

THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL EMOTIONAL STABILITY AMONG INDIAN ADOLESCENT'S PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN KERALA, INDIA

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Abstract: In India, the emotional stability of the parents has become an increasingly serious societal issue but unfortunately, it is not given importance within the Indian context. To help address this problem, the present study attempted to investigate the influence of perceived parental emotional stability on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment being mediated by parental bond, family relationship, and parental self-efficacy. The results of the study found that the higher the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability, the more positive the perception of their family relationship, the higher the perception of their parental self-efficacy and subsequently, the higher is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. It also found that the higher the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability, the lower the perception of their parental bonding, the higher the perception of their parental self-efficacy and subsequently, the higher is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment.

Keywords: Parental Emotional Stability, Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment, Parental Bond, Family Relationship, and Parental Self-Efficacy.

Introduction

Emotional stability is a personality trait recognized by personality theorists (e.g., Cattell & Schuerger, 2003). Smithson (1974) viewed emotional stability as a multi-trait non-cognitive psychological concept. He described it as a process in which personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-psychically and intra-personally. It enables the person to develop an integrated and balanced way of perceiving the problems of life. *Emotional maturity* is another term which goes along with the concept of emotional stability. To be emotionally mature means to signify the capacity to react emotionally in provision of the requirements that a situation imposes. The most outstanding mark of emotional maturity according to Coleman (1944) is the ability to bear tension.

Emotional Stability and Parents

Parents are the provider of physical, intellectual, and emotional security and development of the child. A child gets general literacy and scientific knowledge at

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school, but general wisdom of life is given by parents as they themselves understand it. Parents develop their parenting behavior based on several factors such as socialization experiences, individual familial practices, individual personality of the child, and family cultural background (Belsky, 1984). Parents' relationships between each other as well as with their children are important for children's cognitive and emotional development and the stability of families. Good quality relationship between parents and between parents and their children can make a significant difference to young people's satisfaction with their family situation. Parents and families play an enormous role in shaping a child's social and emotional development.

Parental Emotional Stability and Parental Bond.

The warm bonds with one's parents can have a lasting impact on one's life and are reasonably stable over time (Wel et al., 2000). In a longitudinal study, Wel, Bogt, and Raaijmakers (2002) demonstrated that parental bonds have a lasting significant influence on the well-being of adolescents and young adults aged 12 to 30 years. In fact, even for independent adults, "the parental bond appears to be as important to their well-being as having a partner or a best friend" (Wel et al., 2002, p. 317). In contrast, rejecting parenting (characterized by a lack of emotional warmth) has been significantly associated with a lack of self-acceptance, low self-esteem, and an inability to be self-directed (Schlette et al., 1998). Moreover, poor parental bonds have been linked to internalizing problems, stress, and depression (Burstein et al., 2006). The emotional expression of parents influences the emotional development of their child. A study by Haft and Slade (1989) revealed that securely attached parents tend to be more competent, sociable, and more comfortable in dealing with different kinds of relationships in life. A key tenet of attachment theory states that caregiver behaviors of responsiveness to perceived threat signaled by the child's affective manifestations come to provide a context within which the child organizes emotional experiences. The strategies resulting from the child's organization of emotional experiences are, then, used to regulate felt security and are viewed to be contingent upon the individual's history of regulating distress with caregivers (Alexander et al., 1998). If a child perceives from a parent that he or she is not wanted, hostility and aggression can arise within the child (Bos, Sandfort, de Bruyn, & Hakvoort, 2008).

Parental Emotional Stability and Family Relationships

A number of researches from different fields confirm the importance of the family unit as the provider of safe, stable, and nurturing environments for children. Unquestionably, children who are reared in safe and stable environments have better short-term and long-term adjustment than children who are exposed to harmful experiences. More importantly, family stability is defined not as a specific family structure or condition but, rather, as a family relationship in which care giving practices provide children with the consistent nurturing care they need in order to thrive. Parents living in poverty or in economic stress, for example, experience higher levels of emotional strain and mental health problems (McLoyd, 1998) which can impair their ability to engage with and support children, as well as increase their likelihood of using harsh or punitive parenting practices (Conger et al., 1992;

McLoyd, 1998). Jasbir (2000) studied emotional maturity in relation to environmental factors and found a significant relationship between emotional maturity and school, home, and psychological factors. Characteristics of the home environment such as warmth, emotional availability, stimulation, family cohesion, and day-to-day activities have also been implicated in the notion of family stability (Roderick, 2002). Roderick posited that children who experience family stability have caregivers who remain constant, consistent, and connected to them over time. In another study, it was found that parents who talked more about emotions, expressed positive emotions, and who used reassuring and emotionally laddered explanations in reaction to their children's emotional expressions had children who displayed better regulation of their emotions with their peers (Denham, 1998).

