



## A STUDY OF SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of parenting styles on the social competence and academic achievement of students. Parenting styles play a crucial role in shaping children's behavior, attitudes, and overall development. The study aims to understand how different parenting styles impact students' social competence and academic performance. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data. The sample comprises students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds across various educational institutions. Parenting styles are assessed using established frameworks such as Baumrind's typology, which categorizes parenting into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful styles. Quantitative analysis involves administering standardized questionnaires to measure students' perceptions of their parents' parenting styles, as well as self-reported measures of social competence and academic achievement. Statistical analyses, including correlations and regression models, are conducted to examine the relationships between parenting styles, social competence, and academic achievement.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Competence, Academic Achievement, Students, parenting styles, children's behavior.

### INTRODUCTION

The family is the first to affect the individual. It is the family which gives the child his first experience of living. It gets him when he is completely uninformed, unprotected, before any other agency has had a chance to affect him. The influence of other agencies, although indispensable,

must build upon the groundwork furnished by the family.

From the time of birth, relationships are formed that influence how individuals function as children, adolescents, and adults. One of the most important relationship systems is the family. A psychologically healthy family provides its

members with a supportive and protective environment which fosters optimal functioning (Schuster & Ashburn, 1992). A well-functioning family will provide children with the love and security necessary to form healthy relationships as adults.

Children need a happy and stable family environment and a conducive social network for their overall growth and development. Yet, happy families are not happy all the time. Disagreements and conflicts are a necessary part of living closely together. Both love and hate are to be expected in the intensity of family life and peers interactions, but it is the way negative emotions are handled that makes a difference to family life and social interactions.

## **SOCIAL COMPETENCE**

Social competence is generally described in global terms, such as the ability to effectively make and maintain positive social outcomes by organizing one's own personal and environmental resources (see Boyom & Parke, 1995; Ladd, 1999; Dirks, Treat & Weersing, 2007; Semrud-Clikeman, 2007; Anderson-Butcher, Iachini & Amorose, 2008). Rubin and Rose-Krasnor (1992) defined social competence as “the ability to achieve

personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across situations” (p. 285). Sheridan and Walker (1999) identified two aspects of children's social skilfulness. One aspect is to learn a variety of important social skills appropriate in different contexts and the other is to learn to relate and behave in a way that is acceptable to other people. These aspects may be further divided into more specific skills, such as: 1) positive relations with others, 2) accurate social cognition, 3) the absence of maladaptive behaviours, and 4) effective social behaviours (Vaughn & Hogan, 1990).

## **DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL COMPETENCE**

Social competency is an important component of the social behavior it is acquired through social interaction and cultural integration in different socio-cultural settings. In the early years of life parents are the primary source of social and emotional support for children.

At later years peers begin to play a significant complementary and unique role in promoting child social-emotional development. Increasingly with age, peers rather than parents become preferred companions, providing important sources

of entertainment and support. During the preschool years, social competence involves the ability to separate from parents and engage with peers in shared play activities, particularly fantasy play. As preschool children are just learning to coordinate their social behavior, their interactions are often short and marked by frequent squabbles, and friendships are less stable than at later developmental stages. In addition, physical rough-and-tumble play is common, particularly among boys. In addition, relationships with peers typically involve more give-and-take than relationships with adults, and thus provide an opportunity for the development of social competencies such as cooperation and negotiation.

By grade school, children begin to develop an interest in sports, structured board games, and group games with complex sets of rules. Being able to understand and follow game rules and being able to handle competition in appropriate ways (e.g., being a good sport) become important skills for social competence. Children play primarily in same-sex groups of friends, and expect more stability in their friendships. Loyalty and dependability become important qualities of good friends.

## **FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AS BASIS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The family environment may play a particularly important role in fostering children's social competence, by guiding and modelling socially appropriate behaviour patterns. Children's social competence has also been the target of numerous intervention efforts (see reviews by L'Abate and Milan 1985; and Schneider and Byrne 1985), in the belief that better developed social competence will enable youngsters to cope with and overcome adjustment difficulties.

