

Role Of Fathers' Expressed Emotions In Psychopathology And Social-Emotional Competence In Adolescents

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Abstract

Background: To study the role of fathers' expressed emotions in psychopathology and social-emotional competence in adolescents.

Methods: Through observational research design a study was conducted in the district of Gujrat Pakistan from July 2020 to March 2021. The inclusion criteria of the study were to include adolescents whose age range was 12 to 19 and the only fathers included whose children were adolescents. So, the purposive sampling technique was used, and five hundred adolescents were selected from different colleges and schools, and five hundred fathers of the same adolescents were approached from the community and their working places. For this purpose, Parental Expressed Emotions Scale ¹ was used to assess the psychopathology (Social anxiety) and social-emotional competence in adolescents, Social Anxiety Scale,² and Social Emotional-Competence Scale ³ were used and data were analyzed by using SPSS-21.

Results: A total of 500 adolescents were selected for the study whose age range was from 12-19 years ⁴ and a mean age of 16 years. 229 (46%) were boys and 271 (54%) were girls. Simple linear regression was used to see the effects of father-expressed emotions in psychopathology and social-emotional competence in adolescents. Results showed significant differences in negative and positive expressed emotions of fathers. Fathers' expressed emotions of critical comments caused 56% and hostility 64% predictor of social anxiety in adolescents. On the other hand, the father's emotional - involvement caused 11% warmth 37% positive remarks 17% increase in the social-emotional competence of adolescents.

Conclusion: Father-expressed emotions were found to be a significant predictor of social anxiety and social-emotional competence in adolescents.

Keywords: Positive expressed emotions, Negative expressed emotions, psychopathology, Adolescents, social anxiety, social-emotional competence.

Introduction

The father's parenting acts as an important influencing part in the mental and physical health of the children. The children of involved fathers mostly have good qualities of career achievement, higher educational fulfillment, and mental well-being.⁵ Regardless of it, that father is known as an authoritative figure in many societies. Yet research suggested that there is a positive connection between father's involvement and adolescent positive growth⁶ moreover, fathers are not only closely connected to their children, but the quality of the relationship between the father and child is an important factor for better growth of the children. Controversy, if the child is repetitively exposed to their father's annoyance might become a resentful, angry individual, and exhibit generally disturbing and disruptive behavior in a social environment.⁷

Expressed emotions are the ways of showing emotions in positive or negative manners which are expressed as an attitude of high criticism, hostility, emotional over-involvement, warmth, and positive remarks of the caregivers.⁸ The high emotional expression alters family interaction and relationships because these patterns in families lead to childhood mental illness. Despite all parental efforts of rearing their children, parental expressed emotions are one basic cause of psychopathology in adolescents. In father expressed emotions found significant risk factors of psychopathology in children and adolescents.⁹

In all forms of anxiety, social anxiety is the most disabling psychiatric condition, which is characterized by fear of negative evaluation by others.¹⁰ Research on social anxiety clearly identified that interpersonal relationships play an important foundation for the symptoms of social anxiety. Further studies reported that negative parenting such as rejection and hostile parenting can cause social anxiety in adolescents; even increase social anxiety symptoms in adolescents.¹¹ On the other side, fathers' positive expression of emotions enhances their young child's abilities and social skills, managing their own emotions and establishing positive relationships. Several researchers investigated social-emotional competence and parents' expression of emotions, which not only affect the children's experience but also help to understand others' emotions and expresses these emotions according to their own culture and situation.¹² The father's emotions of affection not only contribute to making a

positive and authentic relationship but generally affect the whole behavioral pattern of the children. Much of researchers reported that negative parental behaviors like hostility and criticism are closely linked to more mental health issues in children.¹³ Fathers negatively expressed emotions, as critical comments and hostility were found significant predictors of social anxiety in adolescents, and on the other side positively expressed emotions like warmth, positive remarks, and emotional-over involvement were found positively linked with social-emotional competence of adolescents.¹⁴ Previous literature provides evidence that certain warmth and emotional over-involvement of the father is a necessary component for children's growth, especially in early and middle childhood periods, because in this critical time, there are significant demands for parental self-sacrificing, warmth, and emotional over-involvement for the enhancement of adolescents' social-emotional competence.¹⁵