Parental Emotional Stability and Parental Self-Efficacy

Parents are more likely to engage in parent-child activities if they have the confidence that their behavior will, indeed, have a positive effect on their children. In contrast, parents who feel that they have little or no control over their children's lives and their children's environment are less apt to engage in promotive strategies (Furstenberg, 1993). In the parenting domain, self-efficacy had been identified as a key construct in terms of its relationship to various outcomes, including parenting behaviors and parenting stress (Coleman & Karraker, 1998). Within the research literature on families of children with developmental disabilities, parental self-efficacy has been explored in two ways, to date: (1) as a predictor of parental outcomes, and (2) as an outcome variable itself. In research addressing the former, several studies have established that self-efficacy or closely-related constructs are predictive of parental stress (e.g., Frey, Greenberg, & Fewell, 1989; Friedrich, Wiltner, & Cohen, 1985; Krauss, 1993). Most researchers addressing self-efficacy as an outcome variable have operationalized it in terms of feelings of parental competence. For example, Oyserman, Bybee, Mowbray, and Kahng (2004) reported that parents who feel efficacious are less likely to feel overwhelmed by parenting tasks, and may also be more warm, nurturing, and less punitive in their behavior management. Furthermore, it was found that feelings of self-efficacy are related to lower levels of parenting stress. In contrast, people with lower self-efficacy tend to doubt themselves and experience high levels of anxiety when faced with adversity, assume more responsibility for task failure than success, interpret challenges as threats, avoid difficult tasks, and cope dysfunctionally. In light of these cognitive, emotional, and behavioral manifestations, it is critical to study self-efficacy within the domain of parenting. Bandura's (1997a) theory of self-efficacy suggests that an individual's perceived parental self-efficacy is positively related to parental nurturing behaviors. Parents with a high level of perceived self-efficacy in specific parenting tasks are likely to exhibit and, therefore, report development behaviors with their children who are 17 years old or younger. Perceptions of parents concerning their ability to care for their children can yield valuable information upon which nurses and other health care professionals can base their teaching and support to help parents give high quality care for their children (Zahr, 1991). This information is important because, if a relationship is found, it will provide the basis for the development of intervention

strategies to facilitate and support parents' capacity to nurture their children by helping them to strengthen their sense of efficacy in their parenting role.

Parental Emotional Stability and Psychosocial Adjustment

Emotions are personal and subjective feelings that arise from complex glandular activities, cognitive, and conditional variables. If parents can manage their emotions in a proper way, this may be a strong tool for bringing success and happiness in the life of their children. . Uncontrolled emotions may be expressed in the form of struggles and conflicts which may be interpersonal or intrapersonal. In day-to-day life, they affect our relations with other members of the family, society, nation, our self-image, and our overall performance (Nisha & Budhisagar, 2013). Past research had demonstrated that emotional changes happening in parents influence the psychosocial adjustment of their children. For example, in a study conducted by Adam and Chase-Lansdale (2002), it was found that when separations from parent figures increased, adolescents showed higher levels of adjustment problems on an index measuring cognitive, emotional, academic, and behavioral functioning. It was also found that multiple changes in the mother's partners have a cumulative negative effect on her children's social, emotional, educational, and behavioral outcomes (Capaldi & Patterson, 1991; Kurdek, Fine, & Sinclair, 1994). Research had demonstrated that children at the adolescence stage require parental love, care, warmth, and serious attention in order to adjust adequately and set effective goals in the environment in which they find themselves. Parents have major roles to play in the adjustment process of adolescents. First year students (college/university) with higher levels of perceived parental and peer social support showed better adjustment (i.e., higher well-being and happiness) and less distress (less depression and anxiety) than those with lower levels of perceived parental support (Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, & Russel, 1994; Holahan, Valentiner, & Moos, 1995). It is expected that perceived social support from parents and friends will predict adjustment to college among first year students and that social support will interact with stress to predict adjustment to college.

