



HOME ENVIRONMENT AS A PREDICTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to explore the relationship between psychological well being and home environment of adolescents in a sample of 260 adolescents from Patiala district of Punjab. The results of a correlation analysis revealed a positively significant relationship of psychological well being with protectiveness, conformity, reward and nurturance dimensions of home environment among adolescents. However, a negatively significant relationship of psychological well being with control and punishment dimensions of home environment among adolescents was observed. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was run to examine the extent to which the various dimensions of home environment contributed to the variability in psychological well being among adolescents. The results indicated that only the conformity, reward and nurturance dimension of home environment were the significant predictors of psychological well being among adolescents. These results of the study have implications for counselors, teachers and parents.

Keywords: psychological well being, home environment, adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence (a life of span ranging from 12 to 19 years) is considered to be the most important period of one's life. Home environment and family have an impact on the teenager's mind which helps in the development of

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teenagers cognitive abilities. At home, a stimulating physical environment, encouragement of achievement, affection and a protecting relationship between children and parents play an important role in the socialization of the child and the achievement of psychological well-being. The well-being of adolescents is largely the product of interactions among the multiple contexts in which adolescents are embedded. In India there is heavy academic and social pressure that results in negative emotional states and more internalizing of problems. Adolescence today is unfortunately not only a period of preparation for and transformation to adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2007), but has become a period in which adolescents increasingly face many new challenges which they are often ill-prepared for. Exposure of alcohol, drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, and an increasing incidence of teenage depression as well as suicidal behaviour have become an obliterating threat to adolescent well-being (Heaven, 1996; Larson, Wilson, & Mortimer, 2002). Rockwood (1996) studied the social learning and family systems theories have both focused on the family environment as having a significant influence on a child's social development. The social aspect of the environment such as peer relationship is found to have a more significant impact on resident's psychological well-being than other aspects of the physical environment (Namazi, 2000). Ng et al. (2000) found family environment to be a predictor of adolescent's psychological well-being and self-esteem. The results revealed that perceived global parenting styles, specific parenting behaviours, and parent-adolescent conflicts were related to adolescents' psychological well-being. Cripps and Zyromski (2009) observed that the level and type of parental involvement, as perceived by adolescents, is correlated with adolescents' psychological well-being. Well-being is subjective and it refers to people's evaluation of their lives both affective and cognitive and refers to the state of being healthy (physically, mentally, socially and emotionally), happy, prosperous and satisfied in his/her life.

Psychological well-being refers to how individuals self-evaluate and their ability to fulfil certain aspects of their lives, such as relationships, support, and work (Amato, 1994; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Knoester, 2003; Roberts & Bengtson, 1993; Wilkinson, 2004). Well-being describes one's happiness, confidence, physical condition and general outlook on life. It is about feeling good and taking care of one-self, responsibilities that can often be neglected when juggling the rigorous demands of every day living in the 21st century. The concept of well-being is most commonly used in philosophy and is usually

related to health in order to describe what is ultimately perceived as good for a person. Well-being or general well-being may be defined as the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life's experiences and one's role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility belongingness and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry etc. Definitions of well-being can be grouped into three categories:

1. Well-being had been defined by external criteria, such as virtue or holiness;
2. Well-being has been focused on how people evaluate their lives in positive terms;
3. The well-being term is used in every day discourse as denoting a preponderance of positive affect over negative affects.

There are many ingredients of psychological well-being such as self acceptance relative freedom from worries and anxieties, frustrations, tolerance, capacity to withstand tensions, absence of excessive day dreaming and rationalization, sensitivity towards the emotional experience of others. The quality of relationships between adolescents, their family and friends is considered to be a crucial factor that influences their well-being. Family plays a very significant role in the all round development of a child; parent-child interaction and parent's way of dealing with their children, development of certain attitudes among the children towards their home; environment-family is the smallest unit of society. In a family the relationship among individuals constructing the family is very closely knit and interdependent. In the process of growth from childhood through adolescence to adulthood an individual is to some degree dependent on the family according to his need and duties. During the impressionable stage of childhood and adolescence the individual is influenced to a great extent by the family members. Rousseau considered home environment as the most effective in bringing about proper development of the child. It is well said that the first six years of the childhood at home revolve around parents where mother is a true nurse and father is the true teacher. Psychological well-being is of immense importance in today's fast life which helps coping with problems of stress and strain faced by the adolescents.

