

Perceived Parenting and Self Concept of Indian college boys and girls

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Abstract

Parenting young children can be both fascinating as well as challenging. As aspects of personality like self concept develop further around this period, the dynamics of parenting become even more crucial. The objective of the present study is to understand perceived parenting, self concept and the relationship between them among young boys and girls living in urban India. The sample consisted of 100 college going youth (50 boys and 50 girls) who were enrolled for undergraduate courses in universities in Delhi & the North Central Region (Delhi NCR). Data was collected and analysed using t-test and correlation analysis. No significant gender differences were observed in perceived parenting except in the dimension of Faulty Role Expectation vs. Realistic Role Expectation for Fathers and Marital Conflict vs. Marital Adjustment. Also, there were no significant gender differences in Self Concept of college going boys and girls except for Physical and Educational Self Concept where boys indicated a higher level of self concept than girls. The correlational analyses yielded a positive relationship between perceived parenting and self concept in the sample under study. The study highlights upon the role of fathers in parenting and emphasizes the need for their active involvement and contribution for the successful development of their young children.

Keywords: perceived parenting, self concept, youth, gender

Introduction

The role of parents in the development of their child extends beyond just the pre-formative years of childhood or adolescence. It can be viewed more as a life-long process where their love, guidance and support translate in different capacities at different stages of life. Parenting involves the upbringing of a child by providing parental care, nourishment, protection and guidance along the course of his/her development (Brooks, 1991). In this process, parents adopt and exhibit various styles and practices of parenting. They may be an outcome of intentional choices (e.g. a punishment style) or without their active awareness (e.g. looking at one's smartphone while answering their child's questions). Children are not passive bystanders to what they see and hear. These experiences, small or big, form their perceptions of parental attention, warmth, discipline, expectations and their moral inclinations. They contribute to the socio-emotional development of the individual in a positive or negative way. Understanding thus the nature of parenting and how children perceive them forms a vital part of understanding the dynamics of parent-child relationships.

Perceived Parenting

The history of developmental research is replete with studies on parenting. One of the most significant and widely known classical studies was that of Diana Baumrind's (1971) model of parenting styles. They refer to the perception of parents about their own parenting attitudes and behaviours along the dimensions of warmth and control towards their children. Accordingly, parenting styles may be classified as either Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive or Neglectful. However, there is no guarantee that children perceive parental affection, warmth and control the same way as parents mean it to be. In other words, there is a fair chance of overlap between parenting intended and parenting perceived. This realization prompted later researchers like Bharadwaj (1998) towards a new direction of inquiry namely the study of 'Perceived Parenting'. Like parenting styles, Perceived Parenting looks into the attitudes and behaviours of parents towards their children in the process of parenting, but from the perspective/ as perceived by the child. Understanding perceived parenting is important because a child who has a positive perception of his/her parents' upbringing of him/her as socially normal and desirable will be more likely to be accepting and adjusting with the parents. Also, perceived parenting can provide useful feedback on the effectiveness of parenting styles and practices (Baumrind, 1996).

Self Concept

Self-Concept concerns the judgements one makes about self as well as collective behaviours (Serra, 1988). Studies in the past have shown its wide implications on aspects of personal, family and social life (Ferreira, Bento, Chaves & Duarte, 2014) as well as other psychological variables like life adjustment, motivation (de Freitas & Paton, 2009). Parenting finds connection with Self-Concept because an individual's upbringing as well as perception of the parenting has an impact on his/her concept of self. Perceived positive parenting has been attributed with positive thinking, spontaneity, creativity and self-confidence in children. Perceived negative parental attitude or a failure to meet upto parental expectations has been linked to feelings of being unwanted, incompetent, inferior and maladjusted.

Dynamics of parenting in adolescence

The study of parenting assumes significant importance during adolescence and youth which is a life stage marked by massive growth, changes and challenges of its own. By the time children approach early adulthood, the reins of parental control have loosened considerably and parents have begun to view their children as autonomous individuals (Aquilino, 2006). Nonetheless, a successful transition to the more settled stage of adulthood requires crucial social, emotional, psychological and financial support as it requires navigating through the turbulent years of youth (Conger, Conger, Russell, & Hollis, 2013). Studies report that young people expect to find support from their family during this stage (Epstein & Sanders, 2002) and the lack of active parental involvement thereof can be detrimental to their academic performance, physical well being and mental health (Hartnett, et. al, 2018). However, this need not imply that they wish to be followed everywhere or be under strict supervision. For instance, Fingerman & Cheng et al., (2012) observe that young people may not be fully appreciative of excessive parental support though they may not be rejecting it straight forward. They may also feel confident about themselves and desire for greater autonomy and independence from parental involvement in their lives (Arnett, 1997). Conflicts are common in many families as they question conventional norms and seek to develop their own identity (Smetana, 1989). In other words, attaining a balance in the parent-child dynamics during this stage can be both interesting and challenging.