Parental Bond and Psychosocial Adjustment

Many studies highlight the fact that parents play a key role in the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents (Rice, 1990), whether in the development of identity (Allen et al., 1994), a positive self-image (Wenk et al., 1994), life satisfaction (Leung & Leung, 1992), social competence and other skills needed to deal with emotional and behavioral problems (Windle & Miller-Tutzauer, 1992). According to the attachment theory, the quality of parent-child relationship plays an important role in the psycho-emotional development of the individual. Since all infants interact with others, every human being develops an attachment bond; even children who have been abused by a parent or caregiver generate a kind of attachment (Bowlby, 1988). Several studies have documented that attachment to parents is linked to the emotional, social, and psychological well-being of young adults (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Moreover, late adolescents' parental attachment security was found to be indirectly associated with functioning in peer and romantic relationships and subsequent emotional adjustment. Attachment insecurity, particularly when characterized by worries about abandonment and not being loved, is associated with rigid and unrealistic rules

concerning self-worth and a depleted self-esteem (Roberts et al., 1996). In addition, insecure attachment was found to negatively affect interpersonal functioning and self-esteem, and was shown to contribute towards the development of depressive symptoms.

Family Relationships and Psychosocial Adjustment

Children's home/family life has long been considered a primary environmental context influencing their cognitive, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical development (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000). Psychological literature also recognizes the influence of family processes in the course of human development (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Several researchers attempted to examine the influence of family relationships on adolescent adjustment and academic achievement. In an attempt to investigate family relationships and school behavior and problems, Paul (1996) revealed that there is significant degree of conflict with less cohesion and organization in emotionally disturbed families. On the other hand, families of successful students showed high achievement orientation and organization in the family, regardless of social class (Paul, 1988). Steven (1990) showed a concomitant relationship between family relationships and school outcome variables. The results of Whitehead and Deborah's (1991) study indicated that the best predictor of grade point average was the intellectual cultural orientation of the family relationships. According to Kumar and Lal (2014), home environment, including parental encouragement, involvement, interest, behavior, aspirations, parenting skills and parenting styles have direct influences on the academic achievement of students. A study by Nihiral, Nink, and Edward (1985) revealed significant influences of changes in home environment on social adjustment in adolescents. They conducted a study to explore the relationship between family relationships, home adjustment and academic achievement; the findings revealed that home adjustment is influenced by degree of support and help and commitment in the family (cohesion), extent to which set rules are followed in the family (control), the amount of anger and aggression in the family (conflict), the degree of interest in political, social, and cultural activities (intellectual-cultural orientation), and the extent to which family members are assertive, self-sufficient, and make their own decisions (independence). Numerous studies have found out that family-instability variables, including changes in marital status and household composition, separations from parent figures, changes in physical residence, and episodes of antisocial behavior or mental or physical illness in the family can affect the psychosocial development of adolescents. However, researchers opined that the main reason for these influences is low economic resources in the family (e.g., Ackerman et al., 1999; Linver, Brooks-Gunn, & Kohen, 2002).

Parental Self-Efficacy and Psychosocial Adjustment

The basic premise of self-efficacy theory – “people's belief in their capability to produce desired effects by their own actions” (Bandura, 1997b, p. 6) is the most important determinant of the behaviors people choose to engage in and how much they persevere in their efforts in the face of obstacles and challenges. The theory also maintains that these efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in psychological adjustment,

psychological problems, physical health, as well as professionally guided and self-guided behavioral change strategies. Self-efficacy beliefs play a major role in a number of common psychological problems, as well as in successful interventions for these problems. It had been demonstrated that low self-efficacy expectancies are an important feature of depression (Bandura, 1997; Maddux & Meier, 1995).

