

Periodic Research

Relationship between Substance use among Adolescents and Effective Parenting

Paper Submission: 04/02/2021, Date of Acceptance: 24/02/2021, Date of Publication: 25/02/2021



Olivia Kakati
Research Scholar,
Dept. of Psychology,
University of Delhi
Delhi, India

Abstract

Substance abuse is a global societal and health threat, which is on the rise at an alarming rate. This gripping situation needs more attention amongst the adolescents, who are getting immersed in substance use, with very little knowledge about its hazardous consequences. Also, in the present day of growing stress and competition, effective parenting is taking a backseat as parents do not have sufficient time to indulge with their children. At this juncture, this study aims to understand the relationship between effective parenting and substance use among adolescents. The main underlying hypothesis of the study is to check if there is a relationship between effective parenting and substance use amongst adolescents. The Alabama Parenting Questionnaire: child version, which is a self report scale has been used to measure effective parenting (Frick,1991). Substance use has been measured by Substances and Choices Scale (SACS): Community Form, which also acts as a self report measure (Christie et.al., 2007). A total of 60 adolescents, living in Guwahati within the age group of 16 to 18 years were included in the study using convenience sampling. The obtained data was subjected to descriptive and correlational analysis using SPSS. The results were discussed in the light of psychological theories, previous research and individual differences.

Keywords: Substance Abuse, Effective Parenting, Substance Use, Adolescents.

Introduction

Substance abuse can be defined as “excessive use of psychoactive drugs, such as alcohol, pain medications or illegal drugs, which can lead to physical, social or emotional harm” (Hambrecht & Häfner, 1996). Substance abuse as well as risky use, is a gripping cause of concern worldwide, which has the potential to cripple the very roots of the society. Substance use is on a steep rise and the scenario is grim amongst adolescents, who resort to substance use owing to a number of reasons, which later takes the form of addiction or dependence. Parents play a very pivotal role and have a strong influence in their teen’s lives. The bond and relationship they share with their child has a direct influence on the decisions the child makes throughout his or her life. Various research has established that the kind of parenting, a child receives is crucial to his/her life choices as well as their overall persona. When children are subjected to faulty parenting or parents have severe arguments within themselves or with their children, they may contribute to an unstable home environment that makes the children more vulnerable to resort to substance use as a coping mechanism for unstable family environment. On the flipside, sharing a positive parent-child relationship which can be achieved through effective parenting can lead to lowering the odds of substance use. Effective parenting can be defined as “parenting behaviors, in particular parenting style, parent-child communications, and monitoring that are important for healthy youth development and outcomes” (Byrnes & Miller, 2012). At this juncture, it becomes essentially importance to take a closer look on whether effective parenting can have an influence on substance use among adolescents.

Past research studies have mostly focused on familial dysfunction and familial bonds as a contributing factor to substance use among adolescents. With the present research study, the researcher is attempting

to take this exploration a step further by shifting the focus from family closeness and family dysfunction and examining the influence of effective parenting on substance use. Also, most of the previous studies done in this area take into account only alcohol use. However, the current study aims to provide a new element by taking into account marijuana, tobacco, other drugs and cigarette use too.

Therefore, with the given context, the present study aims to explore the relationship between effective parenting and substance use among adolescents. The objectives of the study are as follows:

Objective of the Study

To explore the relationship between parenting and substance use among adolescents.

Specific Research Objectives

1. To study the substance use pattern in adolescents.
2. To examine the effectiveness of parenting among adolescents.
3. To check if there is a relationship between effective parenting and substance use in adolescents.

Review of Literature

Effective parenting can be defined as, "developing a parent child relationship where there is a bond of mutual respect, feeling of closeness and intimacy reflected in perceived healthy communication, monitoring, involvement, and joint activities in the family" (Kuendig & Kuntsche, 2006, p. 464). Positive and nurturing relationships between parents and their children when established early can continue to have a positive influence in the development of the child throughout the teen years as well. Positive and indulgent parent-child relationships are important for positive development during adolescence (Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Madsen & Barry, 2008, p. 848). Strong familial bonds and communication with mutual respect acts as a protective factor for the child's growth. The quality of parent child relationship has a significant affect on the decisions the child makes and the social activities and then friend circles they (Abar&Turrisi, 2008). The kind of home environment one receives can influence a child's personality (Crawford & Novak, 2008). Another recent study, aimed at examining the role of effective parenting in the relationship between onset of drug use and childhood conduct problems. They found that effective parenting seemed to have a direct protective effect on drug use; however, the extent of this effect could not be established (Krohn, Larroulet, Thornberry & Loughran, 2019).