Impact of perceived parenting on the development of the individual

Although it may not be clear by what process or means parenting influences child development, there are enough evidence to suggest that parental attitudes, actions and behaviours impact the emotional growth and well being of children (Gar, Hudson, & Rapee, 2005). As children further reach adolescence and youth, psychological constructs like self-concept that had developed earlier in childhood begin to take more concrete shape. In times like these, how they perceive themselves as well as how they perceive their parents' perceptions of them plays a huge role in either enhancing or destroying their image and concept of self and ultimately their social and emotional well being.

Cross cultural studies on how parenting has been perceived by individuals in the West and in India yield interesting observations (Sahitya, Manohari & Raman, 2019). Parental warmth and responsiveness in the West have been associated with development of inhibition capacities in children and the lack of it has been associated with greater oppositional outcomes (Roskam, Stievenart, Meunier, & Noel, 2014; Stormshak et al., 2000). In a recent study of 6483 adolescents aged 13-18 years, it was found that high maternal care was linked to lower risks of behavioural, depressive and eating disorders and high paternal care was linked to lesser risks of substance abuse and occurrence of social phobias (Eun, Paksarian, He & Merikangas, 2018; Lieb et al., 2000). On the other hand, young children who perceived their parents as being cold, rejecting, over controlling and overprotective showed greater social anxiety and symptoms of depression (Spokas & Heimberg, 2009; Betts et al., 2009; Mousavi et al., 2016). Paternal and maternal overprotection has also been linked to pubertal anorexia nervosa in adolescent girls (Albinhac et al., 2018). Another study on a group of 17,399 young participants reported that individuals who identified their parents as authoritarian also had higher chances of depression (King et al., 2016).

A review of Indian studies on parenting has shown that perception of parental warmth and acceptance has been consistent with positive development and wellbeing of children (Kumari & Kang, 2017; Pandey & Kumar, 2009; Rai, 2008). When parents were perceived as more accepting, warm and less controlling, it led to academic efficiency and also lower levels of test anxiety in students (Lakshmi & Arora, 2006; Thergaonkar & Wadkar, 2007). On the contrary, parents who were rejecting, punitive and hostile found children at a higher risk of substance abuse and externalising aggressive behaviours (Rai, 2008; Sandhu & Sharma, 2015, Sharma & Sandhu, 2006). Good parent-child relationships in adolescence was also linked with mental well being and lower risks of violent

behaviours (Hegde, Kamath & Roy, 2015). Indian adolescent have been found to more likely associate the feeling of love and protection with their mothers while perceiving their fathers as more rejecting, demanding and neglectful (Kamble, 2009). There have been mixed results as to how parental control impacts individuals. While some studies found association between high levels of maternal control and stress, anxiety and depression (Jahan & Suri, 2016), others showed associations between high control and less anxiety (Albert, Trommsdorff & Mishra, 2007). The cross cultural review by Sahitya et al. (2019) on parenting styles and its perceptions by children observed that irrespective of the culture one lives in, perception of parental warmth, acceptance, protection and care were generally linked to positive outcomes in terms of emotional, social and mental wellbeing of the children; whereas overprotecting, over controlling and neglectful attributes of parenting could be associated with less desirable outcomes.

The Present Study

Parenting is dynamic. As individuals with distinct personalities, both children and parents change with time. These changes are further influenced by events at the personal (e.g., puberty), communal (e.g., peer pressure), local (e.g., neighbourhood, school) and global (e.g., across borders) levels. The researcher is interested in investigating the shifting perception of parenting by young people today and understanding what influences the way they perceive parenting and how that in turn affects the development of the individual across various dimensions of personality like self-concept.