Parental self-efficacy beliefs are consistently found to be predictors of children's behaviors and development (Coleman & Karakker, 2003). A meta-analysis was organized to examine the potential roles of parental self-efficacy in relation to parent and child adjustment and the role that parental cognitions such as self-efficacy beliefs play in understanding the behaviors and emotions of families (Jones & Prinz, 2005). This analysis focused mainly on studies conducted after 1995, and this review examined 47 empirical studies investigating the relationship between parental self-efficacy and psychosocial variables such as stress and depression. The research review revealed that there is a strong correlation between parental self-efficacy and stress (Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper, & O'Brien) and depression (Gross, Sambrook, & Fogg, 1999). Moreover, a mother's sense of self-efficacy has been found to correlate with the child's academic outcomes at school (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001). In the latter study, parental self-efficacy beliefs were found to be significantly related to children's self-efficacy beliefs and indirectly related to children's positive adjustment with the environment.

Parental Bond, Family Relationships, and Parental Self-Efficacy

A number of researchers focused on the relationship between parental behavior and parental self-efficacy. Among others, it was found that high maternal self-efficacy is linked to adaptive parenting practices such as non-punitive, responsive, and stimulating caretaking (Donovan, 1981; Donovan & Leavitt, 1985; Donovan et al., 1990; Unger & Wandersman, 1985) as well as more direct and active parenting interactions (Mash & Johnston, 1983). Conversely, low maternal self-efficacy is associated with defensive and controlling parenting practices (Donovan et al., 1990) and perceptions of child difficulty (Bugental & Shennum, 1984; Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978; Halpern et al., 1994). Besides these, high maternal self-efficacy is linked to fewer reported child behavioral problems (Johnston & Mash, 1989) and, in contrast, low maternal self-efficacy is connected to actual child behavioral problems (Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978).

There is a scarcity of research exploring the influence of parental bond and parental self-efficacy. According to Bowlby's (1988) theory, caregivers who respond with relative consistency and warmth to a young child's needs foster a sense of a "secure base" that permits the child to regulate anxiety while exploring novel surroundings. A line of research suggests that parental emotional responsiveness may be essential for promoting self-efficacy, especially for social outcomes (Mallinckrodt, 2000).

Method

Participants

A sample of 1,203 participants (male: $n=576$, 47.9%; female: $n=627$, 52.1%) was employed to test the hypotheses of this study. Their ages ranged from 13 to 18 or older, with a median age within the range 16 to 17 years. The majority of the participants were enrolled in Classes 11 and 12 ($n=1,006$, 83.8%), with 195 (17.3%) participants enrolled in Classes 9 and 10.

Materials

Participants responded to a six-part questionnaire designed for the purpose of this study. Part I consisted of items written to elicit the participants' demographic information relating to their gender, age, and educational level. Part II consisted of the 45-item Parental Emotional Stability Questionnaire (PESQ) designed to measure the participant's perception of their parents' emotional stability. Part III consisted of the 25-item Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker, Tupling, and Brown (1979) to measure parental bonding from the participant's point of view. Part IV consisted of the 25-item Index of Family Relationship (IFR), developed by Hudson (1997) to measure family relationship problems. More specifically, the scale was designed to measure the extent, severity, or magnitude of problems that family members have in their relationship with one another. Part V consisted of the 10-item Perceived Parental Self-Efficacy Scale (PPSES), adapted from the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), to measure perceived parental self-efficacy from the participant's point of view. Part VI consisted of the 24-item Children and Adolescent Social and Adaptive Functioning Scale (CASAFS) which was developed by Price, Spence, Sheffield, and Donovan (2002) to measure the social functioning of children and adolescents.

Results

Structural equation modeling was employed to test the three posited hierarchical path models of the present study. According to the first model, the perceived parental emotional stability factors of feelings, behavior, and cognition are hypothesized to be *directly* associated with the criterion variable of psychosocial adjustment. As stated earlier, based on the accumulated research evidence on the relationship between perceived parental emotional stability and the aforementioned variable of psychosocial adjustment, it is hypothesized that the adolescent participants' reported level of parental emotional stability will evidence direct relationship with their level of psychosocial adjustment, such that the more positive they perceived their parental emotional stability factors of feelings, behavior, and cognition to be the more positive their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. The fit of this direct path model was tested via structural equation modeling. This statistical technique analyzed the covariance matrix generated from the model's measurement variables.

