

A Study of Gender Differences in Parenting Styles, Academic Stress and Self-Concept Among Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the gender differences in academic stress, perceived democratic, autocratic, accepting and rejecting parenting styles and self concept of the adolescents of Punjab. A total of 1070 adolescents participated in the study and filled the questionnaires of academic stress, perceived democratic, autocratic, accepting and rejecting parenting styles, coping strategies and self concept. Independent sample 't' was employed to test the differences. Results revealed that significant gender difference exists in the perceived accepting and rejecting parenting style and insignificant gender difference in the scores of academic stress, perceived democratic and autocratic parenting styles and self concept of the adolescents. Counselling cell must be established and should specifically develop the gender sensitive intervention programmes. School management should try to make the campus gender sensitive.

Key words: gender differences, academic stress, democratic, autocratic, parenting styles, self- concept

Introduction

Among all life stages, adolescence is one of the most transitional stages, including social, biological, and psychological changes (Byrne, Davenport & Mazanov, 2007). Adolescence is the stage which clearly establishes self concept of an individual. Self-concept

is an important concept of any child's development. Self-concept is affected as "children develop a sense of self and interact with and gain experience in the world" (Kaur, Rana & Kaur, 2009). Academic stress has always been found to be negatively impacting the academic performance of the students (Ender et al. 1994).

Self-concept is deep rooted within the family experiences (Kaur, Rana & Kaur, 2009). As Kuppaswamy (1954) says, "The self-concept is not a finished product at birth. But is something which develops and how it develops, what its constituent attitudes are depends upon the family in which the individual is brought up with all the social norms of the group to which the family belongs and the education and experiences of each individual." Adolescent's gender plays the role of determinant of parenting behaviour. Adolescent's gender is one of the important factor which helps to elucidate why parents behave the way they do and subsequent influence on their adolescents' outcome (Belsky, 1984). Girls are being more restricted than boys by the parents as reported by the adolescents themselves (Hoeksema, 2001)

Previous studies discovered that the level of self-concept within both the gender is dissimilar. Still many studies have found that adolescents boys report higher levels of self concepts than do girl adolescents (Aparna, A.A. (2013); Mom, M. 2007; Sharma 1981; Park 2003; and Al-Zyoudi 2007), while other studies do not support this notion (Wang, 1997). Investigating the association between academic stress, gender differences and self concept of adolescent students are helpful for developing preventive strategies during adolescence. So the present study is intended to study the gender differences in academic stress, perceived parenting styles and self concept of the adolescents.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the present study is to "compare the mean differences in academic stress, perceived parenting styles and self concept in relation to gender".

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 1070 adolescents (536 Boys and 534 Girls), studying in the class IX and X participated in the study.

MATERIALS

The following tools were used to collect the data

- Children's Perception of Parenting Styles by Pyari and Kalra (2005)

- Self Concept Rating Scale by Dr. Pratibha Deo (2011)
- Academic stress- Bisht Battery of stress scales (2005)
- Coping Strategies- Ways of Coping Questionnaire by Lazarus (1967)

Hypotheses

1. “There exists no significant difference between mean scores of academic stress of adolescents in relation to their gender”.
2. “There exists no significant difference between mean scores of perceived parenting style of adolescents in relation to their gender”.
 - a. “There exists no significant difference between mean scores of perceived democratic parenting style of adolescents in relation to their gender”.
 - b. “There exists no significant difference between mean scores of perceived autocratic parenting style of adolescents in relation to their gender”.
 - c. “There exists no significant difference between mean scores of perceived accepting parenting style of adolescents in relation to their gender”
 - d. “There exists no significant difference between mean scores of perceived rejecting parenting style of adolescents in relation to their gender”.
3. “There exists no significant difference between mean scores of self-concept of adolescents in relation to their gender”.
4. “There exists no significant difference between mean scores of coping strategies of adolescents in relation to their gender”.

Procedure

The researcher described the questionnaires to the participants in their respective schools followed by the administration of the questionnaires.

Data Analysis and Result

Independent sample ‘t’ was employed to test the gender differences among the variables of this study. The value of mean, standard deviations and t-value of academic stress, perceived democratic, autocratic, accepting and rejecting parenting styles and self concept of boys and girls are given in table 1.1.

