

Academic performance of adolescents: An outcome of parental encouragement

■ M.K. RATHORE AND SHEELA SANGWAN

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects will be. Educators frequently point out the critical role of the home and family environment in determining children's school success. Parental encouragement has great significance in developing psychological as well as academic behaviour of a child. Present study was conducted to assess the impact of parental encouragement on academic achievement of adolescents. The sample comprised of all the adolescents of 13-15 years admitted in four selected Government Senior Secondary Schools of rural and urban areas of Hisar. The adolescents were tested to assess the level of their academic achievement and parental encouragement received by them. Findings disclosed that half of the respondents were average and only one-third were good in academics and majority of the respondents had received high level of parental encouragement. The study also revealed significant differences in academic achievement of adolescent's on the basis of academic class, paternal occupation and parental encouragement received by them. Higher level of parental encouragement contributed towards enhancement of academic performance of adolescents. Non-significant differences were found for academic achievement of adolescents from various categories of age of the respondents, their gender, residential area, maternal age, paternal age, maternal education, paternal education and maternal occupation. There was no significant difference in academic achievement of boys and girls as well as in rural and urban area's adolescents.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Educators, Academic class, Paternal occupation, Parental encouragement, Academic performance, Enhancement, Adolescents

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See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

M.K. RATHORE

Department of Human
Development and Family Studies,
I.C. College of Home Science,
C.C.S. Haryana Agricultural
University, HISAR (HARYANA)
INDIA
Email: manjurathore23@gmail.
com

Family plays a vital role in shaping the personality structure of a child, as family is one of the basic social institutions. The psychological climate of the home is extremely important in all the phases of child's life. Hence, it is becoming increasingly important to highlight the parental involvement as an indicator of children's educational success. Parent child relationship at home allows parental encouragement to help promote the students to achieve academic success. A well-rounded family and stable environment is most likely to give a child a positive future and influence. A positive influence supports a child usually to become a positive and prosperous student. Parental encouragement is said to be having an awareness of and

involvement is school work, understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and student success in schooling, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about student progress.

In today's competitive world quality of performance has become the key factor for individual progress. Parents also wants that their children climb the ladder of performance to as high in level as likely. The cognitive shifts that occur in adolescence result in a form of adolescent 'egocentrism' in which the adolescent is overwhelmed by the sense that he or she is the focus of everyone's attention, coupled with the belief that his or her experiences are entirely unique (Elkind, 1967). This phase of life is vulnerable and has so many

behavioural and other problems which may be due to combination of so many changes occurring simultaneously that makes early adolescence problematic for many young people. Coping with the stresses of pubertal change, school transitions, and the dynamics of dating at the same time puts young adolescents at risk for developmental problems such as lowered self-esteem. Self-esteem is an important component to almost everything children do. Not only will it help with academic performance, it supports social skills and makes it easier for children to have and keep friends. Relationships with parents, peers and teachers are usually more positive with efficient performance in academics.

With the advance of adolescence, the amount of time spent with parents typically drops while time spent with peers' increases considerably. Nonetheless, parents continue to play a key role in influencing their adolescent's development. For all adolescents, having a good relationship with their parents is a determinant in fostering enhanced level of academic performance. Therefore, a lot of efforts are used for helping students to achieve better in their scholastic endeavours. The significance of parental encouragement in scholastic and academic achievement has hoisted important questions for researchers. School achievement may be affected by different factors like self-concept, study habit, parental encouragement, socio-economic status, intelligence etc. So, with an overview of above related findings, present study was conducted to add a paradigm with following objectives:

- To assess the academic achievement and parental encouragement of 13-15 year old children.
- To delineate the difference contributed to academic performance of adolescents due to parental encouragement.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state. An exhaustive list of urban and rural government schools admitting children in age group 13-15 year was obtained from the Education Department in Mini Secteriate, Hisar. For rural sample, two villages namely Neoli Kalan and Behbalpur were selected randomly and high school from each of these villages were taken. To draw urban sample, two schools namely Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Shushilabhawan, Hisar and Government Senior Secondary School, Patelnagar, Hisar were selected randomly. From each of the four schools

of rural and urban area of Hisar, all boys and girls of selected Government Senior Secondary Schools (class 8th, 9th and 10th grade) were included in final sample. Respondents were interviewed in groups in their classroom setting to collect the required information. Selected adolescents were assessed to know their level of academic achievement and parental encouragement. Academic achievement score of children were obtained from the latest grade sheet of the examinations. Self prepared questionnaire was used to delineate socio-personal variables. Parental Encouragement Scale (PES) by Sharma (1971) was used for assessing the parental encouragement. Frequency and percentages, 'Z' test and Duncan multiple difference comparison analysis (ANOVA) were used to analyze the data.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the present study was derived through the use of prescribed methodology. A comparison was done for academic performance of the adolescents on the basis of parental support and encouragement received by them.