The results showed that the overall chi-square goodness-of-fit index was significant, χ^2 ($df = 15$) = 534.265, $p < .001$. Furthermore the incremental fit indices (NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI) are all low (range: 0.191 – 0.157). These fit indices indicated that the model provided a very poor fit relative to a null or independence model (i.e. the posited model represented only between 15% to 19% improvement in fit over the null or independence model), and failed to support the hypothesized structure of the posited direct path model. The model also yielded an Akaike Information Criterion

(AIC) value of 560.265. The AIC is used for comparing the goodness-of-fit of competing models.

The indirect mediation path model hypothesizes that the perceived parental emotional stability factors of feelings, behavior, and cognition are directly and indirectly associated with the criterion variable of psychosocial adjustment. Once again, based on the accumulated research evidence on the relationships between parental emotional stability, parental bonding, and family relationship, and the aforementioned variable of psychosocial adjustment, it is hypothesized that the participants' reported parental emotional stability will have an indirect relationship with their level of psychosocial adjustment such that the more positive they perceived their parental emotional stability factors of feeling, behavior, and cognition to be, (1) the more positive their reported levels of parental bonding and family relationship, and (2) subsequently, the more positive their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. The fit of this path model posited to represent the indirect structural relationships between perceived parental emotional stability and the level of psychosocial adjustment, being mediated by the factors of parental bonding and family relationship was tested via structural equation modeling.

Similar to the direct model (Model 1), the overall chi-square goodness-of-fit index was significant, $\chi^2 (df = 7) = 417.264, p < .001$. Furthermore, the incremental fit indices (NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI) are all low (range: 0.317 – 0.343). These fit indices indicated that the model provided a very poor fit relative to a null or independence model (i.e. the posited model represented only between 31% to 34% improvement in fit over the null or independence model), and failed to support the hypothesized structure of the posited indirect path model. The model also yielded an Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) value of 459.264. The AIC is used for comparing the goodness-of-fit of competing models. Figure 4 presents the indirect model together with the significant standardized regression coefficients ($p < .05$).

The full mediation path model hypothesizes that the perceived parental emotional stability factors of feelings, behavior, and cognition are directly and indirectly associated with the criterion variable of psychosocial adjustment. Once again, based on the accumulated research evidence on the relationships between parental emotional stability, parental bonding, family relationships, parental self-efficacy and the criterion variable of psychosocial adjustment, it was hypothesized that the participants' reported parental emotional stability will have an indirect relationship with their level of psychosocial adjustment, such that the more positive they perceived their parental emotional stability factors of feelings, behavior, and cognition to be, (1) the more positive their reported levels of parental bonding and family relationships; (2) the more positive their reported levels of parental bonding and family relationships, the higher their perception of their parental self-efficacy; and (3) subsequently, the more positive their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. The fit of this full path model posited to represent the direct and indirect structural relationships between perceived parental emotional stability and the level of psychosocial adjustment, being mediated by the factors of parental bonding, family relationships, and parental self-efficacy was tested via structural equation modeling.

Although the overall chi-square goodness-of-fit value was significant, $\chi^2 (df = 1) = 59.727, p < .01$, the incremental fit indices (NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI) are all above 0.90

(range: 0.904 – 0.907). These fit indices indicated that the model provided a very good fit relative to a null or independence model (i.e., the posited model represented between 90.4% to 90.7% improvement in fit over the null or independence model), and supported the hypothesized structure of the posited full path model. The model also yielded an Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) value of 113.727. The AIC is used for comparing the goodness-of-fit of competing models.