For a better understanding of the findings of this study, few relevant demographic and social aspects of the sample population has been touched upon within the context of the Indian society. Factors such as gender, family, patriarchy, educational status have formed part and parcel of the Indian society since centuries. With the advent of urbanization, industrialization and westernization, there has been a gradual shift in norms, values and practices. These changes have been more visible in the urban cities and towns (Chowdhury & Patnaik, 2013). The population considered in the current study comprises of college boys and girls from central and private educational institutions of Delhi NCR. The location and context of the study is significant owing to its being a prominent educational hub that has attracted students from all across the country who come to the city to pursue their higher education as well as careers. It is common to find a representation of the country in these college campuses. Most of the students also constitute and represent the major section of the urban Indian middle class family and are also at the forefront of

the merging of the traditional and the modern. Tapping into their perspectives about self and parenting in the backdrop of the above mentioned context holds the potential to give us an idea of the transition in the lives of the urban Indian youth.

Keeping this in mind, the main objectives of the present study were as follows-

- (1) To check for the presence of gender differences between urban Indian college going boys and girls for perceived parenting.
- (2) To check for the presence of gender differences between urban Indian college going boys and girls in the area of self-concept.
- (3) To study the relationship between perceived parenting and self-concept of college going boys and girls.

Hypotheses

Building upon the objectives, the hypotheses of the present study were as follows-

- H1: There will be no significant gender differences in the scores of Perceived Parenting between urban Indian college going boys and girls.
- H2: There will be no significant gender differences in the level of Self Concept between urban Indian college going boys and girls.
- H3: There will be a significant positive relationship between Perceived Parenting and Self Concept of college going boys and girls.

Method

Participants: Data for the present study was collected from a sample of 100 college going youth (50 male and 50 female) between the age of 18-21 years. They were enrolled for undergraduate courses in universities in and around Delhi NCR. Academic background was taken into consideration and students with a background in psychology were excluded from the study. Demographic information was collected for Family Income Level, Mother's Level of Education (Undergraduate or below; Graduate; Postgraduate and above) and Father's Level of Education (Undergraduate or below; Graduate; Postgraduate and above).

Parenting Scale: In the present study, Parenting Scale by Bharadwaj et al. (1998) has been used to tap into the construct of perceived parenting. It comprises of eight dimensions of parenting which was evaluated for mothering and fathering. Each dimension consisted of

five questions with five alternative answers each for mothering and fathering except for the eighth dimension which corresponds to Marital Conflict vs. Adjustment where questions were combined for mothers and fathers. The scoring was done on 5-point Likert scale.

Self-Concept Questionnaire: Self-Concept Questionnaire by Saraswat (1984) was used to study the construct of self-concept. It consists of 48 items that tap into six dimensions of self-concept. Each item was followed with five alternatives of which the participant was required to tick the most appropriate one. Scoring was done with each statement carrying a valence between 1-5.

Procedure

Participants were selected from college and hostel campuses as well as public places like metro stations. As they arrived, rapport was built and they were briefed upon the overview of the study. Informed Consent was obtained and instructions were given. After this, a booklet containing demographic sheet, Parenting Scale and Self-Concept Questionnaire was handed over to them. Upon completion of the test, the participants were debriefed shortly and their feedback was obtained. In the later stage, data was coded and entered into SPSS software (Version 21) for statistical analysis. The findings were evaluated for gender differences of participants and differences in their perception between mothers and fathers. Further, a correlational study was done to explore the connection between perceived parenting and self-concept.

Results

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-ratio of Parenting Scores with respect to Gender

Dimension of Parenting	Gender				<i>t</i> (98)	<i>p</i>
	Boys		Girls			
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Rejection vs. Acceptance (M)	19.20	2.64	19.02	2.86	.327 ^{ns}	.744

