

Exploring Parental Pressure on Academic Performance among Adolescents

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Abstract

Adolescents experience many issues during development phases, such as career, academic struggle, mental health, and social skills. In addition, other aspects can impact the outcome of adolescents, such as parents, family, friends, and environment. Parenting style is one of the significant factors influencing adolescent academic performance. Therefore, how parents treat their children will determine their academic performance. This study aims to explore the parental pressure on academic achievement among adolescents. This study employed qualitative research through an in-depth interview. The instrument has three sections, each containing five questions in the protocol document to guide the data gathering. Next, purposeful sampling was utilized to recruit participants who could provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon. Findings demonstrate that a supportive parenting style will improve adolescents' academic achievement. On the other hand, the authoritarian parenting style often puts high expectations on their children's academic achievement, which eventually causes stress for them. Therefore, parental involvement remains essential for positive youth development, especially in education, and should be more flexible in raising their children. Hence, parents must be aware of their children's academic or practical abilities. This will help students be more successful in their life because they do something they are interested in.

Keywords: Parental Pressure, Academic Achievement, Adolescents, Qualitative

Introduction

Generally, adolescence is the period of human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, between 10 and 19 years (Chulani & Gorson, 2014). During this period, adolescents undergo various physiological and psychological changes making them more prone to multiple stresses. Many factors can lead to stress issues (Lai, 2014; Ahern

& Norris, 2011). However, for them, academic-related events are considered significant stressors globally (Ye et al., 2019).

Academic performance at this stage is essential in higher education and career (Mohd Zaini et al., 2021). Entering a new phase in life needs coping skills, decision making, system support, and emotion to overcome the stressors (Babicka-Wirkus et al., 2021; Smith & Carlson, 1997). One factor affecting academic achievement is parental pressure and expectation of adolescents (An et al., 2020; Luo & Zhang, 2018). Parental pressure can be defined as the emotional stress parents impose upon their children. It is often related to academic performance, sports or other extracurricular activities, cultural or social standards, and many more (Eriksen, 2021). As a result, the pressure imposed by family members can be the most impactful stress on teenagers' mental health, such as depression and low self-esteem (Hosseinkhani et al., 2020). Moreover, Deb et al (2015) discovered that 66.0% of the students reported facing parental pressure, where their parents pressured their academic performance.

Indeed, the majority of studies were conducted to learn more about the effects of the relationship of parental involvement on academic success through quantitative (Kaynak et al., 2021; Furry & Sy, 2015; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). However, there is a need to explore in-depth how parental pressure influences adolescent academic achievement regarding perception and psychological factors in this study.

Parental Pressure and academic achievement

An abundance of the study discovered the factors that influence students' academic achievement (Yavuzalp & Bahcivan, 2021; Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). Among popular predictors is parent involvement in the sense of pressure on their children (Eriksen, 2021). Parents pressure their children to succeed because they are concerned for the welfare of their children and their awareness of the competition for admission to reputed institutions (Sangma et al., 2018). Therefore, to ensure the academic journey is on track, parents' involvement to boost motivation is essential (Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018). In addition, motivational encouragement is vital for students to elevate self-efficacy and life satisfaction (Stavrulaki et al., 2021).

Conversely, those unable to provide a sound support system or excessively pressured to score well in studies are very likely to have low self-esteem and conduct deviant activities (Skok et al., 2021; Chen & Dornbusch, 1998; Eskilson et al., 1986). Leaving the fact that they feel incapable of becoming the ideal son or daughter to their parents. Moreover, parents' high expectations may cause emotional disturbance among students and drive drop out of school (Subramani & Venkatachalam, 2019; Dupéré et al., 2015).

Quach et al (2015) found findings from 997 Beijing High school students showcased that parents' warmth can moderate the adverse effects of the adolescents' stress and pressure when it comes to studies. Furthermore, female and male adolescents stated that mothers express more warmth and pressure than fathers. Thus, increased parental warmth will decrease the relationship between parents' academic pressure and adolescents' psychopathology symptoms.

Stoep et al (2003) highlighted that adolescents with depressive symptoms are at increased risk for diminished academic functioning and impairment in educational attainment. Existing research indicates that when parents involve themselves in their children's educational context, they influence their children's emotional functioning. Parents should keep track of their children's school performance and convey the importance of education to ensure that

children's emotions are well regulated. Grolnick et al (2000) posited that happiness and psychological well-being experienced during child and adolescent development potentially reduce emotional distress.

Adolescents need to receive positive responses from adults, and they will continue to behave in ways that will help them achieve positive responses. Thus, parents as role models with full support and positive involvement potentially influence behavior, attitudes, and motivation to achieve good academic performance (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Thus, parents are social support in their educational learning and real life, such as problem solving and decision making. Meanwhile, Adlerian Approach theorized that one's decisions are primarily based on the person's experience, the present situation, and the goal that person's moving to. Thus, all the reactions and treatment received from their parents, such as their support, encouragement, etc., her behavior will lead to a positive side and will increase her confidence and self-esteem to do better in her academic achievement.

Methodology

Research Design

This research uses a qualitative design (Creswell et al., 2007) with an interview method to determine the adolescent's experience and perceptions of parental pressure issues. This study aimed to illuminate and understand complex psychosocial problems and is most helpful in answering humanistic 'why?' and 'how?' questions (Marshall, 1996). The researchers have chosen an interviewee that will share the struggle of having the parental pressure problem, especially the academic related issue.

Participant and Procedures

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who could provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation (Higginbottom, 2004). It is highly subjective and determined by the qualitative researcher generating the qualifying criteria each participant must meet to be considered for the research study. In this study, the participant is 19 year old student who volunteered to be interviewed regarding research objectives of parental pressure on academic achievement.

