

Type of Parenting as a Moderator of Stress and Youth Problems in Adolescents

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine: (a) the effect of single parenting on the stress level and problems of adolescent students and (b) the relationship between stress and problems of adolescent students. A sample of 120 adolescents was taken by following multistage random sampling. Data was collected using the Youth Problem Inventory made by Dr M Verma and the Student Stress Scale by Dr Zaki Akhtar. Analysis has been done using statistical techniques like mean, t-test, correlation, regression, and ANOVA. The results found that the stress level in dual parenting adolescent students was significantly high compared to single parenting adolescent students. However, an insignificant difference was observed in the level of problems for both categories of adolescents. Further, family problems, social problems, personal problems, and oversensitivity have shown a moderate positive correlation with stress levels, while school or college problems have shown a small positive correlation with stress levels. Further, single parenting has been found to have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between family problems and the stress level of adolescent students. The study highlights the importance of spreading awareness among teachers, parents, and society about the problems of single parenting children and counselling single parents and their children.

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INTRODUCTION

Family is considered as the basic element of society. It is a primary social group consisting of parents and their offspring that works as a social institution for nurturing primary schooling and early socialisation of their children. A family is a group of people who live together and share common histories, emotions, and intimacy. Parents make their children learn basic life skills and provide a good home environment for their better growth and development. They also shape the attitude and behaviour of children. Zahedani et al. (2016) mentioned that parents play an important role in identifying their children's talents. They transmit values to their children through instructions, selective reinforcement, and their behaviour. Bonci (n.d.) reported that parental involvement had influenced the student's academic success positively. Other than parental involvement, home and family environment strongly impact students' educational achievement. Parental control was closely found to be responsible for children's anxiety (McLeod, Wood, and Weisz, 2007) and they may develop psycho-social problems if they face more complex problems during childhood (Christensen and Lynge, 2003). Hence, a close and healthy association between parents and children is vital.

Parenting style includes all those activities and practices that parents

use to rear their child to adjust to his environment and society and make their child a better part of that society. Parental avoidance has a negative impact on emotional intelligence (Bhatia, 2012).

Noor and Rosli (n.d.) asserted that authoritative parenting was the most frequent type of parenting style among Muslim fathers. In contrast, authoritarian parenting was the more common type of parenting style among mothers. Mensah and Kuranichie (2013) found that parenting style influences the social development of students. They also revealed that students had shown pro-social behaviour in the case of authoritative parenting, while authoritarian parenting resulted in anti-social behaviour. Family structure is defined by the roles, instructions, authority and hierarchies.

Family is a social institution and the structure of a family is affected by the separation or death of parents (Usakli, 2013). Generally, two individuals stay together and get married to provide proper care and stability to their offspring. Sometimes this normal family structure gets distorted because of some reasons listed below—

- (i) Marital Separation: It is a state when married partners separate from each other out of their will or because of a court order, i.e., legal separation.
- (ii) Divorce: It is the termination or cancellation of marriage between

a couple as per the rules of a particular country or state due to different reasons. Divorce has long-term consequences on children, parents, and society (Anderson, 2014).

- (iii) Out of wedlock pregnancy: It is a state when a female is not married and becomes pregnant.
- (iv) Death: Death of one parent, either mother or father, is also a reason through which a normally structured family becomes distorted.
- (v) Single parent adoption: It is a situation in which a single parent, either male or female, adopts a child. That single parent can be divorced, unmarried or single for any other reason.

So, due to these reasons, if one of the parents gets separated from the family, then all the responsibilities of the child/children is on the single parent. A single parent has to perform the role of both parents. During or after the separation of parents, a child may suffer from different kinds of problems regardless of the reason for the separation of their parents. Single parenting may impose a lot of negative impacts on single parenting children. These negative impacts affect the child according to the age and gender of that single parenting child. They face problems like psychological problems, low self esteem, adjustment problems, insecurity, delinquency, social problems, the feeling of rejection, etc.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Single parenting may negatively influence academic performance (Abudu and Fuscini, 2013). Compas and Williams (1990) compared stress, coping and adjustment levels in single and dual parenting families and observed no differences. Salami and Alawode highlighted the importance of counselling single parents and their children. Savage (1980) observed that many elementary school children (about 40 per cent of those who come from single parent families) were found to have low achievement. According to Katz, Dunham, and Zimmerman (1997), the social control theory emphasises that people may start acting in deviant ways because of the thrill that people experience. When social control becomes ineffective in any situation, such as in a single parent home, the child starts acting in deviant behaviour. According to a study conducted by Krein and Beller (1988), the damaging effect of living with a single parent increase with the duration of time spent in such a family. This effect was more profound for preschool children and boys. So, from the above discussion, it is clear that single parenting creates problems for children growing up in society.