The results showed that Model 1 (direct model) and Model 2 (indirect model) fitted the data set's covariance matrix very poorly, indicating that they do not reflect the structural linkages hypothesized for these two models. Model 3 (full path model), on the other hand, fitted the study's covariance matrix very well, suggesting that the full mediation model posited to represent both the direct and indirect influences of the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability on their level of psychosocial adjustment supported the structural linkages hypothesized for this model. Furthermore, direct model comparisons indicated that the full path model fitted the data significantly better than the direct and indirect models, $\chi^2(df=14) = 474.538, p < .001$ and $\chi^2(df=6) = 357.992, p < .001$, respectively. These comparison results suggested that the proposed full path model may provide a better representation than either the direct or indirect model of the way the student participants' perception of their parental emotional stability influenced their level of psychosocial adjustment. The goodness-of-fit of competing models can also be compared by means of the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) measure (Akaike, 1987). In evaluating hypothesized models, the AIC takes into account both model parsimony; that is, achieving a higher degree of fit per degree of freedom used, and model fit. Simple models that fit well receive low scores, whereas poorly fitting models get high scores. A small AIC generally occurs when small chi-square values are achieved with fewer estimated coefficients. This shows not only a good fit of observed versus predicted co-variances but also a model not prone to "overfitting" (Jöreskog, 1993). Comparing the AIC measures for the three hierarchical models, it is evident that the full path model provided a lower AIC value (113.727) than the either the direct model (560.26) or the indirect model (459.26). These parsimony fit indices indicate that the full path model is both more parsimonious and better fitting than either the direct model or the indirect model.

Results from the path analysis indicated that the PESQ factors of feelings and behavior exerted significant direct influences on the participants' reported level of psychosocial adjustment. Thus, the higher the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability along the dimensions of feeling and behavior, the higher is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment (Beta=.109 and Beta=.068, respectively, $p < .05$).

The results also showed that the PESQ factors of feelings and behavior exerted significant indirect influences on the participants' reported level of psychosocial adjustment. Thus, for both PESQ factors, the higher the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability along the dimensions of feelings and behavior, the more positive their perception of their family relationship (Beta=-.109 and Beta=-.102, respectively); the more positive their perception of their family relationship, the higher their perception of their parental self-efficacy (Beta=-.312) and, subsequently, the higher is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment (Beta=.354). For the

PESQ factor of behavior, the higher the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability along the dimension of behavior, the lower their perception of their parental bonding ($\text{Beta} = -.162$); the lower their perception of their parental bonding, the higher their perception of their parental self-efficacy ($\text{Beta} = -.08$) and, subsequently, the higher is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment ($\text{Beta} = .354$). The PESQ factor of behavior also exerted its indirect influences on the participants' level of reported psychosocial adjustment via the mediator factors of perceived parental self-efficacy and family relationships. Thus, the higher the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability along the dimension of behavior, the higher their perception of their parental self-efficacy ($\text{Beta} = .174$) and the more positive they perceived their family relationships ($\text{Beta} = -.102$) and, subsequently, the more positive is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment ($\text{Beta} = .354$ and $\text{Beta} = -.089$, respectively). It should be noted that the PESQ factor of cognition was not found to exert any significant direct or indirect influences on the participants' reported level of psychosocial adjustment ($p > .05$).

Discussion

The direct model posited that the perceived parental emotional stability factors of feeling, behavior, and cognition were hypothesized to be *directly* associated with the criterion variable of psychosocial adjustment. It was hypothesized that the South Indian adolescents' reported level of parental emotional stability has direct relationship with their level of psychosocial adjustment such that the more positive the adolescents perceived their parental emotional stability factors of feeling, behavior, and cognition, the more positive is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment.

The results of path analysis indicated that the participants' perception of their parents' emotional stability factors of feeling and behavior have direct influence on their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. Their parents' level of emotional stability along the dimensions of feeling and behavior are positively associated with their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. These findings suggested that the more positive their perception of their parents' emotional stability factors of feeling and behavior, the more positive is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. These results are consistent with literature on parental emotional stability and psychosocial adjustment. For example, Qian and Xia (2001) stated that parent's behavior influences psychosocial adjustment of adolescents. Hall and Bracken (1996) suggested that negative parenting impacts children's behavior and feelings negatively. Davies and Cummings (1994) reported that parent's behavior and feelings strongly affected the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents. It can, thus, be inferred that positive parental behavior can positively influence adolescents' psychosocial adjustment and that, conversely, negative parental behavior can negatively influence adolescents' psychosocial adjustment. No significant relationship was identified as to the effect of cognition within the context of parental resilience to stress on adolescents' process of responding to life's conditions, demands, and stresses. This could be because the factor of cognition basically represents the positive and negative thoughts parents have, and thoughts by itself might not have an impact on children's

manner of responding to life's stresses; only parents' feelings and behavior are noticed or observed by their children.

