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Influential Impact of Parent-Child Interaction on Adolescent Depression Levels

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the correlation between adolescent depression and parent-child interaction. A sample of 150 school students aged 14-17, encompassing both genders, was conveniently selected. To assess the level of interaction between parents and adolescents in terms of time spent, the researcher utilized the 'Quality-time' Parent-Child Interaction Questionnaire (with a Chronbach's alpha coefficient of m = .827), developed specifically for this study. Additionally, the Beck Depression Inventory by Aaron T. Beck (1977) was employed to measure depression levels. The collected data underwent analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient 'r' to determine the relationship between the qualities of time spent with parents and adolescent depression.

Keywords: Quality-time, Depression, Parent-child Interaction

The familial context significantly shapes a child's life, fostering a secure and supportive atmosphere essential for their holistic development. Serving as the initial platform for socialization and value acquisition, the family profoundly influences a child's future social interactions, behavioral patterns, and perspective on life. As the principal source of emotional, intellectual, and physical nurturing, families significantly contribute to a child's upbringing. Strong emotional connections within families, coupled with robust values and cultural foundations, notably bolster a child's emotional growth.

The optimal development of children is contingent upon the provision of a nurturing and secure familial environment. Addressing not only their physical requisites but also their emotional and psychosocial needs is imperative. Adolescents, in particular, necessitate affection, attentive care, guidance, and love to foster stable, adaptable, and socially adept personalities. As per the World Health Organization (1997), adolescence marked by emotional detachment or social seclusion can precipitate apathy, withdrawal, restlessness, heightened hyperactivity, diminished concentration, and a profound yearning for emotional connection.

During adolescence, parental authority predominates, wielding significant influence over the parent-child dynamic. Positive parental engagement fosters a child's propensity for optimistic and confident social conduct, thereby facilitating enhanced social adeptness and academic proficiency. The term "parent-child relationship," as elucidated by Anagha K & Aparna Sreevalsan (2021), encapsulates the distinctive and pivotal bond shared between a parent and their offspring. A responsive and emotionally expressive mode of communication and interaction between parents and their child cultivates a favourable emotional rapport between the parties involved. A nurturing and intellectually stimulating exchange between parent and child not only aids the child in comprehending their environment but also steers their behavioral choices.

Review of Literature

Quality time refers to the duration allocated to engaging in activities deemed significant by both the parent and child. This temporal investment fosters a deeper understanding among family members. It involves the deliberate concentration of attention on each other, facilitating the exchange of emotions and thoughts. The modern challenge faced by an increasing number of parents involves the juggling act of professional responsibilities alongside child-rearing duties (Zimbido, 2007). Research spanning various disciplines underscores the pivotal role of parental interaction in a child's holistic growth. Consequently, parents are encouraged to derive satisfaction from and optimize the periods spent with their children, ensuring these moments are characterized by meaningful engagement (WHO, 2017).

In the past decade, there has been a notable surge of over 200% in the suicide rate among adolescents. Current researches indicate that more than 20% of adolescents within the general populace experience emotional disturbances, while one-third of those attending psychiatric *clinics grapple* with depression. Maurice Blackman MB, FRCPC, asserts that the primary care physician, with familial support, can effectively manage a majority of teenage depression cases. However, there exists a significant under diagnosis of depression in this demographic, resulting in profound challenges concerning academic performance, professional endeavours, and personal adaptation, often persisting into adulthood.

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Need for the Study

In contemporary society, the pervasive drive for achievement, the necessity for dual parental employment to meet financial obligations, and the phenomenon known as single child syndrome have collectively precipitated substantial lifestyle adjustments. Consequently, parents find themselves increasingly unable to allocate sufficient time to their children. This deficiency in parental presence correlates with a host of emotional, social, and *behavioural* issues among children. Studies have illuminated a notable prevalence of depression among adolescents, a pivotal emotional disorder within this demographic.