Academic achievement as per residential area and gender:

Table 1 projects gender wise academic achievement of adolescent as per area of residence. Results disclosed that out of total sample, nearly half of the male (54.37%) and female (56.60%) had an average level of academic achievement. Separately, in rural area 57.70 per cent of males and 50.90 per cent of females were average performers in academics whereas in urban area, difference was observed in average performers in both the gender (51.00% and 63.30%) of male and female, respectively. A variation in poor academic achievement was seen, as females in small percentage from both areas, *i.e.* rural and urban (12.30%, 10.20%, respectively), were poor in academics as compared to males (7.70%, 25.50%, respectively).

The data related to good academic achievement category showed that, in both the areas higher number of females had good academic achievement against their counter parts, since 36.80 per cent of females from rural area and 26.50 per cent from urban area had good academic achievement.

The results were found inline with the findings of Devi and Mayuri (2003) who carried out a study of family and school factors that affect the academic achievement of residential school children studying in ninth and tenth classes on a sample of 120 students of Hyderabad city. The results

Table 1: Academic achievement of adolescents as per residential area and gender

| Sr. No. | Residential area Academic achievement | Rural (n=109) | | Urban (n=100) | | Total (n=209) | |
|---------|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | Male (n=52) | Female (n=57) | Male (n=51) | Female (n=49) | Male (n=103) | Female (n=106) |
| 1. | Poor | 4(7.70) | 7(12.30) | 13(25.50) | 5(10.20) | 17(16.50) | 12(11.32) |
| 2. | Average | 30(57.70) | 29(50.90) | 26(51.00) | 31(63.30) | 56(54.37) | 60(56.60) |
| 3. | Good | 18(34.60) | 21(36.80) | 12(23.50) | 13(26.50) | 30(29.13) | 34(32.08) |

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

indicated significant gender difference in academic achievement and girls were found to be superior to boys in academic achievement. Joshi (2000) also conducted a study on academic achievement as related to gender and culture. The sample selected for the study was 400 students of eighth class belonging to urban and rural area of Punjab. School records and personality inventory was used for data collection. Results revealed a significant difference between boys and girls of rural areas on academic achievement.

Deary *et al.* (2006) examined the association between psychometric intelligence and educational achievement and found gender difference in academic achievement. The findings indicated that the girls performed better than the boys.

Area wise assessment of academic performance was done by Waters *et al.* (2006) who also determined whether the academic performance of 575 medical students learning in rural settings differs from those learning in urban settings. Academic achievement included the results of the consecutive three years and five specialists eight week rotations conducted in either the rural clinical division for rural students or for urban students, all following the same curriculum and taking the same examinations. From the results no statistically significant differences were found between academic performance of rural and urban students.

Gender wise level of parental encouragement of adolescents:

Table 2 illustrates the level of parental encouragement as per residential area and gender. Results disclosed that out of the total sample, majority of male (82.52%) and female adolescents (84.90%) had received high level of parental encouragement. In rural area, 80.80 per cent of male respondents and 84.20 per cent of female respondents had received high level of parental encouragement whereas in urban area, the percentages of male and female respondents were (84.30% and 85.70%, respectively). Slight variation in medium level of parental encouragement was seen, as males in small percentage from both areas, *i.e.* rural and urban (17.30%, 15.70%, respectively) had received medium level of parental encouragement against females (14.00%, 12.20%, respectively).

The result can be supported referring the research done by Laursen and Collins (2009) who studied the parent-child relationship and found that the most of the parents were able

to adjust the adolescents changing needs and conflicts between parents and adolescents do typically not represent a threat to relationship. Parents can support their children in harmonious way. Research has indicated that there are positive academic outcomes stemming from parent involvement ranging from benefits in early childhood to adolescence and beyond (Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Patrikakou *et al.*, 2005).