Research had demonstrated that children at the adolescence stage require parental love, care, warmth, and serious attention in order to adjust adequately and set effective goals in the environment in which they find themselves. Parents have major roles to play in the adjustment process of adolescents (Cutrona et al., 1994; Holahan et al., 1995).

The indirect mediation path model hypothesized that the perceived parental emotional stability factors of feeling, behavior, and cognition are *indirectly* associated with the criterion variable of psychosocial adjustment. The path model was tested via structural equation modeling. The fit of this path model posited to represent the indirect structural relationships between perceived parental emotional stability and the level of psychosocial adjustment, being mediated by the factors of parental bonding and family relationships. The following section presents detailed discussion of these findings. Results obtained from the indirect path model showed that Indian adolescents' perception of their parental emotional stability would have an indirect relationship with their level of psychosocial adjustment such that the more positive they perceived their parental emotional stability factors of feelings, behavior, and cognition, the more positive their reported level of parental bonding and, subsequently, the more positive is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. In a recent longitudinal study, Wel et al. (2002) found that parental bonds have a lasting significant influence on the well-being of adolescents and young adults aged 12 to 30 years and that, even for independent adults, the parental bond appears to be as important to their well-being as having psychosocial adjustment.

This study's findings also suggested an indirect relationship between participants' perceived parental emotional stability and their level of psychosocial adjustment such that the more positive they perceived their parental emotional stability factors of feelings, behavior, and cognition, the more positive their reported level of parental bonding and, subsequently, the more positive is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. Parker et al. (1979) proposed that parent-child bonds are affected by the characteristics of the child, the parents, and the reciprocal relationship between them. Results of path analysis revealed that participants' perception of their parents' emotional stability factors of feelings and behavior have both *direct* and *indirect* influences on their reported level of psychosocial adjustment, being mediated by their family relationships. The indirect relationship suggested that the more positive the adolescents' perceived parental emotional stability factors of feelings and behavior, the more positive is the quality of their family relationships. Bean et al. (2004) proposed that when the emotional context in a family is high in affection, warmth, and trust, parents and children are likely to have a better relationship as they enjoy having activities together and are more likely to communicate openly.

The current findings indicated that the participants' perception of their parents' emotional stability along the dimension of feelings has direct influence on their level of psychosocial adjustment. However, when mediated by parental bond, no indirect relationship was found. Parental bond, on the other hand, was found to be significantly related to parental self-efficacy which, in turn, indirectly influences the participants' level of psychosocial adjustment. This translates into the finding that the

higher the participants' perception of their parents' feelings, the higher is their psychosocial adjustment. It was also found, however, that parental bond which pertains to participants' degree of closeness towards their parents does not have any significant indirect influence on their level of psychosocial adjustment, suggesting that being close to parents alone does not necessarily impact on their adjustment to life's demands.

Limitations of the Study

Before discussing the implications of the current study's findings, some limitations of this study should be noted. After all, there are limitations in most, if not all, empirical studies; this study is no different. As such, the findings obtained and the conclusions drawn from the present study must be interpreted with caution.

First of all, since the research design of this study was cross-sectional and descriptive, no definitive conclusions can be drawn about the causal sequential effects (both direct and indirect) between the models' exogenous, mediator, and criterion variables. In other words, the observed significant path coefficients denote only relationships and not causality.

This study utilized a self-report measure which required participants to recall and rate a number of perceived factors (e.g., parents' emotional stability, parental self-efficacy, parental bond, etc.). Such a retrospective style of responding forces participants to rely on their memory when responding to the study's questionnaire items. Reliance on memory *per se* is clearly subjected to memory lapses/errors which can adversely affect the accuracy of the participants' true feelings or responses. Moreover, as the veracity of responses could not be validated in the survey, this meant that the researcher had to accept the responses at face value and assume that the respondents replied to the questions honestly.

Another limitation is the lack of theoretical perspectives and empirical findings on the impact of perceived parental emotional stability on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment, being mediated by selected factors, within the South Indian context, all together or independently of each other, for that matter. Discussion relied heavily on Western perspectives and studies which may not necessarily reflect Indian culture and values.