Desha, Laura et al. (2011) propose that the duration of parental interaction indirectly correlates with the severity of depressive symptoms in adolescents. This correlation is mediated by the adolescents' perceptions of parental acceptance and the degree to which parents refrain from imposing psychological control. Therefore, there exists a pressing need to investigate the correlation between parent-child interaction dynamics and their impact on adolescent depression.

Methodology

Survey

The study employed a survey methodology to gather data, selecting a convenient sample of 150 school students aged 14 to 17 (mean age: 15.5) encompassing both genders. A personalized data sheet was crafted to compile demographic details of the participants. To gauge the extent of parental interaction with adolescent children, the researcher utilized the

'Quality-time' Parent-child interaction questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha coefficient, m = .827) developed specifically for this study. This 35-item questionnaire, devised by the investigator, focused on assessing the parent-child relationship concerning the quality time invested by parents in their adolescents' lives.

Within the spectrum of the parent-child relationship, the primary focus was on time spent together, further refined into what was deemed 'Quality Time'—encompassing caring, stimulating, co-regulating, and helpful interactions. This was quantified on a 3-point scale, resulting in a total score of 105. A higher score denoted increased quality time invested. Additionally, the Beck Depression Inventory (Aaron T. Beck, 1977) was employed to gauge depression levels. The collected data underwent analysis to ascertain the correlation between the amount of quality time spent with parents and the prevalence of adolescent depression.

The objective of the study is as follows:

- 1. Determine the degree of parental involvement in terms of qualitative time allocation.
- 2. Investigate variances in parent-child interaction predicated on demographic variables.
- 3. Evaluate the extent of depression among adolescents.
- 4. Examine the correlation between parent-child interaction and adolescent depression levels.

Hypothesis

- 1. A substantial variance is anticipated in the duration of high-quality interactions between fathers and mothers with their adolescent offspring.
- 2. An anticipated notable variance exists in the correlation between the duration of highquality interactions among fathers and mothers and the presence of depressive symptoms.
- 3. Adolescents whose parental figures allocate comparatively less high-quality interaction time are susceptible to experiencing symptoms associated with depression.

Table 1 Variables Used for the Study

Sl.No	Type of Variable	Variable description				
1	Quality time	Dependent Variable				
2	Depression	Independent Variable				
3	Gender, Place of stay, Type of family, Sibling status, Working status of	Demographic Variable				
	the parents. Working status of the mother					

Operational Definition

Quality time refers to the duration of meaningful parent-child interaction aimed at mutual understanding. It is not contingent upon extensive hours but can be achieved within short periods. This concept delineates the significant moments parents devote to nurturing their children, imparting values, sharing legacies, cultural practices, and life experiences that contribute to the child's development. Quality time is not exclusive to stay-at-home parents; it extends

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to working parents as well. Its essence lies not in the quantity of time spent but in the enriching quality of the interaction.

Depression represents a mental state wherein an individual experiences dysfunctionality due to irrational beliefs or persistent negative thought patterns. As described by the World Health Organization (2017), depression is a prevalent mental disorder characterized by symptoms such as persistent sadness, diminished interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt, low self-esteem, disrupted sleep or appetite, fatigue, and impaired concentration.

Sampling Procedure

A cohort of 195 students, selected at random from matriculation, CBSE schools, and an Arts college in Chennai, constituted the sample pool for this investigation. Encompassing both male and female individuals aged between 14 and 17, the mean age of the participants was 15.5 years. Prior to their involvement, the participants volunteered for the study, providing written informed consent, a procedure extended to them as adolescents. Furthermore, the study procured informed consent from the respective school and college authorities. The dissemination of questionnaires among the students took place subsequent to obtaining requisite permissions. The administration of these questionnaires occurred within a span of 5 days, resulting in data acquisition from the entire cohort of 195 students. However, individuals presenting incomplete or missing data were excluded from the subsequent analysis. Consequently, a total of 157 participants, encompassing both genders and possessing complete datasets, were included in the study. The remaining individuals, due to their incomplete data, were deemed unsuitable for analysis and were consequently omitted from the study by the researcher.