Table No. 1.1

N, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value of Scores of Academic Stress, Perceived Parenting Styles, Coping Strategies and Self Concept in Relation to their Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Academic Stress	Boys	536	306.78	61.569	10.459**
	Girls	534	353.55	83.141	
Perceived Democratic Parenting Style	Boys	534	26.68	5.99690	6.510**
	Girls	536	24.18	6.550	
Perceived Autocratic Parenting Style	Boys	536	23.0000	6.55730	3.905**
	Girls	534	24.5918	6.77555	
Perceived Accepting Parenting Style	Boys	536	26.6493	6.69692	3.365**
	Girls	534	25.2509	6.89405	
Perceived Rejecting Parenting Style	Boys	536	24.40	6.837	6.025**
	Girls	534	26.93	6.936	
Problem Focused Coping Strategies	Boys	536	39.30	13.405	9.887**
	Girls	534	30.84	14.573	
Emotion Focused Coping Strategies	Boys	536	33.95	13.758	0.715
	Girls	534	34.58	15.330	
Self concept	Boys	536	126.38	27.988	11.289**
	Girls	534	106.15	30.569	

**** Significant at 0.01 level of significance**

*** Significant at 0.05 level of significance**

Individually the 't' test for academic stress, perceived parenting styles, coping strategies and self concept for boys and girls was computed. The calculated value of 't' for academic stress is 10.459, $p = .000$. Data from the table shows that the mean scores in academic stress of boys and girls are 306.78 and 353.55 respectively. It indicates that girls feel more academic stress as compared to boys.

The calculated value of 't' for perceived democratic parenting style is 6.510, $p = .000$. The mean scores on perceived democratic parenting style of the boys and girls are 26.68 and 24.18 respectively. It indicates that boys perceive their parents as more democratic as compared to girls.

The calculated value of 't' for perceived autocratic parenting style is 3.905, $p = .000$. The mean scores on perceived autocratic parenting style of the boys and girls are 23.00 and 24.5918 respectively. It indicates that girls perceive their parents as more autocratic as compared to boys.

The calculated value of 't' for perceived accepting parenting style is 3.365, $p = .000$. The mean scores on perceived accepting parenting style of the boys and girls are 26.6493 and 25.2509 respectively. It indicates boys perceive their parents as more accepting as compared to girls.

The calculated value of 't' for perceived rejecting parenting style is 6.025, $p = .000$. The mean scores on perceived rejecting parenting style of the boys and girls are 24.40 and 26.93 respectively. It indicates that girls perceive their parents as more rejecting compared to boys.

The calculated value of 't' for problem focused coping strategies is 9.887, $p = .000$. The mean scores on problem focused coping strategies of the boys and girls are 39.30 and 30.84 respectively. It indicates that the boys adopt more of problem focused coping strategies when encountered with academic stress as compared to girls.

The calculated value of 't' for emotion focused coping strategies is 0.715, $p = .475$. The mean scores on emotion focused coping strategies of the boys and girls are 33.95 and 34.58 respectively but this difference is insignificant.

The tabulated value of 't' for self-concept is 11.289, $p = .000$. The mean scores on self concept of the boys and girls are 126.38 and 106.15 respectively. This indicates that boys have higher level of self-concept as compared to girls.

From the above discussion it is evident that the boys and girls significantly deferred in academic stress, perceived parenting styles (perceived democratic, perceived autocratic, perceived accepting and perceived rejecting), problem focused coping strategies and Self concept.

Thus the hypothesis "There exists no significant difference between mean scores of academic stress, perceived parenting styles, coping strategies and self concept of in relation to their gender" is rejected for academic stress, perceived parenting styles (perceived democratic, perceived autocratic, perceived accepting and perceived rejecting), problem focused coping strategies and self-concept except emotion focused coping strategies.

Discussion

The main aim of the study was to explore gender differences among secondary students on the various profiles i.e. academic stress, perceived democratic, autocratic, accepting and rejecting parenting styles and self-concept. The results of the study suggest that girls have high magnitude of academic stress than boys. The reason behind this may be girls are more conscious of their grade points as compared to boys. The result is supported by Subrahmanyam, 1986; Verma & Gupta, 1990; Verma et al., 2002 and Mishra & Michelle, 2000. Predominantly, girls were found to have high self-concept than the boy students. The result is contradicted by previous study of Aparna, A.A. (2013); Mom, M. (2007). Girls perceive their parents to be more autocratic and rejecting as compared to boys. Boys

perceive their parents as more democratic and accepting as compared to girls. The result is consistent with Wu, M. (2009); Anjana, S.C. (2015); Gandharva R.S. (2015).

Since gender differences on all the profiles of adolescent students were observed though only significant for perceived accepting and rejecting parenting style, all the concerned authorities should take this into their consideration while dealing with adolescent students. Counselling cell must be established and should specifically develop the gender sensitive intervention programmes. School management should try to make the campus gender sensitive. Since girls scored more on perception of autocratic parenting styles, such parents should be counselled to adopt more positive parenting style. Teachers too should take care of gender differences in the class, and should try to facilitate the girls.

Several limitations of the study should be noted for this study. Sample of the study is limited to one state only which may affect the generalisation of the study result. Lastly, self-report measures were used to collect data.

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