As Paley, Conger, and Harold (2000) remark, children establish their first social relations with parental figures and the nature of those parent-child relationships and the context in which they are sustained may determine the social skills and social relations the child will develop with others later in life. Consistent with this, Henry et al. (1996) found that adolescents having parents who engage in positive reasoning to solve problems, and who described their families as high in cohesiveness, are more likely to report higher levels of perspective taking when trying to understand another individual's feelings or emotional state. These authors conclude from their findings that the family fosters adolescent empathy development in multiple ways; it not only provides the training ground for empathy skills, but also establishes a precedent for

the use of an empathic response which the adolescent can then draw upon in the course of interactions with peers and other adults such as teachers.

Parental sensitivity, involvement and encouragement along with demands for age- appropriate behaviour in combination with limit setting and monitoring contribute to a good psychosocial, academic, and behavioural adjustment among both children and adolescents. A parent-child relationship based on acceptance facilitates adjustment, whereas a poor relationship, especially if it is marked by distancing, is connected with non-adjusted behaviour and socio-emotional problems, such as lower social competence, loneliness and depression.

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Adolescence is a critical time for forming aspirations for the future, especially with regard to career aspirations (Schulenberg, Goldstein, & Vondracek, 1991; Vondracek & Lerner, 1982). School performance is a key mechanism through which adolescents learn about their talents, abilities, and competencies, which are an important part of developing career aspirations (Gottfredson, 1981; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000).

In our society academic achievement is considered as a key criterion to judge one's total potentialities and capacities. Hence academic achievement occupies a very important place in education as well as in the learning process. Academic achievement is defined by Crow and Crow (1969) as the extent to which a learner is profiting from instructions in a given area of learning i.e., achievement is reflected by the extent to which skill and knowledge has been imparted to him. Academic achievement also denotes the knowledge attained and skill developed in the school subject, usually designated by test scores. Achievement is influenced by personality, motivation, opportunities, education and training.

Academic achievement is directly related to students' growth and development of knowledge in an educational situation where teaching and learning process takes place. Academic achievement is defined as the performance of the students in the subject they study in the school (Pandey, 2008). Academic achievement determines the student's status in the class. It gives children an opportunity to develop their talents, improve their grades and prepare for the future academic challenges.

Adolescents with high academic achievement are considered to achieve their

identity in the society, get good career opportunities, get acceptance from peer, parents and teachers, develop leadership qualities, and enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem. Whereas, academic failure leads to frustration, stress, inferiority complex, rejection from the loved ones, increased number of suicides, discouragement and ultimately to dropping out (Ekstrom et al., 1986, Steinberg, Blinde and Chan, 1984; Gadwa and Griggs, 1985), higher rates of unemployment, welfare dependency, and criminal behavior (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1986; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; National Commission on Children, 1991).

Hence, there is a need to give due attention to the factors which are directly or indirectly influencing the academic achievement. This will depend on a number of factors like, student's interest and attitude towards the subject of study, aptitude, intelligence, achievement motivation, socioeconomic status, locality of institution, sex, physical health etc. (Pandey, 2008) but, there are several other factors like home environment, parental relations, parent's education, occupation, students' self-concept etc. which have a close relationship with academic performance.

## **FAMILY INFLUENCE ON CHILD EDUCATION**

The linkage between family and adolescent academic experiences is part of a larger dynamic process unfolding over time. The life course paradigm views human development as an interplay between individual's developmental trajectories and the trajectories of significant others (Elder et al., 1985). One of the most intuitive examples of this linked life principle is the parent-child relationship. Parents, through the choices and decisions they make for themselves and their children influence how their children grow and develop over time (Furstenberg and Hughes, 1995). This view of the linked lives of parents and children offer unique insights into the implications of parents' influence in adolescents well-being including adolescent's academic experiences.

Of all the important, fateful and determining influences of children, the relationship with his/her parents comes first. This is the very life line through which he/she establishes his relationships for better or worse with the rest of the world.

The influence of parents on occupational and educational attainment has also been a subject of great interest for vocational and

career educators and researchers alike. It has been widely recognized that families play a major role in shaping the educational and career decisions of their members. Parental influence is found to be a major determinant of adolescent development.