Tools Used for the Study

Following the refinement of variables, an examination of pertinent instruments for the research was conducted. A comprehensive assessment of existing questionnaires was undertaken, resulting in the selection of specific tools to evaluate depression. Additionally, an investigator-designed questionnaire was formulated to gauge the quality of parent-child interaction concerning allocated quality time, serving the study's objectives. The specifics regarding the instruments utilized in this investigation are delineated in Table 1.

Sl.No	Tool	Author	Reliability
1	Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)	Beck & Steer, (1977)	0.73
2	Quality-time'-Parent child interaction questionnaire (QT-PCI)	Developed by the Investigator	0.827

Tool Description

(1) Personal data sheet was designed to collect demographic information of the participant.

Quality-Time -Parent child Interaction Questionnaire Scale Development

In the initial phase of scale item compilation, a focus group dialogue was initiated with adolescents aged between 16 and 17 years. Six separate sessions were conducted, each accommodating 15 individuals within this age bracket. Throughout these sessions, participants were prompted to deliberate on their perceptions of what constitutes quality time spent with their parents. All articulated points were meticulously recorded and subsequently transcribed into statements featured within the questionnaire.

To assess the content validity of each item concerning its relevance to quality time, input was sought from two psychologists, three research scholars, and face validity was ascertained via consultation with three school principals. The reliability of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, resulting in a satisfactory level of reliability, as detailed in Table 1.

Scale Description

The QT-PCI is a self-report questionnaire developed to assess the effective quality interactive time of the parents with the children. 35-item questionnaire is based on parentchild relationship. Out of the different facets of the parent-child relationship the time spent with the child was taken as the prime factor. Narrowing further from the time spent in total 'the effective interaction time' between the parent and child was termed as 'Quality time". Quality time spent with the children in terms of caring, stimulating, co-regulating and helpful is measured

Scoring and Interpretation

The assessment utilized a 3-point Likert scale spanning from 1 (indicating 'never') to 3 (indicating 'always') for rating each item. The cumulative score derived from these ratings serves as an indicator of the duration of quality time engaged. A higher total score is indicative of a greater amount of quality time allocated.

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Reliability of the scale

Reliability of the scale with Cronbach alpha for present sample is , 0.827 With an adolescent population, the QT-PCI takes 8 to 10 minutes to complete

Beck Depression Inventory (Beck & Depression Inventor) (Beck & Depression

Scale Description

The BDI is a 21-item inventory that assesses depression severity in adolescents and adults. Responses are coded on a 4-point scale on which symptoms increase in severity from 0 to 3.

Scoring and interpretation

Total score on the scale is interpreted as follows:

1-10: These up and downs are considered normal

11-16: Mild mood disturbance

17-20: Borderline clinical depression

21-30: Moderate depression

31-40: Severe depression

Over 40: Extreme depression

Participants are asked to respond based on their experience over the past week, including the day of testing.

Reliability and Validity

The BDI has generally demonstrated adequate reliability, with alpha reliability Coefficients ranging from 0.73 to 0.95 (Beck, Steer, & Earp; Garbin, 1988). The concurrent validity of the BDI has also been established in psychiatric and non-psychiatric samples (Beck, Steer, & Earp; Garbin, 1988; Spreen amp; Strauss, 1991).

With an adolescent population, the BDI takes 8 to 10 minutes to complete.

Ethics Followed in the Research.

1. Informed Consent

- 1) Before starting the research, the subjects were informed about the purpose of research and consent was obtained from the subjects to participate in the research.
- 2) As the subjects were early adolescents and school students, informed consent was also obtained from the school authorities. Written consent was obtained from the participants and oral consent was obtained from the school authorities.

