

Differences in peer - relationship among adolescents across parental variables

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■ **ABSTRACT :** Peers are the one with whom adolescents identify, learn, fight, discover new enterprises and learn about themselves. The present study was undertaken on 460 adolescents of 11th and 12th that is 112 studying in university and 348 studying in government school of Hisar district of Haryana state from the age group of 16 to 17 years. Peer – Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) was used to assess the peer – relationship. Results of the study highlighted that adolescents continuing their study in school were involved in bullying or being victimized to a lower level but had higher pro – social skills as compared to adolescents studying in university and the adolescents whose mothers were engaged in service, they were more involved in bullying.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Bullying, Peer – relationship, Pro – social behavior, Victimization

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A small group of similarly aged, fairly close friends and sharing the same activities is known as peer group. Friends are the support system for adolescence by which they develop self competence which enhances their development. As the children enter adolescence, the quality of peer – relationship starts change. The adolescents start identifying themselves with small gang and get involved in bullying and victimization. Peer groups are networks of interacting individuals who spent time together and share activities. For example direct bully victims exhibit a wide range of maladjustment which includes internalizing problems, peer rejection, lack of close friendships, acceptance of deviance, less supportive and uninvolved parents, less optimal temperament, negative emotionality and reactive aggression. Parental involvement in the lives of

adolescent and children also facilitates young people to cope with stressors and to maintain physical and mental health.

Objectives:

To access the peer - relationship status of adolescents across educational institute.

Differences in peer – relationship among adolescents across parental variables.

■ **RESEARCH METHODS**

The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state on two groups of adolescents, one having transition from school to university atmosphere and another continuing their 11th and 12th in the same school atmosphere of age group 16 – 17 years. Out of 460

adolescents, 348 adolescents from rural and 112 adolescents from urban area constituted the sample for study.

Tools :

Peer – Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) developed and standardized by Rigby and Slee (1993) was used to assess the peer – relationship.

Data analysis :

SPSS Programme was run to analyze the data. Independent sample t- test, One - way ANOVA and correlation was used to examine the differences in peer - relationship among adolescents across parental variables.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been presented under following heads :

Personal profile of respondents :

Personal profile highlights that mean age of adolescents studying in university was 16.58±06.43 years and adolescents studying in school was 16.66±06.44 years. Gender distribution reveals that more than half (60.2%) respondents were females. Table further reveals that adolescents enrolled in universities were better academic achievers (M = 76.61±16.52) than school going adolescents (M=61.88±09.75). Almost similar distribution was observed across adolescents enrolled in school and university with regard to their academic class that is 11th

(48.7%) and 12th (47.8%), respectively.

Peer-relationship of adolescents across educational institute :

Table 1 unveils distribution of adolescents for peer – relationship across educational institute and highlights that 8.80 per cent of adolescents from university were involved in bullying to moderate level as compared to school adolescents (3.70%). Results further revealed that from total sample 20 per cent adolescents were being victimized at moderate level. It was discovered that university adolescents were more victimized by others as compared to school adolescents. In a similar study by Azeredo *et al.* (2015) too reported a significant association with bullying (P <0.05) whereas at school-level, private schools presented more bullying than public schools (OR = 1.17, CI 1.04-1.31). Regarding pro-social behavior of adolescents, it was found that school students were more social as 87 per cent used pro – social behavior to a higher level against 82.40 per cent adolescents from university. The results of the present study regarding peer – relationship reported that the respondents were involved in bullying or being victimized or bullied to a lower level but had higher pro – social skills. This speaks about the rich traditional values of Indian culture, especially in rural areas as the maximum respondents of the present study were from rural area. In rural areas still we have closely knitted emotional ties. The results are supported by the finding of Singh *et al.* (2015) who also found that female adolescents were higher than males on pro – social behaviour.

| Table 1: Peer - relationship of adolescents across educational institute (n=460) | | | | |
|--|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Aspects of peer – relationship | Educational institutes | School (n=348) | University (n=112) | Total |
| Bullying | | | | |
| Low (6 – 12) | | 333 (96.00) | 102 (90.30) | 435 (94.60) |
| Moderate (13 – 18) | | 13 (03.70) | 10 (08.80) | 23 (05.00) |
| High (19 – 24) | | 01 (00.30) | 01 (00.90) | 02 (00.40) |
| Victimization | | | | |
| Low (5 – 10) | | 281 (81.00) | 81 (71.70) | 362 (78.70) |
| Moderate (11 – 15) | | 61 (17.60) | 31 (27.40) | 92 (20.00) |
| High (16 – 20) | | 05 (01.40) | 01 (00.90) | 06 (01.30) |
| Pro – social behaviour | | | | |
| Low (4 – 8) | | 17 (04.90) | 10 (08.80) | 27 (05.90) |
| Moderate (9 – 12) | | 28 (08.10) | 10 (08.80) | 38 (08.20) |
| High (13 – 16) | | 302 (87.00) | 93 (82.40) | 395 (85.90) |