Adolescents may use alcohol and drugs to help as coping mechanism to deal with family conflicts (Marsh & Dale, 2005). It was also found that use of corporal punishment by parents has a relationship with alcohol use. Children who had experienced psychological or physical violence were found to use substances more (Caballero, Ramos, González & Saltijeral, 2010). Alcohol, cigarettes and other substance use is limited when there is a positive parent child bond (McBride et. al, 2005; Drapela & Mosher, 2007; Kuendig & Kuntsche, 2006, p. 469).

Permissive parenting is more strongly associated with high levels of substance use than authoritative parenting (Wood, Mitchell, Read & Brand, 2004). Parents have to be involved in their children's lives to an optimum degree (Ross & Hill, 2001). Disturbed family environment and negative attitudes of parents towards children have been shown to have high correlations with substance abuse in adolescents (Hayes, Smart, Toumbourou & Sanson, 2004; Poelen et al., 2007; Drapela & Mosher, 2007).

From the above literature, we can infer that there seems to be a research gap in terms of the exact relationship parenting has with substance use. The existing body of literature delves more onto how a parent child relationship and family bonding influences a child's persona and how disturbed family environment can lead the child to resort to substance and other addictions as a coping mechanism. Therefore, the current study aims to check if there is a relationship between effective parenting and substance use.

Hypothesis

There is no relationship between effective parenting and adolescent substance use.

Method

Sample

A total of 60 adolescents, comprising of 30 males and females each, were taken for the study. A convenience sampling was used for the same wherein printed questionnaires along with informed consent forms were given to the participants. The sample was selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria and an equal number of males and females were selected.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Adolescents within the age range of 16-18 years, living in Guwahati were selected for the main study. Adolescents who are not fluent in the English language, are orphans or do not have either of the parents were not included in the study.

Variables under Study

Substance use

It can be operationally defined as the scores obtained on the SACS scale in the context of the study.

Effective parenting

It can be operationally defined as the scores obtained on the APQ questionnaire in the context of the study.

Tools used

Substance use and choices scale (SACS)

The SACS was used to study the substance use amongst adolescents. The Substances and Choices Scale is a validated screening test for substance use and choices amongst adolescents within the age group of 13-18 years (Christie et.al., 2007). It is a one-page pencil and paper test that takes around 5 minutes to complete. It has a good reliability and validity, of about 0.72 and 0.76 respectively. The scale has three sections. The first section of the SACS looks at the number of occasions different types of substance have been used over last one month. The second section yields a 'difficulties' score out of 20. It can be used to assess morbidity

Periodic Research

and track progress. All items are rated on a 3 point Likert scale, with the valence of 0= not true, 1=somewhat true and 2= definitely true). The third section of the scale takes about frequency of tobacco use. Higher scores on the scale indicate problematic substance use.

Alabama parenting questionnaire (APQ): Child version.

The APQ was used to examine effective parenting among the adolescents. The APQ is a multi-dimensional 42 item scale that measures effective parenting for children of age 6-18 years. Involvement with children, positive parenting, monitoring/supervision, discipline and corporal punishment are the five dimensions measured by this scale (Frick, 1991). All items were rated on a five- point Likert scale, with the following valence (Always = 5; often = 4; sometimes = 3; almost never =2; never = 1). None of the items are reverse- scored. The maximum possible score on this scale is 210 and higher scores indicate more effective parenting. The reliability of the scale was found to be 0.68. The scale also has a good validity. The mean score on the scale for the current participants was found to be 176.25, which was very close to the mean score of the German sample (Mean = 179.25).

Research Design

The present study adheres to a correlational research design.

Procedure

The study was approved by the IRB at Royal Global University. At first, the researcher shortlisted a few colleges and higher secondary schools in

Guwahati city. Following that, permission was taken from the concerned authority for data collection. Verbal assent was obtained from the parents as well as the adolescents after briefing them about the purpose and procedure of the study, their role and rights in the participation. Participants were invited to participate in the study; upon consenting participation. The printed questionnaires along with demographic data sheets were then provided to the participants based on the selection criteria. Each participant took around 20-25 minutes to complete the forms. Once the participant completed the forms, it was rechecked and only the completed forms were accepted for the study. The obtained data were coded and stored on a password protected laptop and relevant analyses were carried out.

Data Analyses

The responses obtained from each item of the Alabama Parenting Scale: Child version was summed to obtain a total effective parenting score for each participant. Responses obtained on the SACS were summed to obtain a substance use score for each participant. The data were subjected to descriptive statistics using SPSS software, version 24.0 (IBM Corp., 2016).

The total scores on the two scales obtained were then subjected to a correlational analysis using the SPSS software to meet the objectives of the study.