Statistical Analysis

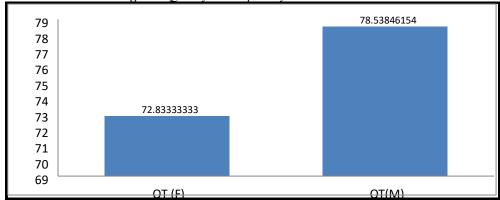
Data was statistically analysed using SPSS 15. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to find the Mean, Standard Deviation. Inferential statistics like standard error, 't' ratio and Pearsons were used to analyse the data

Table 3 Quality Time Spent by Father and Mother

Quality time	N	Mean	SD	SE	't' value	significance
Father	150	72.83	18.3	1.46	3.18	0.001
Mother	155	78.53	12.3	0.99		

^{*}Significant at 0.01 level

Figure 1 Quality Time Spent by Father and Mother



^{**} Significant at 0.05 level NS-Not Significant

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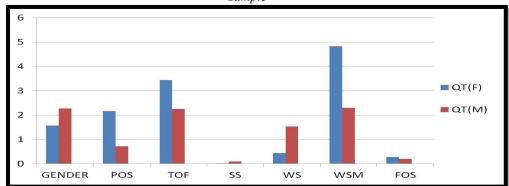
According to the findings depicted in Table 2 and Figure 1, an analysis of the mean values reveals that the duration of quality time dedicated by mothers exceeds that of fathers. The 't' value signifies a statistically significant distinction in the extent of quality time allocation between fathers and mothers. Thus, it is evident that mothers invest a greater amount of quality time with their children compared to fathers, indicating a relatively higher level of maternal engagement in this regard.

Table 4 Comparison of Quality Time of Father and Mother with Reference to Demographic Characteristics of the

				50	ample					
Demographic			Father	f				Mothe	er	
Characteristics	Mean	Sd	SE	t	SIG	Mean	Sd	SE	T	SIG
GENDER										
Male (N=103)	70.71	18.	3.0	1.5	0.12 ^N	76.12	11.7	2.0	2.2	0.03*
		96	7	7	S		67	7	7	*
Female(N=54)	75.54	16.				80.80	13.2			
,		92					00			
PLACE OF STAY				<u> </u>					<u> </u>	
Family (N=149)	73.09	17.	6.6	2.1	0.03*	77.89	12.3	4.5	0.7	0.47 ^{NS}
(1. 1.5)	, 5.0)	63	0	6	*	,,,,,,	99	2	2	0,
Others (N=8)	58.88	27.				74.63	13.6	- f	Ĩ	
others (1v o)	50.00	11				74.03	17			
TYPE OF		11	1	1	ı		J1 /		1	
FAMILY										
Nuclear (N=122)	74.61	15.	3.4	2.9	0.00*	78.91	9.12	2.3	2.2	0.03*
ivucicai (iv 122)	74.01	34	4	2.7	0.00	76.71	3	5	5	*
Joint (N=35)	64.54	25.		_		73.60	19.7			
John (N=33)	04.54	11				73.00	76			
SIBLING STATUS		11					70			
Single child (N=17)	72.29	21.	4.7	0.0	0.99 ^N	77.47	10.6	3.2	0.0	0.93 ^{NS}
Single child (N=17)	12.29	57	3	0.0	0.99	/ / .4 /	13	3.2	9	0.93***
Has sibl	i72.38	18.	3	2	3	77.76	12.6	1	9	
	1/2.38					77.76				
(N=140)		04					75			
WORKING STATUS					I	<u> </u>	1		1	NC
1 parent working	72.04	18.	3.6	0.4	0.66 ^N	76.96	13.3	2.4	1.5	0.13 ^{NS}
(N=125)		90	5	4	S		50	5	3	
	k73.66	16.				80.72	7.34			
(N=35)		34					5			
WORKING STATUS OF										
MOTHER										
	t76.63	8.6	3.0	4.8	0.00*	79.17	8.05	2.1	2.3	0.02*
(N=111)		9	1	3			1	5	0	*
Non-working mother	62.09	28.	1			74.24	18.9	7		
(N=46)		85					81			
FATHERS OCCUPATION	STATUS									
Father in Business	76.50	8.9	1.6	0.2	0.79 ^N	78.22	14.2	2.2	0.2	0.84 ^{NS}
(N=50)		7	4	8	s		85	1	0	
Father in Service	76.05	9.6				77.77	11.7			
(N=96)		2					34			
11-50)	1	<u> </u>					Эт			