Rejection vs. Acceptance (F)	18.96	3.04	19.22	3.71	-.383 ^{ns}	.702
Carelessness vs. Protection (M)	19.52	2.57	18.92	2.49	1.187 ^{ns}	.238
Carelessness vs. Protection (F)	18.86	2.56	18.36	2.51	.986 ^{ns}	.326
Neglect vs. Indulgence (M)	19.60	3.02	19.34	2.73	.451 ^{ns}	.653
Neglect vs. Indulgence (F)	20.04	2.92	19.16	2.58	1.348 ^{ns}	.181
Utopian Expectation vs. Realism (M)	19.40	2.33	18.94	2.86	.882 ^{ns}	.380
Utopian Expectation vs. Realism (F)	18.82	2.99	18.48	3.48	.523 ^{ns}	.602
Lenient Standard vs. Moralism (M)	18.34	2.97	18.46	2.76	-.209 ^{ns}	.835
Lenient Standard vs. Moralism (F)	18.50	2.56	18.48	3.06	.035 ^{ns}	.972
Freedom vs. Discipline (M)	18.74	3.82	18.54	3.18	.284 ^{ns}	.777
Freedom vs. Discipline (F)	18.44	3.94	18.40	2.88	.058 ^{ns}	.954
Faulty Role Expectation vs. Realistic Role Expectation (M)	17.58	2.57	16.76	2.95	1.481 ^{ns}	.142
Faulty Role Expectation vs. Realistic Role Expectation (F)	17.94	2.13	16.74	3.39	2.118*	.037
Marital Conflict vs. Marital Adjustment	18.98	3.29	17.26	3.29	2.612*	.010
Perceived Mothering	1.32	13.33	1.29	11.82	.952 ^{ns}	.343
Perceived Fathering	1.31	13.45	1.29	15.40	.940 ^{ns}	.349

Note: M- Mother, F- Father, * -Significant at 0.05 levels, and ^{ns} - Not Significant

Table 1 depicts the Mean, Standard Deviation and t-ratio of Perceived Parenting for gender. In the dimension of Faulty Role Expectation vs. Realistic Role Expectation of parenting by fathers, boys ($M=17.94$, $SD= 2.13$) reported significantly higher levels of realistic role expectation than their counterpart girls ($M=16.74$, $SD= 3.39$), $t(98)=2.12$, $p=.037$. In the dimension of Marital Conflict vs. Marital Adjustment of parenting, girls ($M=17.26$, $SD= 3.29$) reported significantly lower levels of perceived marital adjustment than their counterpart boys ($M=18.98$, $SD= 3.29$), $t(98)=2.61$, $p=.010$. The rest of the dimensions of Perceived Parenting showed no significant differences for gender of college going boys and girls in the present sample. Therefore, Hypothesis H1 which predicted that there will be no significant difference between college going boys and girls for Perceived Parenting can be partially accepted.

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-ratio of Self Concept Scores with respect to Gender

Dimension of Self-Concept	Gender				$t(98)$	p
	Boys		Girls			
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Physical SC	29.14	3.80	27.26	3.07	2.721^{**}	.008
Social SC	29.20	3.42	29.12	3.64	.113 ^{ns}	.910
Temperamental SC	29.94	3.30	28.76	3.34	1.776 ^{ns}	.079
Educational SC	29.62	4.07	27.60	4.47	2.362[*]	.020
Moral SC	29.74	2.70	30.84	2.94	-1.947 ^{ns}	.054
Intellectual SC	26.90	3.81	26.20	3.31	.981 ^{ns}	.329
Total SC	1.75	12.45	1.68	12.61	1.9 ^{ns}	.060

*Note: * -Significant at 0.05 levels, ** -Significant at 0.01 levels and ^{ns} - Not Significant*

Table 2 depicts the Mean, Standard Deviation and t-ratio of Self Concept for gender (independent samples t test). Boys ($M=29.14$, $SD= 3.80$) reported significantly higher levels of Physical Self Concept than girls ($M=27.26$, $SD=3.06$), $t(98)=2.72$, $p=.008$. Boys ($M=29.62$, $SD= 4.07$) reported significantly higher levels of Educational Self Concept than girls ($M=27.60$, $SD=4.47$), $t(98)=2.36$, $p=.020$. In the rest of the dimensions of Self Concept, there were no significant gender differences between college going boys and girls. Therefore, Hypothesis H2 which predicted that there will be no significant difference between college going boys and girls for Self Concept can be partially accepted.

Correlation table between Perceived Parenting and Self Concept

Table 3

Inter-correlation matrix between dimensions of Perceived Parenting with Self Concept