## RELATION OF PARENTING STYLES TO ADOLESCENT SCHOOL OUTCOMES

Studies that have considered the effects of the parent-adolescent relationship on academic outcomes, have overwhelmingly conceptualized the quality of the relationship via parenting styles, such as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and indulgent (e.g., Bean, Bush, McKenry, & Wilson, 2003; Dornbusch, Ritter, & Leiderman, 1987).

A plethora of research exists building on the work of Baumrind (1966; e.g., Baumrind, 1991; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Querido et al., 2002; Strage & Brandt, 1999). In general, an authoritative parenting style emphasizing both responsiveness and demandingness appears superior in fostering higher academic performance (Reitman, Rhode, Hupp, & Altobello, 2002). Parenting styles and academic performance have been studied primarily in children and adolescents. In several studies

(e.g., Baumrind, 1991; Baumrind & Black, 1967), Baumrind has reported on the positive associations between authoritative parenting style and academic performance. For example, Baumrind (1991) found that children (ages 4-15 years old) of parents who were characterized as authoritative were the most motivated, the most competent, and the most achievement oriented. In addition, Baumrind and Black (1967) found that authoritative parenting was positively associated with academic performance; and authoritarian and permissive parenting was negatively associated with grades.

Following Baumrind's early work, Dornbusch, Steinberg, and their colleagues conducted a series of studies to explore the influence of parenting styles on adolescent achievement. These studies used data from large-scale surveys of over 6000 adolescents in Wisconsin and California. One of the first studies in this series found that parents who displayed higher levels of authoritative parenting by providing their children with warmth, autonomy, and high maturity demands had children with higher achievement levels (Steinberg et al., 1989). In another study, Steinberg et al. (1992) found that authoritative parenting was related to adolescent grade point average (GPA) and school engagement.

## Parental Goals, Values, and Aspirations

A primary way parents socialize their children is by communicating the goals they want their children to attain, the aspirations they want their children to fulfill, and the values they want their children to internalize. Parental goals and aspirations are best described as internal representations of desired states or outcomes that parents hold for their children. These, in turn, organize and direct parents' behaviors toward their children (see Austin and Vancouver, 1996; Wentzel, 1998). Parental values toward education represent the importance parents place on their children's educational achievement (see Bandura, 1989; Eccles and Wigfield, 1995; Ford, 1992). With respect to school achievement, parents might set certain goals and hold certain aspirations for their children, such as doing well in math class, graduating high school, and attending college. Similarly, parents might communicate to their children their values with respect to school (i.e., importance of education), intending for their children to adopt these values and beliefs.

Researchers have found that parental aspirations, goals, and values are related to their children's setting of academic goals, persistence in school, course enrollment, intellectual accomplishments, and

attendance of college. Researchers have also found that parents' values towards education relate to their children's educational attainment, persistence, and performance.

Several studies have examined the extent to which parental aspirations, goals, and values for their children's educational attainment vary by parents' ethnicity. Researchers have found that African American and Hispanic parents place a high value on education, are concerned with educational issues, and have educational aspirations for their children that equal those of nonminority parents. Despite these findings, recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Census (2004) indicates that a smaller percentage of African Americans and Hispanics attain a college degree than Caucasians. Furthermore, researchers have found that Hispanics and African Americans have higher drop-out rates from high school and lower levels of educational attainment than Caucasian students.

## CONCLUSION

Social competence was found to be significantly positively correlated with perceived family environment-relationship and personal growth dimensions in girls and boys. Social competence obtained significant positive correlation with

rejection vs acceptance and utopian expectation vs realism mode of mothers' parenting. But it obtained significant negative correlation with neglect vs indulgence and lenient standard vs moralism dimensions in girls. Among boys significant positive correlated was attained carelessness vs protection and faulty role expectation vs realistic role expectation with social competence. Also significant negative correlation was obtained with lenient standard vs moralism dimension of mothers' parenting. Mother parenting mode rejection vs acceptance individually contributed 70%; rejection vs acceptance and lenient standard vs moralism combined accounted for 75% of variance in social competence. Above two mentioned and freedom vs discipline significantly contributed 77% of variance, with addition of utopian expectation vs realism variance raised to 79%. All previously mentioned dimensions plus carelessness vs protection collectively contributed 80% of variance in social competence among girls.

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