Result

Descriptive statistics comprising of mean, standard deviations were obtained and normality values were calculated (Table 1).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics Showing Mean, Standard Deviation and Normality of Data.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	W	Sig
Effective parenting	60	176.25	8.762	.984	.610*
Substance use	60	4.25	5.595	.965	.084*

*p < .05

The data was found to be normally distributed at 0.05 level.

Table 2
Correlation among Effective Parenting and Substance Use

Variables	Mean	SD	W	1	2
Effective parenting (1)	176.25	8.762	.984		
Substance use (2)	4.25	5.595	.965	-.72*	

*p < .01

Pearson's product-moment correlation showed a linear relationship between effective parenting and substance use among adolescents ($r = -0.72$). The results indicate a strong negative correlation and it is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between effective parenting and substance use among adolescents is rejected.

Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between effective parenting and substance use among adolescents. The null hypothesis that there is no relationship between effective parenting and adolescent substance use was taken for the purpose of the study. The SACS was used to study the substance use amongst adolescents. The APQ: Child version was used to

examine effective parenting among the adolescents. A correlational research was conducted to fit the purpose involving 60 adolescents (Males = 30) within the age group of 16 to 18 years living in Guwahati city. The participants were selected for the study using convenience sampling according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The results indicate a strong negative correlation between the two variables ($r = -0.72$), which is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between effective parenting and substance use among adolescents is rejected. And the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative correlation between effective parenting and substance use among adolescents is accepted. Thereby, results support the alternative hypothesis.

The main finding from this study is that

E: ISSN No. 2349-9435

Periodic Research

effective parenting can reduce substance use among adolescents. This finding suggests that parents and adolescents need to spend quality time together, have distinct rules and maintain a good balance in the level of monitoring from the parents. This is consistent with previous research that suggests that a good parent-child relationship is associated with low level of alcohol use (Crawford & Novak, 2002).

Parents have to try and maintain a positive relationship with their children and employ effective parenting techniques for optimum growth and development of their child. Miller-Day (2008) found that the quality of family life and the kind of parenting practices play a significant role in the initial experimentation with substances.

The finding can also find support in the finding of Miller-Day, 2008, that effective parenting practices can make adolescents more resilient towards anti-social activities and risky substance use. Parents who are involved in the right way in their teens' lives and seek their children's engagement in the decisions that they make, tend to foster a healthy relationship which in turn acts as a protective shield for their child from indulging in risky behaviors.

Dysfunctional families, where the parents indulge in faulty parenting practices, lack discipline or are too controlling can push the adolescent to take to substances. Resorting to substances is like a coping mechanism for the adolescents which can reduce their stress, anxiety, anger and pain for a while, without making them realise the effects it can have on them. Parents who are perceived as lacking warmth or being hostile towards their children can contribute to substance use among their children (Johnson & Pandina, 1991). Foxcroft and Lowe (1995) found that children who perceive themselves as being neglected by their parents are more at use to use substances than their counterparts.

Implications and Suggestions

The findings of the study seem to have important practical implications. The finding that there is a relationship between effective parenting and substance use among adolescents can be used to develop further modules to provide intervention for substance abuse. The importance of the results of this study can also be implicated in working towards public sensitisation towards the problem of substance abuse and working towards having a positive family environment and psycho-educating parents about effective parenting techniques, thereby minimising such unhealthy behaviour. This can in turn contribute to the global cause of lowering substance abuse.

The study findings could also play a key role in developing intervention and prevention modules for substance abuse clients. Currently, most modules and programmes tap only on the individual's change. However, from the results of this study, it seems that effective parenting can be a protective factor for substance use. Thereby, the need of the hour is to have interventions and preventive programmes that tap on both the individual and parents to ultimately reduce such maladaptive behaviour.

Limitations of the study

In this study, we delved into the association

of parenting with substance use amongst adolescents. However, there are certain limitations of the study which can be directions for future research. It may be noted that convenience sampling was employed to select adolescents for our sample, which limits the generalisation of findings. Another limitation of the study is the small sample size. Conducting a similar study with a larger sample could yield a larger effect size. The analysis of data according to gender and background of participants might reveal some more interesting facts. Also, providing intervention to the participants who revealed risky substance use behaviours was beyond the scope of the study. Additionally, examining which of the following dimensions of effective parenting is more strongly related to substance use can yield many significant findings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that effective parenting acts as protective factor to reduce substance use among adolescents.