Materials and Methods

The observational research design was used, and the study was conducted in different cities of the District Gujrat, Pakistan from July 2020 to March 2021, after approval from the Advanced Studies and Research Board (ASRB), University of Gujrat, Pakistan. The methods and materials included in the current study have been reviewed, permitted, and endorsed by the Board. Four important ethics of individual human rights; self-esteem, skill, responsibility, and integrity are addressed in a study by using informed consent, selection of subjects, risk-benefit analysis, and privacy.¹⁵ The target population was fathers and their adolescents whose age range was 12-19 years with a mean age of 16 years. A sample of 500 fathers and 500 of their adolescents were recruited by the rule of thumb as 6 to 10 observations (participants) on single questions ($60 \times 8 = 480$) from the community and educational institutes by using a purposive sampling strategy,¹⁶ After getting the educational institutions list from the District Education Office Gujrat, 12 educational institutions (8 schools and 4 colleges) were randomly selected. Adolescents approached with permission of the authorities and teachers of 7th to 12th-grade students and securitized only those adolescents whose parents gave consent to participate in the study. The adolescents have been clearly instructed about instruments and response choices

instructions. The social anxiety scale and social-emotional competence scale were applied to adolescents. Researchers selected only the same fathers of the adolescents and excluded all fathers who were single or divorced and suffered any mental and physical disability. They were approached at their work and convenient place. For measuring the role of father-expressed emotions parental expressed emotions scale was administered to fathers. They were instructed to read the items cautiously while responding. It was informed to the participants that participation will be voluntary, confidentiality was assured, and ethical considerations were maintained by the researchers. Data were analyzed by using the

SPSS-21 version by applying frequencies and regression analysis.

Results

To assess the mean median standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness of father-expressed emotions, psychopathology and social-emotional competence of adolescent’s normality analysis was conducted (Table-1) which shows that father-expressed emotions (negative emotions) increase of 47% social anxiety and 75% (positive expressed emotions) increase social-emotional competence in adolescents.

Table-1 Normality analysis of father-expressed emotions (critical comments, hostility, emotional over-involvement, positive remarks, and warmth) social anxiety, and social-emotional competence in adolescents (N=1000)

	CRFT	HSFT	EMFT	PSFT	WARFT	SANXT	SECT
Mean	13.70	28.49	24.79	21.32	26.99	47.92	75.66
Median	14.00	30.00	25.00	20.00	25.00	50.00	70.00
Std. Deviation	1.376	6.906	6.584	6.994	9.344	13.124	24.010
Variance	1.894	47.689	43.350	48.915	87.307	172.237	576.498
Skewness	-1.209	-.545	-.073	.201	.051	-.425	.958
Std. Error of Skewness	.109	.109	.109	.109	.109	.109	.109
Kurtosis	1.482	-1.014	-1.207	-1.727	-1.456	-.577	-.081
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.218	.218	.218	.218	.218	.218	.218

*CRFT = (Critical comments father total score), HSFT = (Hostility father total), PSFT = (Positive remarks of father total), WARFT = (Warmth father total), SANXT = (Social anxiety total), SECT = (Social-emotional competence total score)

Table-2 Demographic characteristics of adolescents (N=1000)

Variables	Girls	Boys
Total (n)	271	229
Age		
9-12 Years	60	51
13-15 Years	132	115
16-19 Years	79	63
Institution		
School	82	60
College	175	157
Others	14	12

Social anxiety in adolescents was also found to be strongly associated with father-expressed emotions (Table-3). Regression analysis explored those critical comments and hostility increased by 56% and 64% social anxiety while emotional over-involvement, positive remarks, and warmth had negative effects on social anxiety. To assess the demographic characteristics of adolescents, descriptive statistics were applied which showed variances in variables (Table-2) 46% of boys and 54% of girls (schools & colleges) identified with social anxiety due to fathers’ negative expressions of emotions.