Adolescence is the most important period of human life. Adolescents are frequently troubled with their problems as physical, emotional, mental and social adjustment. Parents have no time for their children to guide them. All these conditions block well-being. The review of related literature is indicative of the fact that the psychological well-being among school-going adolescents

was studied both as a dependent and independent variable. No child can grow in a vacuum. He needs all the vital elements in his environment to help him grow, develop, become complete and in short, possess integrity. A child gets his age appropriate learning experiences from home, which is tailored suitably to his temperament. Parents teach children ways to solve problems by helping them develop internal limit setting. There is a lot of empirical evidence to prove that the acquisition of the well-being concept on the part of adolescents is also influenced by the nature of parental behavior towards them. Saints and thieves are largely the product of home environment than that of heredity.

Home environment is considered as a system where the behavior and relationship among all family members are interdependent. A stimulating physical environment, encouragement of achievement and affection are repeatedly linked to better performance of children. Every individual bears an impact of the environment in which he/she is brought up. Home is almost the exclusive environmental factor, which influences the first few primitive years of life. The home is an important aspect of adolescent's psychology. Home environment and family have a substantial impact on the developing minds of teenagers, and these developments may reach on climax during adolescence. If the concepts and theory behind right or wrong were not established early in a child's life, the lack of this knowledge may impair a teenager's ability to make beneficial decisions as well as allowing his/her impulses to control his/her decisions. With the advancement of science and technology the life of every human being has become very complex. Every individual wants to be ahead and rise above from his fellow beings. Due to the materialistic ideology of the modern man, competition in every sphere of life is increasing. In competitions, the role of family environment is very crucial in adolescence development. It may be pointed out that school-going adolescent face a number of stresses due to academic aspirations, uncertainty about career path, peer pressure etc. Many studies have been conducted to explore parental involvement and the effect it has on psychological well-being (Gecas, 1971; Amato, 1994; Amato & Ochiltree, 1986; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Buri, Kirchner, & Walsh, 1987; Farrell & Barnes, 1993; Roberts & Bengtson, 1993; Dekovic & Meeus, 1997; Steinberg, 2001; Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004; Wilkinson, 2004; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; Gibson & Jefferson, 2006). In continuation with the previous studies, the present study is a humble attempt to explore the relationship of well being with home environment in Indian context. This study

will guide the parents to provide a healthy family environment to their children, so that they can actually face the challenges of life. After identifying the various factors, which are responsible for lack of psychological well-being among adolescents, remedial measures can be taken up by the parents to eliminate these factors.

Objectives

1. To study psychological well-being among adolescents in relation to home environment.
2. To study home environment as predictor of well-being among adolescents.

Delimitations of the study

1. The study was delimited to school-going adolescents from Patiala district only.
2. Adolescents studying in 9th grade were included in the sample.
3. The sample was delimited to 260 students.

Operational definitions of the terms used

1. *Well-being* - describes one's happiness, confidence, physical condition and general outlook on life to be measured by PGI General Well-being Scale by Verma and Verma (1989).

2. *Home Environment* - refers to the psychological environment of home as perceived by adolescents to be measured by Home Environment Inventory, developed by Misra (1986) having 100 items, divided into 10 components namely (i) Control (ii) Protectiveness (iii) Punishment (iv) Conformity (v) Social Isolation (vi) Reward (vii) Deprivation of Privileges (viii) Nurturance (ix) Rejection and (x) Permissiveness.

Method

Descriptive method of research was used for the conduct of the present study.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant relationship of psychological well-being with home environment among adolescents.
2. Home environment will emerge as a significant predictor of well-being among adolescents.

Sample

The population of the study was comprised of adolescents studying in 9th grade in schools located in Patiala district of Punjab. The sample for the present study was taken following the random sampling method. The total sample comprised of 260 students, taken randomly from government secondary schools of Patiala district. The schools, taken, were affiliated to Punjab School Education Board (PSEB). The total sample included 130 boys and 130 girls from 9th grade.

Research tools used

In order to collect the data for the present investigation the following tools were selected and used by the investigator:

PGI General Well-being Scale (Verma & Verma, 1989) was used to measure adolescents' psychological well-being. It is a twenty-item scale intended for jugging general well-being. Each item in the scale is to be responded by ticking against each of the 20 items. The ticked items are counted and thus a total score of well-being is obtained.

Home Environment Inventory (HEI) by Misra (1986) was used to measure the psycho-social climate of home as perceived by children. It provides a measure of the quality and quantity of the cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the child within the home. The Home Environment Inventory has 100 items that fall into ten dimensions of home environment.