Some other researches also included the assessment of parental encouragement as Laible and Carlo (2004) conducted a study to examine how the parental relationship dimensions of both mothers and fathers independently and together predict adolescent's outcomes. Findings revealed that perceived maternal support and rigid control were the most consistent predictors of adolescent adjustment. In contrast support and control from fathers was generally unrelated to adolescent adjustment. High levels of perceived maternal support and low levels of maternal rigid control were related to adolescent's reports of sympathy, social competence and self worth. Vig and Jaswal (2011) investigated correlation of parental stress and emotional adjustment with quality of the parent-child relationship. The analysis revealed that emotional adjustment of the parents showed positive correlation with all the positive dimensions of parental-child relationship *viz.*, acceptance, marital adjustment and realistic role expectations, whereas, stress showed negative correlation with these positive dimensions of parenting.

Comparison of academic achievement of adolescents as per personal variables :

The observations of Table 3 show the academic achievement of adolescents as per personal variables. Comparison was done using Z test and Duncan multiple difference comparison. Significant differences were observed for academic achievement of adolescents from different academic classes ($F_{(2,206)}=5.80^*$, $p<0.05$). The mean scores, predicted that the adolescents of class 10th ($M=62.21$) had significantly higher academic achievement compared to adolescents of class 8th and 9th ($M=55.46, 57.19$, respectively).

Adolescents with higher standards had comparatively good academic achievement than adolescents in lower standards *i.e.* with increasing academic standards, maturity as well as intellectual abilities also gets improved and which helps adolescent in performing better in academics.

Non-significant differences were found for academic

| Sr. No. | Residential area Parental encouragement | Rural (n=109) | | Urban (n=100) | | Total (n=209) | |
|---------|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | Male (n=52) | Female (n=57) | Male (n=51) | Female (n=49) | Male (n=103) | Female (n=106) |
| 1. | Low | 1 (1.90) | 1 (1.80) | – | 1 (2.00) | 1 (0.97) | 2 (1.88) |
| 2. | Medium | 9 (17.30) | 8 (14.00) | 8 (15.70) | 6 (12.20) | 17 (16.50) | 14 (13.20) |
| 3. | High | 42 (80.80) | 48 (84.20) | 43 (84.30) | 42 (85.70) | 85 (82.52) | 90 (84.90) |

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

achievement of adolescents from various age groups and sex categories. However, the mean scores of 15⁺ year's adolescents were comparatively higher than 13⁺ year's and 14⁺ year's adolescents showing that better academic achievement in older ones. Likewise mean scores of both the sex categories showed that females were better performers in academics. Tripathi and Swarnkar (2008) too reported that achievement motivation of boys and girls does not differ significantly. Begum and Phukan (2001) also explored the difference in boys' and girls' academic achievement. The sample included 180 students of which 118 were boys and 62 were girls. Total marks obtained in the examination were taken as academic achievement scores of the students. and found that there was no difference between boys and girls with respect to high and low academic achievement. Sunitha (2005) studied academic learning environment of students from aided and unaided co-educational high schools and results also revealed no significant different in academic achievement of boys and girls. Halawah (2006) examined the effect of motivation, family environment, and student characteristics on academic achievement. On the sample comprised of 388 high school students including 193 male and 195 female students of Abu Dhabi district in United Arab Emirates. Grade point average was taken as measure of academic achievement of the students. The results revealed no significant gender difference in academic achievement of the students. Nuthana (2007) carried out a gender analysis of academic achievement of school students of Karnataka. The results of study also showed that there was no significant difference in academic

achievement of boys and girls. Panday and Ahmad, 2008; Parsasirat *et al.*, 2013; Singh and Thukral, 2010 also observed that there was no significant difference in academic achievement of boys and girls.

Comparison of academic achievement of adolescents as per residential area :

Comparison of academic achievement of adolescents as per residential area is displayed in Table 4. Non-significant differences were identified for academic achievement on the basis of residential area. However mean scores of rural respondents (M=59.08) were comparatively higher than that of urban respondents (M=56.48) showing better level of academic achievement in rural respondents.

Waters *et al.* (2006) also determined whether the academic performance of 575 medical students learning in rural settings differs from those learning in urban settings. From the results no statistically significant differences were found between academic performance of rural and urban students. Same finding were supported by Singh and Thukral (2010).

Comparison of academic achievement of adolescents as per parental variables :

Results related to adolescent's academic achievement on the basis of parental variables are portrayed in Table 5.