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

| Table 2 : Comparison of peer – relationship among adolescents across parental variables | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sr. No. | Parental variables | | | | F value | | |
| 1. | Aspects of peer-relationship | Maternal age | | | | | |
| | | 28 – 38 years | 38±49 years | 49±60 years | | | |
| | | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | | | |
| | | Bullying | 07.47±02.29 ^a | 07.99±02.53 ^b | | 07.43±01.95 ^a | 2.47* |
| 2. | Aspects of peer-relationship | Paternal age | | | | | |
| | | 30 – 40 years | 40±50 years | 50±60 years | | | |
| | | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | | | |
| | | Bullying | 07.42±02.18 ^a | 07.94±02.64 ^b | | 07.21±01.50 ^a | 3.10* |
| 3. | Aspects of peer-relationship | Maternal education | | | | | |
| | | Illiterate | Upto matric | Above matric | | | |
| | | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | | | |
| | | Bullying | 07.73±02.41 ^a | 07.41±02.06 ^a | | 08.12±03.29 ^a | 1.86 |
| 4. | Aspects of peer-relationship | Paternal education | | | | | |
| | | Illiterate | Matric | Senior secondary | | Graduate | |
| | | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | | Mean±SD | |
| | | Bullying | 07.48±02.45 ^a | 07.33±01.89 ^a | | 07.77±02.44 ^{ab} | 08.30±02.91 ^c |
| 5. | Aspects of peer-relationship | Maternal occupation | | | | | |
| | | Housewife | Labourer/agricultural labourer | Service | | | |
| | | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | | | |
| | | Bullying | 07.61±02.26 ^a | 07.32±02.50 ^a | | 08.81±04.25 ^b | 2.26* |
| 6. | Aspects of peer-relationship | Paternal occupation | | | | | |
| | | Labourer | Farmer | Businessman | | Service | |
| | | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | | Mean±SD | |
| | | Bullying | 07.47±02.14 ^a | 07.61±02.32 ^a | | 07.73±02.37 ^a | 07.85±02.71 ^a |

* indicates 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 3 : Correlation between peer – relationship and parental variables | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Sr. No. | Aspects of peer – relationship | Parental variables | | | | | |
| | | Maternal age | Paternal age | Maternal education | Paternal education | Maternal occupation | Paternal occupation |
| 1. | Bullying | 0.04 | 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.11* | 0.07 |
| 2. | Victimization | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.19 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| 3. | Pro – social behaviour | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.03 |

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Comparison of peer–relationship among adolescents across parental variables :

The perusal of Table 2 displays the comparison of peer-relationship of adolescents across parental variables. Significant differences were observed in bullying across maternal age categories [$F_{(2,457)} = 2.47$], paternal age [$F_{(2,457)} = 3.10$], paternal education [$F_{(2,457)} = 2.49$] and maternal occupation [$F_{(2,457)} = 2.26$], whereas, victimization behavior differed significantly only with maternal age [$F_{(2,457)} = 4.17$] at 0.05 level of significance. Moving towards paternal age, mean scores shows that adolescents having fathers between 40 ± 50 years of age group ($M = 7.94$) were more involved in bullying. Further data revealed that adolescents having graduate fathers were more involved in bullying ($M = 8.30$). Results also depicted that adolescents whose mothers were engaged in service were involved in bullying at higher level ($M = 8.81$) as compared to their counterparts whose mothers were housewives ($M = 7.61$) and labourers/ agricultural labourers ($M = 7.32$). The reason behind this may be that due to employment or job, they are not able to spend the time with their children at the time they need which causes the bullying behavior among adolescents. Dunifon *et al.* (2013) also suggests that some aspects of maternal work, such as night shift work, long commutes and irregular work hours are linked with higher behaviour problems among children.

Correlation between peer – relationship and parental variables :

Table 3 exhibits correlations of peer – relationship of adolescents with parental variables. Results indicate that only maternal occupation had positive significant correlation with bullying ($r = .11, P < 0.05$). Adolescents whose mothers were engaged in service, they were relatively more involved in bullying. The reason behind this may be that as adolescents’ mothers are more involved in household activities and to service area, they spend less time with their children at the time they need their support. As adolescents do not perceive maternal

support, they start involvement in bullying or being bullied. The results are in line with the finding of Seenivasan and Caroline (2014) which illustrated that maternal employment influences family processes that mediate child outcomes. Parental involvement is an important factor for positive child mental health for both boys and girls.

Conclusion :

Adolescents studying in school environment were involved in bullying or being victimized to a lower level but had higher pro – social skills as compared to adolescents studying in university environment.

It was also found that adolescents whose mothers were engaged in service, they were relatively more involved in bullying.

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