Generally, stress is defined as a kind of psychological and physiological pressure that someone feels during his life due to lack of balance between expectations and reality. Stress can be positive,

which is necessary for a person to get motivated and achieve or gain something and bring out the best in him. However, stress can have a negative impact and may result in threatening his well-being and make him face social, physical, emotional, and organisational problems. The study conducted by Abdulghani et al. (2011) reflected that physical problems are associated with high stress levels among students. Stress affects the personality, physical strength and general health of the human beings. It may be because of poor civic facilities, unwanted changes in life, frustration, racial, caste and religious conflicts, technological changes and career changes. Stress can lead to various problems like a physical illness and emotional illness that arise due to mishandling of critical changes in somebody's life. Stress makes children anxious, emotionally weak, depressed, lonely, and judgemental and fills their mind with negative thoughts. Arun and Chavan (2009) revealed that students who received less support from family and had academic problems had more suicidal ideations and perceived their lives as burdens. Stress may lead to maladaptive behaviour among students (Huli, 2014). So, there is a close relationship between family environment and stress level. Parents and school training are significant stress factors (Kumari, Vidyapith, and Bansal, n.d.).

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Adolescents have a lot of physical, mental, and intellectual potential, but they also face a lot of problems and challenges at this age. They may experience problems related to physical development, mental development, and emotional development. Further, this problem gets multiplied in the case of adolescents. All these issues and problems make adolescence a period of stress and storm. In the case of single parenting families, adolescents become more vulnerable to such problems. After reviewing related literature and looking at the importance of family in influencing one's life, the investigators decided to conduct a study on the effect of single parenting on the stress level of adolescent students and other related problems.

The present research study focuses on understanding stress level, and youth problems among adolescents in relation to the type of parenting type and gender. Further, correlation and moderation analyses were performed to understand the relationship between stress and the problems of youth. ANOVA and multiple analyses were used to study the effect of parenting type on the stress level and other related problems.

METHOD

Research Design and Sample

In this study, a detailed field survey was conducted on 120 adolescent

students (16–18 years old) in the Sonapat district of Haryana. By adopting a multistage random sampling method, 60 adolescent students were taken from single parenting families while 60 were taken from dual-parenting families.

Research Instruments and Procedures

In the present research, stress and related problems were considered dependent variables, while parenting type and gender were considered independent variables. Data collection was performed using the Youth Problem Inventory prepared by Dr. Verma and the Student Stress Scale prepared by Dr. Zaki Akhtar. The Youth Problem Inventory is comprised of 80 statements based on family problems (Area-A), school/college problems (Area-B), social problems (Area-C), personal problems, and oversensitivity (Area-D). Student

Stress Scale is comprised of 51 items based on major types of stress prevalent in adolescents.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Based on the results shown in Table 1, it can be observed that the mean level of stress was significantly less in single parenting adolescent students (150.0) than in dual parenting adolescent students (162.3). Dual parenting adolescents were more stressed. This finding is quite different from the expected results. Moreover, it was observed that both groups are experiencing low to moderate levels of stress. Further, boys and girls did not differ in their level of stress except in the case of single parenting adolescents, where boys were found to have significantly high-stress levels.