Results and discussion

Pearson's product-moment correlation was computed to determine the linear relationship of psychological well being with home environment. The results of the correlation analysis are shown in table 1. They show that the correlation coefficients of psychological well-being and the home environment

component of protectiveness (0.14) is significant at 0.05 level. It may also be observed that there is a positive and significant correlation of psychological well being and home environment components of protectiveness ($r = .14$, $p < .05$), conformity ($r = .16$, $p < .01$), reward ($r = .17$, $p < .01$) and nurturance ($r = .18$, $p < .01$). However, the home environment components namely social isolation (-0.04), rejection (-0.10) and permissiveness (-0.03) are negatively correlated with psychological well-being, though not significant. Also the correlation coefficient of psychological well-being with control (.004), punishment (.001) and deprivation of privileges (0.006) are not significant even at 0.05 level. This shows that there is no significant correlation of social isolation, deprivation of privileges, rejection and permissiveness components of home environment with psychological well-being among adolescents. The finding clearly points to the fact that adolescents high on protectiveness, conformity, reward and nurturance in their home environment tend to possess higher well being. Similar observations have been reported in a number of other studies (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Christensen et al., 1989; Bigner, 1998; Maker et al., 1998; Ng, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; DeGenova & Rice, 2002; Moos & Moos, 2002; Prevatt, 2003; Deci & Ryan, 2004; and Vansteenkiste, 2005).

Table 1. Psychological Well-being among Adolescents in relation to Home Environment

S. No.	Home Environment. Components	r
1.	Control	.04
2.	Protectiveness	.14*
3.	Punishment	.01
4.	Conformity	.16**
5.	Social Isolation	- .04
6.	Reward	.17**
7.	Deprivation of Privileges	.006
8.	Nurturance	.18**
9.	Rejection	- .10
10.	Permissiveness	- .03

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the extent to which home environment components contributed to the variability on well being among adolescents. The stepwise analysis was preferred over

standard one to find a subset of those independent variables which are useful in predicting the dependent variable, by eliminating those which do not contribute additionally to that already predicted by the variables in the equation. Table 2 shows the results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis for the dependable variable well being. The results of the stepwise multiple regression indicated that conformity, reward, nurturance components of home environment emerged as significant predictors of well being among adolescents; together they explained 26 % of the variation in well being among adolescents ($R^2=.26$, $p<.01$). The nurturance component of home environment being the most potent predictor of well being; it entered the equation at step one. The multiple R for this variable equals to .38, which suggests that stress accounts for approximately 14% of the variance ($R^2=.14$). The F-value being 15.69 which is significant at .01 level.

Table 2. Summary of Stepwise Regression for Prediction of well being among adolescents

Predictor Variable	R	R ²	F	Direction of relationship with well being
1. Nurturance	.38 ^a	.14	15.69**	Positive
2. Conformity	.45 ^b	.20	12.12**	Positive
3. Reward	.51 ^c	.26	10.78 **	Positive

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01

a. Predictors: (Constant), nurturance

b. Predictors: (Constant), conformity, nurturance

c. Predictors: (Constant), reward, conformity, nurturance

The conformity component of home environment appears to be another potent predictor which took entry at step two. Multiple R increased to .45 with the entry of conformity in the equation after the nurturance component of home environment. The F-value being 12.12 is significant at .01 level. It means that nurturance and conformity components of home environment jointly account for approximately 20% of the variance in well being among adolescents. Simple linear regressions were also conducted to determine whether different home environment components were independently predictive of well being among adolescents. The last variable that took entry into the regression equation is the reward component of home environment. With the entry of this

variable the multiple R increased to .51, indicating that these three variables accounted for 26% of variance in well being of adolescents. The F ratio at this step equals to 10.78 which is significant at .01 level. The results of the stepwise regression analysis revealed that the linear combination of conformity, reward and nurturance components of home environment account for significant proportion of variance (i.e. 26%) in well being among adolescents. Nurturance, conformity and reward components of home environment each accounted for 14%, 6% and 6% of the variability in well being among adolescents (Table 2). Nurturance appeared to be the strongest predictor of well being compared to conformity and reward. These results are in line with previous researches (Bigner, 1998; Maker et al., 1998; Ng, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; DeGenova & Rice, 2002; Moos & Moos, 2002; Prevatt, 2003) and have important implications for counsellors and parents.

Educational Implications

Well-being is the concept being used in the developmental context and nations are being rated as happy states on the basis of wellness of the people. Poor nations show higher well-being as compared to developed nations, thereby meaning that well-being is independent of economic prosperity. The well-being among these nations is due to contentment and integrated family life, social support and other social indicators. Hence, educational programs, both in formal and non-formal education system (and also through extension activities) should focus on social factors that have a positive effect on family life and occupational climate so that well-being of the people is enhanced. In the light of these results, it is suggested that it should become the foremost duty of parents to make every effort to inshore that our youth in schools can become mature. They should create an atmosphere in their home oriented towards training the adolescents' emotions in the right direction for well-being. The study also provides guidelines for parents so that they can provide a healthy development of their children so that they in turn may become well adjusted in life. On the basis of the findings of the present study it is suggested that a parent should not adhere purely to any one style or one behavior, but should accommodate to the needs of the adolescent his individuality in the process of cultivating a stimulating, encouraging and healthy family environment.

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