

Parental - Peer Trust and Communication among Adolescents of Jammu

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Abstract

Adolescence is an important developmental stage as it is marked by rapid physiological neurological, cognitive and social changes. Mutual trust and communication are essential components of attachment and play an important role in the lives of the developing adolescents. The present study analyses and compares levels of parental and peer trust and communication among early and late adolescents of Jammu. The sample for the study comprised of 160 school and college going adolescents in the age group of 12-19 years. The sample was selected through random sampling technique. The tool for data collection was the IPPA scale (Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment) designed by Armsden and Greenberg. The results reveal that most adolescents shared high degree of mutual trust with their mothers, fathers and peers. The sample adolescents showed satisfaction with their parents as well as the friends and felt wanted and cared for. Similarly, most adolescents shared a high degree of communication with mothers, fathers and the peer group as well. There was exchange of feelings and opinions on regular basis. Results further highlight that the early and late adolescents did not vary significant on maternal and paternal trust, and maternal and paternal communication. However, there was statistical difference between the two groups on peer trust and communication. More early adolescents showed higher levels of peer trust and communication than the late adolescents.

Keywords: *Maternal Trust, Maternal Communication, Paternal Trust, Paternal Communication, Peer Trust, Peer Communication, Early Adolescents, Late Adolescents.*

1. Introduction

The rapid neurological, cognitive and social changes of adolescence create a social-cognitive dilemma for the youth. Adolescents integrate new and diverse experiences in relation to the world and oneself. Adolescence also presents an attachment dilemma that is, maintaining connection with parents while exploring new social roles away from the family and developing attachment relationships with peers and romantic partners. Healthy transition to autonomy and adulthood is facilitated by secure attachment and emotional connectedness with parents (Collins and Repinski, 1994) [2].

Trust and communication are two important components of attachment. As adolescents grow they learn to trust others apart from their parents and immediate family. Similarly, there is marked change in the communication pattern of the growing teenagers. Attachment security in terms of trust and communication during adolescence continue to be important. A secure base fosters exploration and the development of cognitive, social and emotional competence. Studies of non-clinical samples show that securely attached adolescents are less likely to engage in excessive drinking, drug use and risky sexual behavior. Securely attached adolescents also suffer fewer mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and inattention, thought problems, conduct disorder, delinquency and aggression. Attachment security in female adolescents is related to fewer weight-related concerns and less frequent eating disorders. Attachment security in adolescence also predicts more constructive coping skills and significant gains in social skills from 16 to 18 years of age. Securely attached adolescents manage the transition to high school more successfully; enjoy more positive relationships and experience

less conflict with family and peers than do insecurely attached adolescents. Findings from clinical samples are consistent with those from normative samples: insecure attachment is associated with sociality, drug use, and aggressive and delinquent behavior (Freeman and Brown, 2001) [3].

Parents play a significant role in helping adolescents maintain and sustain healthy attachment. Research suggests that the attachment function of parents changes in some ways, but remains stable in others. For example, while young children require close proximity and physical availability of parents to provide comfort when they are distressed, adolescents do not need the same degree of proximity and can derive comfort from knowing their parents are supportive even when they are not present. However, parental sensitivity and attunement continue to be essential in maintaining attachment security during adolescence, especially in the domain of autonomy needs. The ability of parents to sustain a 'goal-directed partnership' with their child also remains critical, and is particularly challenging because conflict between parents and children increases during adolescence (Rice, *et al*, 1997) [9]. Conflict itself is not a sign of poor relationship quality, because it will unquestionably arise in healthy relationships as parents exert appropriate levels of behavioral control over their adolescents, negotiating increasing responsibility as competence develops. However, growing evidence suggests that the capacity of parents and their adolescent children to maintain 'relatedness' while disagreeing on critical issues is the hallmark of attachment security. Maintaining relatedness is captured by specific parent-adolescent behaviors during disagreements, including confidently stating one's own opinion, and validating and

showing empathy for the other person's point of view (Grossman *et al.*, 2001) [4].

With this as background the present research has been designed to assess and compare the level of mutual trust and quality of communication of early and late adolescents with their parents and peers.

Methodology

Sample: The total sample for the present study comprised of 160 adolescents the age group of 12-19 years. Half of the selected adolescents were in the early adolescents and rest in the late adolescent age group. Equal representation was also given to males and female.

Locale of the Study: The entire sample was selected from various private and Government schools of Jammu city.