Data Analysis

Protocol interviews were developed to guide the researcher during the interview session. The guided semi-structured interview questions consist of three sections focused on demographics, parenting styles, family environment, and psychological reactions. This is important for the researcher to ensure conversations session to gather in-depth information (Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush, 2006). For this research, the interview session was conducted online using Google Meet with an interviewee on permission and voluntary. The research data analysis uses thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). The data collection was transcribed verbatim to identify the patterns that emerged between the themes and were analyzed to understand the responses to the research objectives.

Findings and Discussions

This study discovered how parental pressure influences adolescent academic achievement regarding perception and psychological factors.

Encouragement

The interview data were analyzed into parenting style, family environment, and the children's psychological reactions. Based on the interview findings, the parenting style and children's psychological reactions play a significant role and significantly impact one another. For instance, the interviewee viewed her parents' parenting style as a supportive family. Her parents never pressured her to study nor forced her to join any tuition centers or do things she hated. It was based on her choices: *"My parents give me space to decide what I want to do. However, they will monitor."* Thus, with the support she gets from her parents, she wants to try her best not to disappoint them and make them happy as much as possible.

On the other hand, even though her parents never really forced her to do things based on their interests, on the contrary, they highly encouraged her to pursue what more made her keen to do. At the same time, give guidance, for example participating in debates competition or furthering studies at Al-Azhar University. So to say, rather than 'force,' her parents are more to 'encourage' their children to do things they want. She mentioned, *"my parents always give motivated words even though the decision making I made is wrong. But then, they will guide me and rational back with explaining the wrong decision and comfort me back"*. Hence, because of her parents' parenting style and parental support from both of her parents, she did not feel pressured about her academic achievement and continuously tried her best not to disappoint her parents.

Furthermore, during the interview, she mentioned that even if she did poorly in her academic achievement, her parents usually soothed her by telling her to do better next time and advising her to reduce her playtime. They never really got mad or yelled at her for doing poorly. As for her, even though her parents never really scolded her for having a bad academic achievement, she still felt embarrassed and ashamed for not doing well. Due to that, she made those feelings and support from her parents as a motivation for her to do well so that she can maintain her parents' expectations of her as stated, *"Sometimes my result is not that great... low results, but my parent did not scold me, instead of they calm me and give the advice to improve better next time"*. Indeed, for this research, we found that her parents did not put pressure on her academic achievements but instead showed full support and encouragement to her. Eventually, that support made her want to do better in the future.

Parenting styles

Based on the findings, we can say that parenting style somehow influences parental pressure on adolescents' academic achievements. For example, Brennan (2021) stated that parents who apply an authoritarian parenting style are more likely to have higher expectations of their children. They expect the children not to make mistakes and must be fully obedient to the parent's rules and regulations. Hence, the more strict parents are, the more expectations they have for their children. Indeed, having high expectations for children will only put more pressure on them, especially when it comes to academic achievement, where they will feel that they should not fail and have to study harder to meet their parents' expectations. However, compared to the findings from our interviewee, where her parents' parenting style is not forcing and more to encourage their children, it made the interviewee feel less pressured and better in academic achievements as stated: *"they are more supportive and give more support and guidance."*

Therefore, the findings show that parenting style and parental support contribute significantly to an adolescent's academic achievements. She added, *"I will always refer to them when I need guidance and advice."* It is worth mentioning that when parents could provide an excellent parenting style and support to their children, it helps their children or adolescents

feel less pressure. Thus, it infused children to do better and not disappoint their parents significantly regarding academic achievements. Ugwuanyi et al. (2020) stated that a good parenting style and sufficient proper parental support could majorly help improve learner performance. In contrast, an effective parenting style helps strengthen their children's academic performance.

Stressed Out

Indeed, based on the findings, we found that the authoritarian parenting style continuously pressures and forces children on their academic achievements. The research found that it will only further add to adverse side effects that will only cause harm to the children. For instance, they will feel stressed and depressed by their parents' tremendous pressure and expectations. The participant stated, "*I am so stressed out when my parents pressure me a lot.*" Poddar (2020) posited that academic pressure caused by parent expectations had increased stress levels among today's students, making them more vulnerable to severe depression and suicidal tendencies. High pressure levels from parents may also lead adolescents to make bad decisions (York, 2000). Thus, based on the findings, we can see that parental pressure on adolescents' academic achievement influenced by the parenting style indeed impacts children's well-being and academic performance.

Implication

We recommend that parents be more flexible in raising their children so that they will grow up to be someone who enjoys and is grateful for their journey in life. Those parents must not force their children to study, but parents must take more initiative to explore and identify their children's academic performance and practical abilities. This will help students be more successful because they do something they are interested in. Adlerian Approach mentioned that family relationships influence one's lifestyle (Corey, 2015). This is due to one's decisions being mainly decided based on the person's experience, the present situation, and the goal that person is moving to. The treatment, support, and encouragement also lead to positive behavior to motivate the inner self.

Conclusion

The results concluded that parental pressure regarding positive involvement in education is essential for facilitating positive adolescent development. Additionally, parenting style and children's psychological reactions play a significant role and significantly impact one another and academic performance. Academic performance is also associated with communicating parental expectations about schoolwork and the importance of education, encouraging educational and career goals, and making plans. Furthermore, supporting adolescents in the preparation future demonstrates their concern for their children's well-being to openly communicates. Finally, this approach will reduce students feeling burdened with studying, and they can be successful with their academic performances because of their parents' support.

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