In reference to the problems of adolescent students, Table 2 results showed no significant difference in

Table 1: Comparison of Level of Stress (N=120)

Sr. No.	Variables	Type of Students	No. of Students	Mean	t-value	Result (0.05)
1.	Level of Stress	Single Parenting Adolescent Girls	30	140.7	3.68	Significant
		Single Parenting Adolescent Boys	30	159.4		
2.	Level of Stress	Dual Parenting Adolescent Girls	30	159.2	1.05	Not significant
		Dual Parenting Adolescent Boys	30	165.4		
3.	Level of Stress	Single Parenting Adolescent Girls	30	140.7	3.50	Significant
		Dual Parenting Adolescent Girls	30	159.2		

4.	Level of Stress	Single Parenting Adolescent Boys	30	159.4	1.05	Not Significant
		Dual Parenting Adolescent Boys	30	165.4		
5.	Level of Stress	Single Parenting Adolescent Students	60	150.0	3.00	Significant
		Dual Parenting Adolescent Students	60	162.3		

the level of problems across gender and groups. Further, boys and girls were found to experience the same type of problems.

Correlation analysis indicated that the correlation coefficients between areas A, C, D, youth

problems and stress scores were significant and positive at 0.05 level of significance. It means family problems, social problems, personal problems, and oversensitivity lead to an increase in stress level among adolescents. However, the correlation

Table 2: Comparison of Level of Problems (N=120)

S. No.	Variables	Type of Students	No. of Students	Mean	t-value	Result (0.05)
1.	Level of Problem	Single Parenting Adolescent Girls	30	41.3	1.87	Not significant
		Single Parenting Adolescent Boys	30	50.4		
2.	Level of Problem	Dual Parenting Adolescent Girls	30	46.9	0.45	Not significant
		Dual Parenting Adolescent Boys	30	44.5		
3.	Level of Problem	Single Parenting Adolescent Girls	60	41.3	0.98	Not significant
		Dual Parenting Adolescent Girls	60	46.9		
4.	Level of Problem	Single Parenting Adolescent Boys	60	50.4	1.34	Not significant
		Dual Parenting Adolescent Boys	60	44.5		
5.	Level of Problem	Single Parenting Adolescent Students	60	45.85	0.03	Not significant
		Dual Parenting Adolescent Students	60	45.71		

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient Between Stress Level and Youth Problems

Correlation Coefficient	Area A (Family Problems)	Area B (School / College Problems)	Area C (Social Problems)	Area D (Personal Problems and Over Sensitivity)	Youth Problem
Stress Score	0.29**	0.10	0.25**	0.25**	0.28**
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

coefficient of area B and stress level was 0.10 (insignificant), which means that school/college problems of the students had a small positive correlation with stress level, which did not reach statistical significance.

Multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the contribution of parenting type and youth problems to the stress level. The model summary given in Table 4, indicated that the value of the adjusted R square came out to be 0.157, indicating that this regression model explains 15.7 per cent of the variance in the stress scores of adolescents. Further, the ANOVA

summary in Table 5 showed that the F value (5.42) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it can be inferred that this multiple regression model is significant.

The value of beta under standardised coefficient indicated that parenting type and family problems significantly contribute to the stress level among adolescents. Hence, out of different problems faced by the adolescents, only family problems were found to have a predictor effect on the stress level of adolescents.

After multiple regression, moderation analysis was carried out

Table 4: Regression Analysis Summary on Correlates of Stress Level Among Adolescents

Regression Analysis	Analysis of Variance					
R2 .192	Source	SS	Df	Ms	F	Sig.
R2.192	Regression	12184.607	5	2436.92	5.420	0.000*
Adjusted R2.157	Residual	51257.184	114	449.624		
SE 21.20	Total	63441.792	119			
a. Dependent Variable: Stress level						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Parenting Type, Area A, Area B, Area D, Area C						

Table 5: Coefficient Table of Stress Level, Youth Problems and Parenting Type

Variable Description	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	B	SE	Beta	T	Significance
(Constant)	121.867	7.798		15.628	0.000
Parenting Type	11.303	3.905	0.246	2.895	0.005
Area A	0.690	0.308	0.232	2.240	0.027
Area B	0.724	0.466	0.184	-1.555	0.123
Area C	1.636	1.308	0.144	1.250	0.214
Area D	0.452	0.340	0.157	1.329	0.186

Table 6: Model Summary for Moderation Analysis

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.4329	0.1874	444.4332	8.99159	3.000	116.0000	0.0000

