has independent and predominant effect on adolescent problem behaviour (Buehler et al. 1997). Some other studies have revealed that in families where the severity and frequency of parental conflicts are high, adolescents from those families express learned aggressiveness, psychological withdrawal and insecurity through their behaviour only by observing and perceiving negative meanings of their parents' relation (Cummings & Davies, 1994). Moreover, high marital conflict between parents may result in a deeper psychological distress and it may be manifested through devastating and antisocial behaviour in adolescents.

Therefore, it may be concluded that some conflict and marital distress probably occurs in almost all families and can be maintained at moderate level. Probably the best way to develop relationship mechanisms which can manage conflict within both the parent and parent-adolescent relationship.

Peer group influence on Behaviour of adolescents:

Mankind is social by nature and no man can live in isolation. Human needs company and support of others for different causes. It can be to ease the things by grouping, to gain acceptance or may be to seek identity or to achieve status. Peer groups play a key role as a fundamental socializing agent. During adolescent period, the formation of groups of friends or peers is normal. The tendency to create such a group begins from childhood. Group of school mates, playmates, scout friends etc. which provides the adolescent a feeling of attachment, emotional security and social release. To a great extent, peer group influences the individual's behaviour, attitude learning, aspirations, values and preferences. Adolescents are wanted to be accepted and liked by their friends which may result in pleasurable feelings when accepted on the other hand they may exhibit extreme stress and anxiety when they are disparaged and excluded by their peers. It affects the adolescent's mind how they are seen and

accepted by the peers (Santrock, 1988). Therefore, peer and their relationship are very significant during the period of adolescence. The influence of peer groups on development of behaviour and personality of an individual has been explained in various research studies. Many sociologists and social psychologists opened that peer group specially in adolescence are some of the strongest factors which determines the behaviour of adolescents.

As the adolescent develops they begin to experiment on both constructive as well as negative behaviours. During adolescence peer group plays crucial role in transmitting the behaviour of adolescents both positively and negatively. Adolescents are vulnerable to peer group influence and this influence is different from group to group or person to person. In a positive way, peer groups play a vital role in formation of good attitudes, desired values, good behaviour and personality of an individual. It may reduce the tendency of developing internalizing problems like anxiety and depression by providing peer acceptance and a sense of security. Various research study reported that peer groups may provide peer support to a large extent. Mead, Hilton & Curtis (2001) described peer group support as a process of giving and receiving assistance with honour, collective responsibility as well as reciprocative agreement through support, empathy, friendship sharing and mutual assistance.

With the positive effect peers have negative influence too on adolescent's behaviour. Many research studies shown that peer group influence is the major cause of anti-social and deviant behaviour in adolescent and peer group has a greater effect on adolescent behaviour than any other factors. It is because most of the teenagers spend a large amount of time with their peers. The dealing with the peers is more direct and powerful in comparison to other people or group. Many research studies support that anti-social peers in many cases have a relation with negative behaviour of adolescents including externalizing problem (Porter, Allen & Mc Farland, 2006), delinquency (Sullivan, 2006) and risky sexual behaviour (Crockett, Raffaelli & Shen, 2006). Besides, the teenagers who are associated with deviant peers express more substance use (Aseltine, 1995) and norm breaking (Vitaro, Brendgen & Bukowski, 2000) and more anti-social behaviour in general (Dishion et al., 1991). Deviant peers provide their fellow friends chance to involve in anti-social behaviour and encourage them with rationalization, motivation and attitudes to support such kind of behaviour (Dishion, Andrews & Crosby, 1995). Moreover, exposure to deviant peers may encourage anti-social behaviour by providing encouragement and positive reinforcement.

In sum, both the parents and peers play major role in shaping and building the behaviour of adolescents. Research findings support that a deviant peer association and a conflictual and negative parent adolescent relationship contributes to the

teenagers' antisocial behaviour. On the contrary a sound peer association and a conflict less parental relation, care, guidance and child-rearing style can develop the behaviour of adolescent in a positive way.

Recommendations:

1. Parents should maintain an equilibrium between permitting change that inspires greater individual competence, while managing stable connection with the teenagers that prevent them from drifting into deviant behaviour.
2. A fine balance between being firmly in control and being flexible should be maintained so that greater autonomy can be given within an atmosphere of guidance, standard and limit.
3. A good supervision of parents regarding their adolescents' peer is mandatory
4. Empathic environment of home can be a good measure of anti-social behaviour of adolescent.
5. A balanced intervention is much needed for resolving the issues of peer derivation.

Conclusion:

A primary conclusion of this study is that parents and peer groups have the most powerful and predominant influence on adolescents both internal and external behaviour. Although a great area has been revealed by studying peer associations, their structure, nature or the parent-adolescent relation but it may be the time to extent the scope of this area. This area should attract more attention of the parents, teachers and researchers and there is a large scope to study this area in details.

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