^{*}Significant at 0.01 level

Figure 2 Comparison of Quality Time of Father and Mother With Reference to Demographic Characteristics of the Sample



^{**} Significant at 0.05 level NS-Not Significant

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Table 3 and Figure depict the absence of a noteworthy discrepancy in the duration of quality interaction initiated by fathers between male and female offspring. Conversely, a significant dissimilarity in the duration of quality engagement initiated by mothers between male and female offspring is evident at a statistical significance level of 0.05, indicating that mothers allocate more quality time to female children. Furthermore, a notable distinction emerges in the duration of quality interaction between fathers and children residing within the family context versus those residing in a hostel or under the care of a guardian, at a significance level of 0.05. This illustrates that fathers invest more quality time when the child resides within the familial setting. Conversely, the quality time invested by mothers demonstrates no substantial variance based on the residence of the children, remaining consistent whether within the family or elsewhere (hostel/guardian).

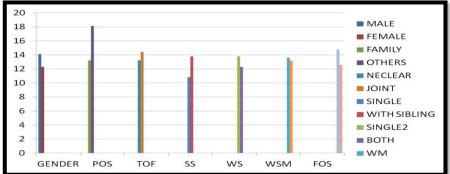
The study demonstrated a statistically significant variance in the allocation of quality time by parents between nuclear and joint family structures at a significance level of 0.01. Specifically, parents within nuclear families were found to invest a greater amount of quality time compared to those in joint family setups. However, there was no notable distinction in the quality time dedicated by parents regardless of whether they had a single child or multiple children. Similarly, the working status of parents did not significantly affect the amount of quality time spent with their children. Even when both parents were employed, there was no discernible variance in the quality time devoted to their children. The research highlighted a significant discrepancy in the quality time spent with children based on the mother's employment status, registering at a significance level of 0.01. Notably, when the mother was employed, there was a substantial increase in the quality time spent with the child, evidenced by a significant difference at a 0.05 significance level. Consequently, parents tended to allocate more quality time to their children if the mother was part of the workforce. Moreover, the study indicated no substantial differentiation in the quality time invested by fathers and mothers, irrespective of the father's occupational status. Whether engaged in business or employed in a salaried position, both fathers and mothers exhibited a similar pattern of dedicating quality time to their children.

Table 5 Comparison of Depression with Reference to Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Depression						
Gender	N	Mean	Sd	SE	't'ratio	SIG	
Male	103	14.10	9.223	1.54	1.16	0.25 ^{NS}	
Female	54	12.31	9.051				
PLACE OF STAY				•			
Family	149	13.23	9.176	3.31	1.47	0.14 ^{NS}	
Others	8	18.13	8.357				
TYPE OF FAMILY		•	*	•	•	•	
Nuclear	122	13.21	9.315	1.77	0.69	0.50 ^{NS}	
Joint	35	14.43	8.732				
SIBLING STATUS				•		•	
Single child	17	10.82	10.001	2.35	1.27	0.20 ^{NS}	
Has siblings	140	13.81	9.055				
WORKING STATUS				•		•	
1 parent working	125	13.78	9.341	1.82	0.81	0.42 ^{NS}	
Both working	32	12.31	8.532				
WORKING STATUS OF MOTHER				•			
Working mother	111	13.61	9.580	1.61	0.28	0.79^{NS}	
Non-working mother	46	13.17	8.204				
FATHERS OCCUPATION STATUS			•	•	•	•	
Father in Business	50	14.76	8.693	1.61 1.35		0.18^{NS}	
Father in Service	96	12.58	9.524				

^{*}Significant at 0.01 level

Figure 3 Comparison of Depression with Reference to Demographic Characteristics of the Sample