Table 7: Coefficient Table

Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
Constant	96.5382	14.8384	6.5060	0.0000	67.1488	125.9276
Area A	2.4100	0.7882	3.0577	0.0028	0.8489	3.9712
Parenting Type	29.7029	9.3763	3.1679	0.0020	11.1320	48.2738
Interaction	-1.0198	0.4971	-2.0516	0.0425	-2.0044	0.0353
Interaction=Area A*Parenting Type						

Table 8: Conditional Effect of the Family Problems on the Values of Moderator

Parenting type	Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Single parenting	1.3902	0.3531	3.9367	0.0001	0.6908	2.0897
Dual parenting	0.3704 0.3498	1.0587	0.2919	0.3225	1.0633	

to understand the role of parenting type as a mediator between family problems and stress level by using PROCESS macros in SPSS given by Andrew F. Hayes. The mediation model summary given in Table 6 indicated that parenting type significantly moderates ($F = 8.92$, $p = 0.00$) the relationship between family problems and stress. The moderation process showed that the effect of the moderator (parenting type), controlling for family problems, was significant, $b = 29.7029$, $t = 3.16$, $p = 0.0020$. Analyses revealed that controlling for the moderator, family problems was also a significant predictor of students' stress, $b = 2.41$, $t = 3.05$, $p = 0.0028$. The interaction term between parenting type and family problems ($b = -1.019$, $t = -2.05$, $p = 0.042$) was statistically significant, and R square change (R^2 change = 0.0295, $F = 4.208$, $p = 0.042$) was also found significant, which suggested that moderation was significant. Conditional analysis revealed that only single parenting type acted as a significant mediator ($b = -1.39$, $t = -3.93$, $p = 0.0001$); however, the effect of the mediator became insignificant for dual parenting type ($b = 0.3704$, $t = -1.0587$, $p = 0.2919$).

DISCUSSION

The stress level was high among dual parenting adolescents as compared to single parenting adolescents. Although, this finding of the study could not be compared due to

the lack of literature in this area. However, Cicchetti et al. (1993) found adaptive outcomes and resilience in the case of maltreated children. This suggests that the rough phase of life faced by single parenting adolescents has made them more resilient and adaptive, so they now experience lesser stress. The problems faced were higher among single parenting adolescents than that dual parenting adolescents. However, the difference in the problems faced was statistically insignificant. These results are consistent with Compas and William (1990) who found no difference between children in single and dual parent families in terms of emotional/behavioural problems and stressful events.

Adolescents' stress is significantly correlated with family problems, social problems, and personal problems. However, school/college related problems do not create stress for them. Out of four types of problems adolescents face, family related problems significantly predicted their stress. The results of moderator analysis revealed the significant moderating role of single parenting on the relationship between family problems and stress level among adolescents. It means family problems can lead to more stress when adolescents belong to single parent families. Aminian, Sabunchi, Madadi, Sharifi, and Amini, (2015) found that mental health and educational attainment is adversely affected in the absence of any parent. Hence,

the family can act as a buffer against problems or contribute to their stress if it does not work well. It suggests that single parenting influences stress among adolescents. This may be due to lack of a support system and other basic amenities required to live a happy life. Further, Abudu and Fuscini (2013) supported the findings, wherein they recommended that single parent children should be given more attention to enable them to cope and adjust to an academic environment.

CONCLUSIONS

In this research, the effect of parenting type on stress and other related problems of adolescent students was studied. Results suggest that problems of adolescent students related to family, society, school or college, personal and oversensitivity may affect their stress level. According to the results, family problems, school or college problems, social problems, personal problems, and over-sensitivity are positively correlated with stress levels. This implies that stress level is associated

with these problems and will increase with the increase in problems. The study also demonstrated the role of single parenting in the relationship between family problems and stress levels. It means that in the case of single parenting, family problems cause stress.

The study has implications for teachers and parents as they can prepare remedial plans especially to reduce stress levels, as most adolescents are experiencing low to moderate levels of stress. Results also highlight the importance of spreading awareness among teachers, parents, and society about the problems of single parenting children and counselling single parents and their children. Programmes and policies may be framed to encourage single parents to stay involved with their children. Further, the curriculum may include specific strategies to reduce stress among adolescents and train them in problem-solving abilities. Hence, in many ways present study is beneficial to teachers, teacher educators, administrators, and policymakers.

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