Table-3 Regression analysis of fathers’ expressed emotions (IVs=critical comments, hostility, emotional-over involvement, positive remarks, and warmth) and adolescents’ social anxiety (N=1000)

Variables	R	R ²	Δ R ²	F	P
Critical comments	0.753	0.56	0.566	652.24	0.00
Hostility	0.8	0.64	0.64	887.217	0.00
Emotional over-involvement	-0.377	0.142	0.14	82.489	0.00
Positive remarks	-0.462	0.214	0.212	135.484	0.00
Warmth	-0.677	0.458	0.457	421.641	0.00

According to the results of fathers negatively expressed emotions of critical comments and hostility decreased the 57% and 56% variance in the social-emotional competence in adolescents while other positive emotions significantly increased by 11%, 16%, and 37% respectively in social-emotional competence (Table-4)

Table-4 Regression analysis of fathers’ expressed emotions and adolescent’s social-emotional competence (N=1000)

Variables	R	R ²	Δ R ²	F	P
Critical comments	-0.759	0.577	0.576	678.781	0.00
Hostility	-0.749	0.560	0.560	634.964	0.00
Emotional over-involvement	0.335	0.112	0.111	63.023	0.00
Positive remarks	0.412	0.170	0.168	102.109	0.00
Warmth	0.614	0.377	0.376	301.270	0.00

Discussion

The current research results cast a new light on father-expressed emotions and related consequences on the mental health of adolescents, which are rarely studied in Pakistan. Thus, previous expressed emotions tools measured the emotions of the family of ill persons, and healthy family expression of emotions with healthy adolescents remained ignored. The emotional attitudes of the father play an important role in developing the whole personality and family members' emotional attitudes developed risk and become a leading cause of psychiatric disorders.¹⁶ Particularly, the Influence of expressed emotions is one of the vigorous predictors of psychological disorders in adolescents, because the extra demands of caregivers with the conflict of the personal needs of the adolescents’ affects very critically teenager’s mental health.¹⁷

Current study results suggested that there is a positive connection between father’s involvement and adolescent positive growth.¹⁸ A study result was consistent with current findings; they found behavior problems in children who were exposed to critics and hostility from parents.¹⁹

The potential role of fathers and especially the unhealthy relationship between fathers and children is one of the core causes of adolescents’ anxiety and other mental health issues.²⁰ anxiety disorders are the most common and debilitating forms of

psychopathology experienced by children and adolescents, with a prevalence rate of approximately 5%. As the above-mentioned results of the current study supported the study hypothesis that father-expressed emotions play a significant role in adolescents’ social anxiety.²¹ Fathers support their children in the development of positive self-concept, empathetic abilities, self-esteem, social competence, self-confidence, and emotion regulation.²² The current findings showed that fathers expressed emotions of positive remarks and warmth increased the social-emotional competence in adolescents.

In view of the recent findings, It is suggested that the researchers should further take into account the need for what constitutes highly expressed emotions in fathers and the mechanism of emotions and how they related to adolescents’ psychopathology and social-emotional competence further needs to be explored. To help adolescents, research is required to focus on some preventive measures and proper strategies with the help of parents, family teachers, and policymakers. So there is a need to explore these factors not only in other areas of the country but to explore these issues with other populations.

Conclusion

1. In the current study statistically, a significant predictive relationship has been found among fathers’ expressed emotions of critical comments,

hostility, emotional-over involvement, positive remarks, and warmth on adolescents' social anxiety and social-emotional competence.

2. These kinds of studies can promote a deeper understanding of fathers that what are the expressed emotions, and how they are associated with adolescents' mental health issues like social anxiety as well as with social-emotional competencies.
3. The present study was based on the father's expressed emotions with their normal adolescents which is the very first study in Pakistan.
4. In a current study not only explored the role of father-expressed emotions but also provide the prevalence of social anxiety among adolescents which is very rarely studied in Pakistan.
5. Although there would not be possible to find out gender, age, and institution-wise differences in a single study although it will be helpful to provide grounds for future researchers to explore these aspects in their studies.

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