^{**} Significant at 0.05 level NS-Not Significant

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Table 4 and Figure 3 illustrate a lack of statistically significant variance in depression levels between male and female children, indicating equality in their depressive states. The domicile of the child demonstrates no discernible impact on depression levels, irrespective of whether they reside in a hostel or within a family setting. Adolescent exhibit consistent depression levels regardless of their familial structure, be it nuclear or joint. Furthermore, the presence of siblings or being an only child yields no statistically significant disparity in adolescent depression levels. The employment status of parents also does not contribute significantly to variations in adolescent depression—whether one or both parents are working shows no discernible impact. Similarly, the employment status of the mother does not engender any significant difference in adolescent depression levels. Lastly, the nature of the father's occupation, whether entrepreneurial or salaried, does not yield any notable divergence in depression levels among adolescents.

Table 6 Correlations between Quality Time and Depression of the Children

		Depression score
Quality time father	Pearson Correlation	189*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018
	N	157
Quality time Mother	Pearson Correlation	046
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.564
	N	157

The investigation employed Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient to examine the association between a child's depression and the quality time spent with their father or mother. The correlation coefficient for quality time spent with the father was determined as 0.185, indicating a statistically significant negative correlation at the 0.05 significance level. Conversely, the correlation coefficient for quality time spent with the mother was -0.046, signifying a negative correlation; however, this association did not reach statistical significance.

These findings suggest that children tend to exhibit higher levels of depression when quality time with their father is lacking, while the presence of quality time spent with the mother seems to correlate with reduced depressive symptoms. These conclusions align with the outcomes of the study titled 'Adolescent Depression and Time Spent with Parents and Siblings' (Desha, Laura N et al., Apr 2011), which asserts an indirect relationship between the duration of time spent with parents and the severity of depressive symptoms in adolescents.

Findings of the Study with regard to Quality time

Both Mother and father spend quality time with their children

Findings of the Study with regard to Quality time father and mother with reference to demographic characteristics of the sample

- 1. Paternal engagement in quality interactions is observed with both male and female offspring. Maternal investment in quality time exhibits a higher inclination toward interactions with female offspring.
- 2. Paternal allocation of quality time demonstrates a preference for children residing at home. Maternal investment in quality time remains consistent regardless of the children's residential setting (home, hostel, or with a guardian).
- 3. Within nuclear family settings, parental investment in quality time with children surpasses that observed in joint family structures.
- 4. Parental allocation of quality time remains equitable irrespective of the presence or absence of siblings.
- 5. Regardless of parental employment status, there is consistent investment in quality time with children.
- 6. Employed mothers exhibit a higher propensity for investing quality time with their children compared to non-working mothers.
- 7. Both paternal roles, encompassing business and salaried occupations, demonstrate an equitable allocation of quality time toward children.

Findings of the Study with regard to comparison of depression with reference to demographic characteristics of the sample

- 1. There is an absence of significant gender-based disparity in depression levels among children, indicating equality between boys and girls.
- 2. Comparable levels of depression are observed among children residing both at home and in hostile environments.
- 3. The levels of depression exhibited by children in joint family setups and nuclear family structures are similar.
- 4. The presence or absence of siblings does not correlate with variations in the level of depression; equivalence is observed between individuals with siblings and those who are only children.

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- 5. The employment status of parents, whether both parents are working or a single parent is employed, does not exhibit a discernible impact on the level of depression among children.
- 6. The maternal employment status does not demonstrate a significant impact on the level of depression among children.
- 7. The paternal employment status does not appear to influence the level of depression experienced by children.

Findings of the study with regard to correlation between the quality time spent by the parent and depression of the child

Children are more depressed if the father doesn't spend quality time with them.

Conclusions

The current investigation yields findings indicating that maternal figures allocate a comparatively greater amount of quality time to interactions with their adolescent offspring in contrast to paternal involvement. Within nuclear family structures, parental units allocate increased periods of quality time compared to those in joint family setups. Furthermore, paternal investment in quality time with children escalates in instances where the maternal figure is engaged in employment. Notably, a correlation is observed between diminished paternal quality time investment and heightened levels of depression among children when compared to the duration of quality time invested by maternal figures.

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