Sampling Technique: The entire sample was selected randomly through multistage sampling. In the first stage, one zone out of four zones of Jammu was selected by lottery method. In the second stage a list of schools located in the selected zone namely Jammu city was obtained from the office of Jammu & Kashmir State Board of School Education. From this comprehensive list, schools were again selected by random sampling. In 3rd stage school authorities were contacted and necessary permissions were sought. List of children matching the sampling criteria was prepared and children were randomly selected.

Tool used: Degree of Mutual Trust and Quality of Communication sections of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment designed by Armsden and Greenberg was used with the sample Adolescents. The Inventory assesses adolescents' perceptions of the positive and negative affective/cognitive dimensions of relationships with their parents and close friends—particularly how well these figures serve as a source of psychological security.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study along with their discussion are presented as under:

1. Age of Sample Adolescents

Table 1: Age of Sample Adolescents

Age (in years)	Males		Females		Total	
	N	n%	N	%	n	%
11-13	12	15	16	20	28	17.5
13-15	28	35	24	30	52	32.5
15-17	29	36.25	20	25	49	30.5
17-19	11	13.75	20	25	31	19.37
Total	80	100	80	100	160	100

Table no. 1 reveals that majority (32.5%) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 13-15 years, followed by, 30.63% of the respondents who were into the age group of 15-17 years. Between males and females, most males either belonged to 15-17 years (36.25%) or 13-15 years (35%) age group; while most females (30%) were 13-15 years old.

2. Educational status of Sample Adolescents

Table 2: Educational status of Sample Adolescents

Qualification	Males		Females		Total	
	N	%	N	%	n	%
7 th	12	15	16	20	28	17.5
8 th	28	35	24	30	52	32.5
11 th	29	36.25	20	25	49	30.63
12 th	11	13.75	20	25	31	19.37
Total	80	100	80	100	160	100

Table no. 2 indicates that majority (32.5%) of respondents were study in class 8th or in 11th standard (30.63%). Between males and females, most males either studied in 11th standard (36.25%) or 8th class (35%); while most females (30%) were in 8th standard.

3. Maternal Trust among Early and Late Adolescents

Table 3: Maternal Trust among Sample Adolescents

Levels	Early Adol		Late Adol		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	74	92.5	70	87.5	144	90
Moderate	6	7.5	10	12.5	16	10
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	80	100	80	100	160	100

χ^2 value= 1.11, df=1, p value 0.29

Overall, 90% of the sample adolescents showed high level of trust on their respective mothers. In most cases, the teenagers shared their thoughts and every day activities regularly with their mothers. They felt that their mothers respected their feelings and believed in their ability to make judgments. Their mothers showed unconditional acceptance and understanding; and at the same time the children also showed high satisfaction with their mothers. According to the age of the sample adolescents statistically there was no significant difference in their level of maternal trust. This indicates that for the given group of adolescents, both the early as well as late adolescents tend to show high degree of maternal trust.

4. Paternal Trust among Early and Late Adolescents

Table 4: Paternal Trust among Sample adolescents

Levels	Early Adol		Late Adol		Peers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	76	95	73	91.5	149	93.12
Moderate	4	5	7	8.75	11	6.87
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	80	100	80	100	160	100

χ^2 value= 0.87, df=1, p value 0.34

Results in Table 4 indicate that most selected adolescents showed high level of trust on their fathers. Just like mothers, fathers were also recipients of high degrees of trust from their adolescent children. Majority of these children felt that their fathers respected their feelings and did a good job as their father. Their respective fathers not only cared about their point of view but also trusted their judgment. Most of them also reported that their fathers were understanding especially when they were upset or angry. Statistically both early as well as late adolescents showed similar levels of paternal trust.

5. Peer Trust among Early and Late Adolescents

Table 5: Peer Trust among Sample adolescents

Levels	Early Adol		Late Adol		Peers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	74	92.5	52	65	126	78.75
Moderate	6	7.5	28	35	34	21.25
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	80	100	80	100	160	100

χ^2 value= 18.07, df=1, p value 0.00*

Overall the results indicate that most adolescents (78.75%) had high level of mutual trust with their peers, followed by the remaining having moderate levels of it. Majority of these adolescents were happy with their friends and felt that they were trust worthy. They reported that they could count on their friends when in trouble. There was also mutual respect for feelings and understanding among them. However, calculation of chi-square indicates significant difference between early and late adolescents on level of peer trust. More early adolescents (92.5%) had high levels of peer trust as compared to late adolescents (65%). This indicates that probably the younger adolescents were more trusting on their friends than the older adolescents.