References

1. Abar, C. & Turrise, R. (2008). *How Important Are Parents During the College Years? A Longitudinal Perspective of Indirect Influences Parent's Yield on Their College Teen's Alcohol Use. Addictive Behaviors, 33(10), 1360-1368.*
2. Bahr, S., Marcos, A.C. & Maughan, S.L. (1995). *Family, educational and peer influences on the alcohol use of female and male adolescents. Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 56(4), 457-469.*
3. Beman, D.S. (1995). *Risk Factors Leading to Adolescent Substance Abuse. Adolescence, 30(117), 201-208.*
4. Byrnes, H. F., & Miller, B. A. (2012). *The relationship between neighborhood characteristics and effective parenting behaviors: The role of social support. Journal of family issues, 33(12), 1658-1687.*
5. Caballero, M.A., Ramos, L., González, C. & Saltijeral, M.T. (2010). *Family Violence and Risk of Substance Use among Mexican Adolescents. Child Abuse and Neglect, 34(8), 576-584.*
6. Christie, G., Marsh, R., Sheridan, J., Wheeler, A., Suaalii-Sauni, T., Black, S., & Butler, R. (2007). *The Substances and Choices Scale (SACS)-The development and testing of a new alcohol and other drug screening and outcome measurement instrument for young people. Addiction, 102(9), 1390-1398.*
7. Crawford, L.A., & Novak, K.B. (2008). *Parent-Child Relations and Peer Associations as Mediators of the Family Structure—Substance Use Relationship. Journal of Family Issues, 29(2), 155-184.*
8. Crawford, L.A. & Novak, K.B. (2002). *Parental and Peer Influences on Adolescent Drinking: The Relative Impact of Attachment and Opportunity. Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse, 12(1), 1-26.*
9. Drapela, L.A. & Mosher, C. (2007). *The Conditional Effect of Parental Drug Use on Parental Attachment and Adolescent Drug Use: Social Control and Social Development Model*

E: ISSN No. 2349-9435

Periodic Research

- Perspectives. Journal of Child and Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 16(3), 62-87.
10. Foxcroft, D. & Lowe, G. (1995). Adolescent Drinking, Smoking and Other Substance Use Involvement: Links with Perceived Family Life. *Journal of Adolescence*, 18(2), 159-177.
 11. Frick, P. J. (1991). *The Alabama parenting questionnaire: Unpublished rating scale*. New Orleans: University of New Orleans: Department of Psychology.
 12. Gordon, H.W. (2002). Early Environmental Stress and Biological Vulnerability to Drug Abuse. *Psychoendocrinology*, 27(1), 115-126.
 13. Hambrecht, M., & Häfner, H. (1996). Substance abuse and the onset of schizophrenia. *Biological psychiatry*, 40(11), 1155-1163.
 14. Hayes, L., Smart, D., Toumbourou, J.W., & Sanson, A. (2004). Parenting Influences on Adolescent Alcohol Use. *Australian Institute of Family Studies*, 10, 1447-1469.
 15. IBM Corp. Released 2016. *IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 24.0*. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.
 16. Johnson, V. & Pandina, R. (1991). Effects of the Family Environment on Adolescent Substance Use, Delinquency and Coping Styles. *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 17(1), 71-88.
 17. Kuendig, H., & Kuntsche, E. (2006). Family Bonding and Adolescent Alcohol Use: Moderating Effect of Living with Excessive Drinking Parents. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 41(4), 464- 471.
 18. Marsh, A. & Dale, A. (2005). Risk factors for alcohol and other drug disorders: A review. *Australian Psychologist*, 40(2), 73-80.
 19. McBride, D. C., Freier, M.C., Hopkins, G., Babikian, T., Richardson, L., Helm, H., Hopp-Marshak, H., Broward, M. (2005). Sector Health Care Affairs. Quality of Parent-Child Relationship and Adolescent HIV Risk Behavior in St. Maarten. *AIDS Care*, 17, 45 -54.
 20. Miller-Day, M. (2008). Talking to Youth about Drugs: What do Late Adolescents Say about Parental Strategies? *Family Relations*, 57(1), 1-12.
 21. Padilla-Walker, L.M., Nelson, L.J., Madsen, S.D., & Barry, C.M. (2008). The Role of Perceived Parental Knowledge on Emerging Adult's Risk Behaviors. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 37(8), 847-859.
 22. Poelen, E., Scholte, R., Willemsen, G., Boomsma, D. & Engels, R. (2007). Drinking by Parents, Siblings and Friends as Predictors of Regular Alcohol Use in Adolescents and Young Adults: A Longitudinal Twin-Family Study. *Alcohol & Alcoholism*, (42)4, 362-369.
 23. Ross, L., & Hill, E. (2001). Drinking and Parental Unpredictability among Adult Children of Alcoholics: A Pilot Study. *Substance Use and Misuse*, 36(5), 609.
 24. Wood, M., Mitchell, R., Read, J. & Brand, N. (2004). Do Parents Still Matter? Parent and Peer Influences on Alcohol Involvement among Recent High School Graduates. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 18(1), 19-30.