

Age and gender differences in rural adolescents with respect to parental encouragement, academic performance and academic anxiety

KANU PRIYA AND RIPPEN G. JASSAL

ABSTRACT

In the present study, an attempt has been made to study the age and gender differences in parental encouragement, academic performance and academic anxiety among rural adolescents. A total sample of 200 (100 boys and 100 girls) adolescents in the age range of 13-16 years, from different high and senior secondary schools of Ludhiana district were purposely selected. Socio-economic status scale was used to judge the socio-economic status of the respondents. To measure the level of perceived parental encouragement and academic anxiety by the adolescents, the Agarwal Parental Encouragement Scale and Academic Anxiety Scale for Children were used. The results revealed that academic performance and age were significantly associated with parental encouragement and academic anxiety. Non-significant age and gender differences for parental encouragement and academic anxiety were found.

KEY WORDS : Parental encouragement, Academic performance, Academic anxiety, Rural adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

Modern age is often called the age of stress and strain. Stress and anxiety are commonly seen on the faces of people in their taut nerves and in their behaviour and actions. The demands of life are so pressing that hardly few can escape the trap of stress. Anxiety is harmful only when it exceeds the limit. Today, anxiety is not only troubling adults but has also started taking adolescents and children in its claws. Their heavy school bags, neck to neck competition, parental aspirations and pressures are proofs of their stressful life. They live in a world where nothing seems to be guaranteed with certainty and at the same time they are expected to perform at every front, the main beings the academics. The reason behind academic anxiety is that the adolescents manifest more future orientations, career consciousness and therefore undergo feelings of anxiety at some phase of their lives. Another reason can be the pressure that parents impose on adolescents for performing academically well. Once out of elementary school, they find their teachers, parents and peers putting a new emphasis on deadlines, academics and mastery of

large amounts of information. Although a certain amount of anxiety is necessary to get motivated and excel for an individual, but it becomes harmful when one begins to over react the situation. In our society, academic achievement is considered as key criteria to judge one's total potentialities and capabilities. Therefore, it is becoming more and more pressing for the individuals to have good academic achievement.

Hence, children perceive examination and results to be an indicator of their worth. As adolescence is a passing phase, it should be tackled by the parents and teachers sympathetically and sensibly. Parents have an important role to play because it is believed that parents care, concern, guidance and influence or a word, "Parental encouragement" has an effect on the educational development of the child. It is well documented that parental involvement and parenting have a variety of intellectual, academic and social outcomes. There are strong reasons for understanding the way adolescents perceive parental encouragement and how it relates to their academic achievement. Therefore the present study

Correspondence to:

RIIPPEN G. JASSAL, Department of Human Development, College of Home Science, Punjab Agricultural University, LUDHIANA (PUNJAB) INDIA

Authors' affiliations:

KANU PRIYA, Department of Human Development, College of Home Science, Punjab Agricultural University, LUDHIANA (PUNJAB) INDIA