6. Maternal Communication among Early and Late Adolescents

Table 6: Maternal Communication among Sample adolescents

Levels	Early Adol		Late Adol		Peers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	73	91.25	65	81.25	138	86.25
Moderate	7	8.75	15	18.75	22	13.75
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	80	100	80	100	160	100

χ^2 value= 3.37, df=1, p value 0.06

When the quality of mother-adolescent communication was evaluated, most adolescents reported sharing high level of communication with their mothers. The sample adolescents stated that they seek the point of view of their mother in matters concerning their own selves. They communicated with her about their problems and troubles; and could count on her on every occasion. Some of them also felt that their mothers knew that they were upset or bothered without even being told about it. Though statistically there was no significant difference in the maternal communication between early and late adolescents yet, more early adolescents showed high levels of communication with their mothers than late adolescents.

7. Paternal Communication among Early and Late Adolescents

Table 7: Paternal Communication among Sample adolescents

Levels	Early Adol		Late Adol		Peers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	69	86.25	62	77.5	131	81.87
Moderate	11	13.75	18	22.5	29	18.12
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	80	100	80	100	160	100

χ^2 value= 2.06, df=1, p value 0.15

Results on the paternal quality of communication when analyzed reveal that most sample adolescents (81.87%) reported having high level of communication with their fathers, followed by the remaining (18.12%) having moderate levels of communication. Majority of the adolescents, both early as well as late adolescents felt that they could show their inner feelings and emotions in front of their father and that their fathers were helpful in getting a better understanding of their own selves. They approached their father in problem situations as they could be depended upon anytime. Fathers were approachable and concerned about their adolescent's welfare.

8. Peer Communication among Early and Late Adolescents

Table 8: Peer Communication among Sample adolescents

Levels	Early Adol		Late Adol		Peers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	74	92.5	56	70	130	81.25
Moderate	6	7.5	24	30	30	18.75
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	80	100	80	100	160	100

χ^2 value= 13.29, df=1, p value 0.00*

Just like with mothers and fathers, most adolescents reported having high quality of communication with their peers as well. Most of the teenagers stated that they could tell their friends about their problems and troubles and often sought the opinion of friends on matters concerning everyday life. The friends valued each others view point and cared about each others feelings. However, statistical procedures indicate significant difference in the peer communication level of early and late adolescents. Comparatively more early adolescents stated having higher communication with peers than late adolescents.

Conclusion & Summary

Adolescence is a crucial period of development which is marked by rapid changes – physiologically and psychologically. The greatest markers of developmental changes in the self in adolescence are seen through independence, autonomy and detachment from caregivers (Rayan and Lynch, 1989) [8]. Rayan and Lynch (1989) [8] found that adolescents strive for more autonomy and individuation from parents and hence there is a higher level of detachment from parents. Collins and Ripinsky (1994) [2] noted that the amount of physical time that parents and their children spent together decreases during adolescence as well. Apart from their parents teenagers also form emotional bonds with others outside the family. Hazen and Shaver (1994) [5] state that children must create bond with other available figures and as development progresses, peer become extremely important attachment figures. These new peer relationships, however look different than with parents (Freeman and Brown, 2001; Nickerson and Nagle, 2005) [3,7]. Laursen and Collins (1994) [6] argues that the forming of closer peer bonds allows adolescents to explore independence from parents additionally Nickerson and Nagle (2005) [7] found that adolescents go to their peers in times of need (proximity seeking behavior) more than before entering this developmental period.

Findings of the present research indicate that most adolescents that is, both early as well as late adolescents tend to show high level of trust on their mothers as well as fathers. They showed high level of satisfaction with their parents and found them

dependable and supportive. They felt well cared for and their judgments were valued. Analogous results were found in a study by Shaban and Mattoo (2012)^[10]. Similarly on the other dimension namely, quality of communication also most sample adolescents across the two age groups reported having high degree of communication with both the mothers and fathers. Discussions were held frequently between parents and adolescents, with the later seeking out parental opinions on all issues of importance. Many of the adolescents felt that their parents could comprehend their emotional states without even being told about them. The results point towards healthier trust and communication among the sample adolescents and their respective parents. Thakkar and Sheth (2014)^[11] also noted that adolescents are equally comfortable discussing most issues with both parents.

As far as the level of trust and communication with peers is concerned, even though on the whole most adolescents continued to score high on both the dimensions; yet there were statistically significant differences between early and late adolescents. On both the variables more early adolescents scored high as compared to late adolescents, implying that the younger teenagers were more trusting and communicative with their peers than the older group. Late adolescent's peer trust and quality of communication were slightly lower than that of early adolescents.

To conclude, even though the growing adolescent may start to trust and communicate with peers and friends, nonetheless the importance of parents can not be overshadowed. Parents, both mothers as well as fathers continue to be important in the lives of the adolescents. Trust on parents and communication with them still tends to be an important part of an adolescents' life.

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