Significant differences contributed for academic achievement of adolescents as per paternal occupation ($F_{(2,200)}=2.90^*$, $p<0.05$). Mean scores for academic achievement as per paternal occupation were significantly different,

| Sr. No. | Academic achievement | Personal variables | | | |
|---------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| 1. | Academic achievement | Age | | | F-value |
| | | 13 ⁺ years | 14 ⁺ years | 15 ⁺ years | |
| | | Mean ± SD | Mean ± SD | Mean ± SD | |
| | | 56.80±9.77 | 57.41±11.73 | 59.25±14.21 | 0.77 |
| 2. | | Sex | | | Z -value |
| | | Male | Female | | |
| | | Mean ± SD | Mean ± SD | | |
| | | 56.69±12.50 | 58.94±11.58 | | 1.35 |
| 3. | | Academic class | | | F-value |
| | | 8 th | 9 th | 10 th | |
| | | Mean ± SD | Mean ± SD | Mean ± SD | |
| | | 55.46 ^a ± 9.97 | 57.19 ^a ± 10.93 | 62.21 ^b ± 14.93 | 5.80* |

* indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Note: Means in the same row that do not share superscripts differ at $p<0.05$ using Duncan multiple difference comparison

| Academic achievement | Residential area | | Z -value |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|
| | Rural Mean ± SD | Urban Mean ± SD | |
| | 59.08 ± 11.43 | 56.48 ± 12.64 | 1.56 |

* indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Note: Means in the same row that do not share superscripts differ at $p<0.05$ using Duncan multiple difference comparison

indicating adolescents whose fathers were engaged in farming ($M=60.07$) were significantly better in academic achievement than adolescents whose fathers were engaged in labour work and there were no difference existed in adolescents whose fathers were engaged in business/service from adolescents whose fathers were engaged in farming and labour work. In agreement to this finding Gill and Sidhu (1988) also found that occupation of parents influence the school performance of their children. Likewise, Penda and Jena (2000) conducted a study on effect of some parental characteristics of class IX student's achievement motivation and reported that students belonging to fathers of service group were found to have significantly better achievement motivation as compared to their counterparts.

On the other hand, non-significant differences were found for academic achievement of adolescents from various categories of maternal age, paternal age, maternal education, paternal education and maternal occupation. These results are inclined with Panday (2008) who observed relationship of

academic achievement with parental education and their occupation. The results revealed that academic achievement of students were not affected by educational level of parents. The academic performance of the students of one parent working group was better than both parents working group.

Comparison of academic achievement of adolescents as per parental encouragement :

Table 6 illustrating the academic achievement of adolescents as per parental encouragement. It is inferred that the parental encouragement had significant contribution ($F_{(2,206)}=3.72^*$) towards adolescent's academic achievement. As the mean scores showed that, adolescents who received higher parental encouragement were significantly better in academics than the respondents who received low level of parental encouragement. But the academic achievement of respondents who received medium level of parental encouragement ($M=58.53$) was not significantly differing from academic achievement of respondents who received low

Table 5 : Academic achievement of adolescents as per parental variables

| Sr. No. | Academic achievement | Parental variables | | | | |
|---------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. | Academic achievement | Maternal age (n=208) | | | | F-value |
| | | 27-35 year Mean \pm SD | 36-43 year Mean \pm SD | 44-51 year Mean \pm SD | | |
| | | 59.33 \pm 12.69 | 58.71 \pm 10.49 | 56.20 \pm 14.79 | 1.09 | |
| 2. | | Paternal age (n=203) | | | | F-value |
| | | 30-40 year Mean \pm SD | 41-50 year Mean \pm SD | 51-60 year Mean \pm SD | | |
| | | 61.70 \pm 11.27 | 57.81 \pm 11.96 | 57.03 \pm 18.89 | 0.41 | |
| 3. | | Maternal education | | | | F-value |
| | | Illiterate Mean \pm SD | Primary Mean \pm SD | Middle and above Mean \pm SD | | |
| | | 56.13 \pm 12.21 | 59.25 \pm 12.08 | 59.90 \pm 11.47 | 2.09 | |
| 4. | | Paternal education | | | | F-value |
| | | Illiterate Mean \pm SD | Primary Mean \pm SD | 6 th -matriculation Mean \pm SD | Above matriculation Mean \pm SD | |
| | | 56.33 \pm 12.97 | 57.16 \pm 10.27 | 57.40 \pm 11.63 | 58.51 \pm 12.43 | |
| 5. | | Maternal occupation | | | | Z -value |
| | | Housewife Mean \pm SD | Labourer and small entrepreneur | | | |
| | | 58.34 \pm 11.76 | 54.98 \pm 13.75 | | 1.41 | |
| 6. | | Paternal occupation | | | | F-value |
| | | Labourer Mean \pm SD | Farmer Mean \pm SD | Business/service Mean \pm SD | | |
| | | 55.50 ^a \pm 11.85 | 60.07 ^b \pm 11.40 | 58.89 ^{ab} \pm 11.31 | 2.90* | |

* indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Note: Means in the same row that do not share superscripts differ at $p<0.05$ using Duncan multiple difference comparison

Table 6 : Academic achievement of adolescents as per parental encouragement

(n=209)

| Academic achievement | Parental encouragement | | | F-value |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| | Low Mean \pm SD | Medium Mean \pm SD | High Mean \pm SD | |
| | 53.02 ^a \pm 19.92 | 58.53 ^{ab} \pm 12.28 | 67.00 ^b \pm 11.72 | 3.72* |

* indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Note: Means in the same row that do not share superscripts differ at $p<0.05$ using Duncan multiple difference comparison

(M=53.02) and high level (M=67.00) of encouragement.

To support above findings various other researchers gave similar findings as Parents who have a good relationship with their children can strengthen that relationship when they learn about and try to understand the hopes and dreams of each child, listen with empathy, provide active support and encourage child's performance. Parental relationship dimensions of both mothers and fathers independently and together predict adolescent's outcomes (Laible and Carlo, 2004). Marchant *et al.* (2001) also reported that parental encouragement was found to be major factor influencing student's academic achievement. Devi and Kiran (2002) confirmed that low parental involvement and parental encouragement were found to be detrimental to academic achievement of their children. An authoritative parenting style emphasizing both responsiveness and demandingness appeared superior in fostering higher academic performance (Reitman *et al.*, 2002). Devi and Mayuri (2003) came out with a result that family factors like parental aspiration and socio-economic status significantly contributed to academic achievement. High parental involvement led to higher achievement of adolescents in Science, English and Maths as compared to the group belonging to parents having low involvement (Ahuja and Goyal, 2006).

Parents who were perceived as more acceptant and using less restrictive and hostile psychological control tended to have adolescents with higher academic success and competence (Lakshmi and Arora, 2006; Codjoe, 2007; Singh and Devgun, 2012). Students have an advantage in school when their parents encourage and support their school activities and they lay the groundwork for their students' success in school by building their children's self-confidence, self-concept and self-reliance. Kaur (2013) showed a significant difference between academic achievements of the students receiving high and low parental encouragement. The students receiving high parental encouragement showed better academic achievement than the students receiving low parental encouragement. Parental encouragement was positively associated with achievement (Hill and Tyson, 2009; Priya *et al.*, 2011). Students are more likely to reach their full potential when their parents actively support their direction and goals.

Hence, parent involvement remains a strong predictor of academic achievement even for high school students. It is important to debunk the popular myth that parents' influence over their children withers as they enter adolescence. Often, both parents and school personnel misinterpret the adolescents' desire for autonomy as a developmental barrier to family involvement. However, studies have indicated that High School students believe they can do better at school if they know that their families are interested in their schoolwork and expect them to succeed, thus challenging the prevalent view that adolescents do not want their parents involved at

all. Research has also shown that there are long-lasting effects of parent involvement on the academic achievement of adolescents and young adults. Specifically, parents who hold high expectations for their teens, communicate their expectations clearly, and encourage their adolescents to work hard in order to attain them can make a difference in students' success.

Conclusion :

Academic competency is among the most demanding cognitive and motivational challenge that growing adolescent's face in their life. The importance of academic competence lies in the fact that academic records in the school/college life predominate the social reactions and adolescents' future occupational picture. The study has attempted to provide an outline of impactful effect of parental encouragement on academic achievement of adolescents as its whole spectrum involves the approval and appreciation of parents towards any activity related to education or revoke any hurdle felt by the student in the process or guide him the right and wrong. Parent involvement is a crucial force in children's development, learning, and success at school and in life. Decades of research in the area of family involvement have time and again supported the simple fact that children of involved parents have a much greater chance to develop into healthy, knowledgeable, responsible, and caring adults. Results revealed that children had received high level of parental encouragement and majority of the respondents were average in academics. Parental encouragement, academic class and paternal occupation contributed significant difference in academic performance of adolescents *i.e.* the level of parental encouragement received by adolescents gets increased; they were comparatively performing better in academics. Similarly Adolescents with higher standards had comparatively good academic achievement than adolescents in lower standards and respondents belonging to fathers of service group were found to have significantly better achievement motivation as compared to their counterparts.

Authors' affiliations:

SHEELA SANGWAN, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, I.C. College of Home Science, C.C.S. Haryana Agricultural University, HISAR (HARYANA) INDIA
Email: sangwan.sheela@yahoo.com

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