The findings of the current investigation should, indeed, be interpreted with some caution because of some intervening or limiting factors beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, despite some identified limitations, it is anticipated that this study would provide valuable knowledge and database for a number of helping professionals such as psychologists, social workers, school counselors, other mental health practitioners. Additionally, a study of this nature would benefit behavioral scientists and researchers who are interested in the further investigation of the interrelationship between parental emotional stability, psychosocial adjustment, and the other selected key variables of this study. Thus, the contribution of this study towards expansion of the literature cannot be overemphasized.

Implications

With the above limitations in mind, the findings of the present study carry a number of implications for the conceptualization and understanding of parental emotional

stability within the Indian context. First, this topic is relatively new and very little research has been conducted on this subject within the Indian setting. The present study is one of the earliest studies that explored the relationship between parental emotional stability and the psychosocial adjustment of South Indian adolescents. Thus, the findings offer an expansive view of the interplay among the selected key variables, within a non-Western setting.

Moreover, the theory-based path models employed in the present study and the obtained findings can serve as a knowledge resource and database for mental health practitioners, teachers, and school/college administrators towards the development and implementation of intervention strategies that could prove helpful in promoting better psychosocial adjustment among Indian youths.

Third, the current findings offer a number of suggestions aimed at the active involvement of parents and adolescents in regulating their emotions positively. The identification of specific variables associated with emotional stability (e.g., emotive factors of feelings, behavior and cognition) allows for targeting parents who appear to be at risk for emotional instability by raising their awareness and providing education for both parents and adolescents. School administrators, social workers, teachers, and allied practitioners can collaborate in initiating and implementing remedial measures aimed at parents and youths on how to regulate emotions, such as seminars, workshops, topic inclusion in PTA meetings, invitational lectures, or forums hosted by experts.

Finally, armed with vast information generated from the present study, trainers and family counselors working with families in South India can help educate local fathers and mothers on their impact on child outcomes. In addition, educational/training institutions can use the information to provide community-based seminars and workshops on related issues such as 'effective parenting', 'importance of parental emotional stability', 'importance of adolescent psychosocial adjustment' and suchlike. As parents and teachers gain more exposure on these topics, they can incorporate the new knowledge into their home life, classroom activities, educational materials, and other life domains.

Conclusions

The present generation of parents in Kerala, South India has been observed to be overwhelmed with many responsibilities, such that increasingly less time is spent with their children. Children, in turn, face various problems, most of which stem from such technology-based issues as Internet addiction or too much exposure to social media. Indian parents must charge themselves with higher responsibility to raise responsible children in the society. By the same token, society expects parents to do their duties responsibly in order to create healthy and productive citizens of the future. It can, thus, be concluded that in order for children to thrive in good direction, parents must develop positive emotional stability in terms of their feelings, behavior, and cognition. The findings of this study generally indicate that parental emotional stability factors of feelings and behavior have direct influences on adolescents' reported level of psychosocial adjustment. However, despite the reported 100% literacy rate of people in Kerala, the news that they read every day are about children who were abused and maltreated by their parents. This emanates from the unhealthy

emotional conditions of parents that are reflected in their unfavorable parenting styles. On the other hand, this study also found that adolescents in Kerala are confused about their parents' cognitive processes as most local parents do not willingly spend time to discuss their thoughts with their children. Modern Indian parents appear to be constantly adopting the Western mindset in raising their children; consequently, they lose a certain degree of parental emotional stability on the cognitive level. It can be concluded that the lesser the likelihood of parents sharing their thoughts to their children, the more distant their communicative process becomes. Adolescents are creative, energetic, and enthusiastic individuals. Their development should be coursed through by parents as normally as possible, so as to avoid future complications. The findings of the present study suggest that Indian parents should be more nurturing, affectionate, and interactive with their children on a daily basis. This will facilitate a more open communication between them and, in the process, initiate an emotional bond. As there are only a few studies on the parental emotional stability of South Indian parents, this study represents a significant step in shedding light on how perceived parental emotional stability creates an impact on the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents, within the Indian context. Thus, it can also be concluded that cultural parameters and traditions play an important role in the psychosocial development of Indian adolescents, in addition to the impact of parental emotional stability.

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