

Parental Bonding as an Influencing Factor of Body Image Perception among School Going Adolescent Girls

¹Priyanka Pathak, ²Dr. Vallari Kukreti, ³Dr. P. D. Bhatt

1. Faculty, Department of Psychology, Doon University Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, S.D.M. Govt. P.G. College, Doiwala, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
3. Professor, Department of Psychology, S.S.J. University, Almora, Uttarakhand.

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a delicate psycho-physiological developmental stage. The adolescent attempts to adjust with the bodily changes as well as struggles for firstly, understanding the social dynamics and secondly, desiring acceptance, especially from the peers. In this stage, parenting becomes essentially a complex process. Hence, the present exploratory study was conducted to explore the body image perceptions of adolescent girls reporting parental overprotection and care. Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) was administered and a structured interview on body image perception was taken of randomly selected 133 (16-18 yrs.) school going adolescent girls from five schools of Nagar Palika Area, Didihat, Pithoragarh District, Uttarakhand. Results revealed that girls who reported more overprotection by their parents show more body image dissatisfaction in comparison to girls who reported more parental care. Parental overprotection may be considered as a risk factor for body image dissatisfaction in adolescent girls. Further studies with more refined research design are required in the present arena of research.

Keywords: *Parental care, Parental overprotection, adolescent girls & body image.*

Introduction

Parenting exerts enormous influence over every individual's life. Parents are ground influencer of one's life. In each and every developmental stage parents has specific task and goals towards their child especially when individual move to adolescent, because adolescent concern with major physical changes and full of emotional and physical transformation. Once individual enter in adolescent, they understand that the body is a strong instrument in social relation (Nanu et al., 2014) and face dynamic perceptions of body image (Singh et al., 2015). Studies suggest particularly teen-age girls are the most vulnerable group who engage in having a thin body shape (Madhavi et al., 2009).

In such situation, parental nurturance is important throughout the adolescent problem behaviour (Windle et al., 2010) because family environment and parent weight-related talks found important when it comes to body image (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2010). Girls who frequently participated in appearance related conversation were rather dissatisfied with appearance (Curtis et al., 2014). Now a day's society with increasing obesity about body image, parents are concern with their children's weight and often verbalize this concern by giving weight message about weight control, dieting & the relevance of being thin (Nanu et al., 2014). Variations in parenting styles & parent child relationships qualities are long-standing research topic in development and family psychology (Bi et al., 2018). There are abundant of researches as done on parenting style and parent-child relationship, still have paucity of information

regarding various dimensions of PBI and their effect on body image perception of school going adolescent girls in Indian context especially in hilly regions.

Hence, with this available literature the present study focuses on following objectives:

- (1). To explore influence of parental care on body image perception in school going adolescent girls.
- (2). To explore influence of parental overprotection on body image perception in school going adolescent girls.

Methodology

Sample

An exploratory study was carried out on school going adolescent girls of Nagar Palika Didihat, District Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand. From population of 200 schools going adolescent girl's sample of 133 girls (age range 16-18 years) was randomly selected from 5 different school of Nagar Palika Didihat. Individual suffering with any physical and mental illness were excluded from sample. Incomplete questionnaires were not included in the study.

The subject was informed about the present study purposes of the present study. Subjects were asked to fill the questionnaire after taking their consent. A structured interview was organised to ask the subject questions regarding body image dissatisfaction.

Tools for Data Collection

1) Personal Data Schedule (PDS): PDS was created by the researcher to ask demographic details and psycho physiological status of the subject.

2) Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI): The parental bonding instrument is a self-report questionnaire including 25 items, each describing a parental attitude toward the subject. There are 12 "care" items reflecting the dimensions of care/involvement versus indifference/intrusion versus encouragement of independence. And 13 are "overprotection" item. Participants were asked to rate each parent on a 4-point liker scale, in which 0 is very like, 1 is moderately like, 2 is moderately unlike & 3 is very unlike the parent in question. PBI possessed good internal consistency and re-test reliability. The PBI has been shown to have satisfactory constructed and convergent validity (Parker, et al., 1979).

Results

In the present study, from all 133-school going adolescent girls, 77 girls reported parental overprotection and 56 girls reported parental care. Frequencies of body image perception are shown in Table.

Table: Frequencies of positive responses on four questions related to body image of school going adolescent girls:

Perceived Parenting	Do you compare your body size with others?	Do you compare your body size with some famous actress or model?	Are you dissatisfied with your appearance?	In dreams do you see you are fat?
1. More Parental Overprotection	50 (64.93%)	18 (23.37%)	24 (31.16%)	6 (7.79%)
2. More Parental Care	31 (55.35%)	12 (21.42%)	7 (12.5%)	8 (14.28%)

On one hand, from all 133 adolescent girls 57% girls are more overprotected by their parents and their respond on all four dimensions of body image dissatisfaction as, in comparing body size with others 64.93% girls reported positively, in comparing body size with famous actress or model 23.37% girls reported positively, 31.16% girls are dissatisfied with their appearance and in dreams only 7.79% girls see they are fat.

On the other hand, 42.10% girls reported more parental care and their responses on all four body image dissatisfaction items are as, 55.35% girls compare their body size with others, 21.42% girls compare their body size with famous actress or model, 12.5% girls are dissatisfied with their appearance and in dreams 14.28% girls see they are fat.

From all four dimensions of body image dissatisfaction girls reported highest frequency on comparing body size with other in both groups respectively (girls whoever more overprotected and whoever reported more parental care). Overprotected girls are more likely towards comparing body size with others, comparing body size with famous model and dissatisfied with appearance, they seem to be psychologically more concern about their body image. While on fourth dimension (i.e., in dreams do you see you are fat) girls whoever reported more parental care are more frequent, they are involve in body image dissatisfaction but are not more concern about their body image.

Discussion

Results from the present study revealed that parental overprotection may lead to body image dissatisfaction. Previously available literature suggests that particularly parents often deliver appearance-related message that are intended to be encouraging but in fact can harm the body esteem of an adolescent (Helfert et al., 2011). More positive memories of parental care are associated with lower levels body dissatisfaction (Hardit et al., 2012) while family who has more focus towards appearance and attractiveness can cause their daughters to become concerned about their body image (Kluck, 2010). On one hand adolescent dissatisfied with their appearance are associated with less nurturing parenting (Bearman et al., 2006). On the other hand, adolescent whoever satisfied with their body their parents are more supportive and nurturing (Crespo et al., 2010).

Previous literature indicates that parental criticism about their own children's weight and physical limitations is a crucial factor in developing body image dissatisfaction (Aliyev et al., 2014). Insecure and anxious attachment or mothers care & fathers care seem to confer greater vulnerability for the negative evaluation of one's own body (Amianto et al., 2017). Negative communication regarding body image from family members including critical comments, teasing and encouragement to diet, have been associated with development of body image dissatisfaction (6). It has been reported

previously parents, particularly mothers who go on diets & are concerned about their weight tend to encourage their adolescent daughters to be thinner and promoting body image dissatisfaction among them (McCabe et al., 2005).

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate parental overprotection may act as a risk factor in adolescent's body image perception whereas parental care affects less likely body image perception of adolescent girls. Parental influence on body image has received less attention previously. As a result, in the present arena of research available literature is not sufficient in Indian cultural context. The lack of comprehensive research highlights a clear gap in the available literature and emphasizes the need for more refined study with large sample size.

References

- Aliyev, B. & Turkmen, A. (2014). Parent, peer and media effect on the perception of body image in preadolescent girls and boys. *Universal J of psychology*, 2(7), pp.224-230, doi: 10.13189/ujp.2014.020703.
- Amianto, F., Martini, M., Spalatro, A., Abbate, DG. & Fassino, S. (2017). Body image development within the family: Attachment dynamics & parental attitudes in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. *Acta psychopathol*, 3(4:50), pp.1-6, doi: 10.4172/2469-6676.100122.
- Bearman, S. K., Martinez, E. & Stice, E. (2006). The skinny on body dissatisfaction: A longitudinal study of adolescent girls and boys. *J Youth Adolescence*, 35(2), pp.217-229.
- Bi, X., Yang, Y., Li, H., Wang, M., Zhang, W. & Deater-Deckard, K. (2018). Parenting styles and parent-adolescent relationships: The mediating roles of behavioral autonomy & Parental authority. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9(2187), 1-13, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02187.
- Crespo, C. Kielpikowski, M., Jose, PE. & Pryor, J. (2010). Relationship between family connectedness and body satisfaction: A longitudinal study of adolescent girls and boys. *J of Youth & Adolescence*, 39(12), pp.1392-1401.
- Curtis, C, & Loomans, C. (2014). Friends, family & their influence on body image dissatisfaction. *Women's Studies J*, 28(2), pp.39-56.
- Hardit, S. K. & Hannum, J. W. (2012). Attachment, the tripartite influence model, and development of body dissatisfaction. *Body Image*, 9, pp.469-475.
- Helfert, S. & Warschburger, P. (2011). A prospective study on the impact of peer & parental pressure on body dissatisfaction in adolescent girls & boys. *Body Image*, 8, pp.101-109, doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2011.01.004.
- Kluck, A. S. (2010). Family influence on disordered eating: The role of body image dissatisfaction. *Body Image*, 7, pp.8-14.
- Madhavi, A. V. P., Nirmalie, M. I., Rajapaksa, R. C. W., Chandralatha, M. M. A. R., Kumari, W. M. S. U. & Chandana, L. (2009). Body image perception & dietary patterns among teenage girls.

- McCabe, M. P. & Riccardelli, L. A. (2005). A prospective study of pressure from parents, peers & the media on extreme weight change behaviours among adolescent boys and girls. *Behaviour Research & Therapy*, 43, pp.653-668, doi: 10.1016/j.brat.2004.05.004.
- Nanu, C., Taut, D. & Baban, A. (2004). Why adolescents are not happy with their body image? *J of Gender & Feminist Studies*, 2, pp.1-20.
- Neumark-Sztainer, D., Bauer, KW., Friend, S., Hannan, PJ., Story, M. & Berge, JM. (2010). Family weight talk & dieting: How much do they matter for body dissatisfaction & disordered eating behaviours in adolescent girls? *J of Adolescent Health*, 47, pp.270-276, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2010.02.001>.
- Parker, G., Tupling, H. & Brown, L.B. (1979). Parental Bonding Instrument. pp.1-2.
- Singh, MM., Ashok, L., Binu, V. S., Parsekar, SS. & Bhumika, T. V. (2015). Adolescents & body image: A cross sectional study. *Indian J Pediatr*, doi: 10.1007/s12098-015-1768-5.
- Windle, M., Brener, N., Cuccaro, P., Dittus, P., Kanouse, DE., Murray, N.,...Schuster, MA. (2010). Parenting predictors of early adolescents health behaviours: Simultaneous group comparisons across sex and ethnic groups. *J. Youth Adolescence*, 39, pp.594-606, doi: 10.1007/s10964-009-9414-z.