	Physical	Social	Temperamental	Educational	Moral	Intellectual	Total
Rejection vs. Acceptance (M)	.080	.152	.155	.082	.216*	.140	.222*
Rejection vs. Acceptance (F)	.199*	.286*	.197*	.153	.158	.157	.320*
Carelessness vs. Protection (M)	-.026	.018	-.061	-.159	.047	-.056	-.079
Carelessness vs. Protection (F)	-.085	.295*	.117	.046	.057	.047	.131
Neglect vs. Indulgence (M)	.015	.242*	.214*	.016	.086	.104	.182
Neglect vs. Indulgence (F)	.170	.354*	.261*	.178*	-.031	.153	.312*
Utopian Expectation vs. Realism (M)	.286**	.040	.202*	.159	-.118	.323**	.264*
Utopian Expectation vs. Realism (F)	.218*	.220*	.307*	.064	-.040	.227*	.280*
Lenient Standard vs. Moralism (M)	-.114	.198*	.027	-.108	.185	-.159	-.010
Lenient Standard vs. Moralism (F)	-.059	.237*	.104	.014	.143	-.139	.074

Freedom vs. Discipline (M)	-.048	.173	.074	-.098	.104	-.154	.001
Freedom vs. Discipline (F)	-.108	.219*	.045	.101	.035	-.276**	.007
Faulty Expectation vs. Realistic Expectation (M)	-.106	.118	-.083	-.118	.066	-.031	-.054
Faulty Expectation vs. Realistic Expectation (F)	.116	.138	.118	.052	.065	.169	.182
Marital Conflict vs. Adjustment	.204*	.234*	.252*	.178	-.002	.103	.279*
Mothering	.012	.219*	.121	-.056	.137	.024	.115
Fathering	.105	.374*	.249*	.136	.080	.072	.284*
		*					*

Table 3 depicts the correlation analyses between Perceived Parenting and Self Concept. *Rejection vs. Acceptance* (Mothers) was significantly correlated with Moral Self-Concept ($r=.216$, $p<.05$). On the other hand, *Rejection vs. Acceptance* (Fathers) was significantly correlated with Physical Self-Concept ($r=.199$, $p<.05$), Social Self-Concept ($r=.286$, $p<.01$), Temperamental Self-Concept ($r=.197$, $p<.05$) and Total Self-Concept ($r=.320$, $p<.01$). *Carelessness vs. Protection* (Fathers) was significantly correlated with Social Self-Concept ($r=.295$, $p<.01$). There was no significant relationship of *Carelessness vs. Protection* (Mothers) with any of the dimensions of Self-Concept of college going students. *Neglect vs. Indulgence* (Mothers) was significantly correlated with Social Self-Concept ($r=.242$, $p<.01$) and Temperamental Self-Concept ($r=.214$, $p<.05$). On the other hand, *Neglect vs. Indulgence* (Fathers) was significantly correlated with Physical Self-Concept ($r=.170$, $p<.05$), Social Self-Concept ($r=.354$, $p<.01$), Temperamental Self-Concept ($r=.261$, $p<.01$), Educational Self-Concept ($r=.178$, $p<.05$) and Total Self-Concept ($r=.312$, $p<.01$). *Utopian Expectation vs. Realism* (Mothers) was significantly correlated with Physical Self-Concept ($r=.286$, $p<.01$), Temperamental Self-Concept ($r=.202$, $p<.05$), Intellectual Self-Concept ($r=.323$, $p<.01$) and Total Self-Concept ($r=.264$, $p<.01$). On the other hand, *Utopian Expectation vs. Realism* (Fathers) was significantly correlated with Physical Self-Concept ($r=.218$, $p<.05$), Social Self-Concept ($r=.220$, $p<.05$), Temperamental Self-Concept ($r=.307$, $p<.01$), Intellectual Self-Concept ($r=.227$, $p<.05$) and Total Self-Concept ($r=.280$, $p<.01$). *Lenient Standard vs. Moralism* (Mothers) was significantly correlated with Social Self-Concept ($r=.198$, $p<.05$) and *Lenient Standard vs. Moralism* (Fathers) was significantly correlated with Social Self-Concept ($r=.237$, $p<.01$).

Freedom vs. Discipline (Fathers) was significantly correlated with Social Self-Concept ($r=.219$, $p<.05$) and Intellectual Self-Concept ($r=.276$, $p<.01$). There was no significant relationship of *Freedom vs. Discipline* (Mothers) with any of the dimensions of Self-Concept of college going students. There was no significant relationship of *Faulty Role Expectation vs. Realistic Role Expectation* (Fathers and Mothers) with any of the dimensions of Self-Concept of college going students. *Marital Conflict vs. Marital Adjustment* was significantly correlated with Physical Self-Concept ($r=.204$, $p<.05$), Social Self-Concept ($r=.234$, $p<.01$), Temperamental Self-Concept ($r=.252$, $p<.01$) and Total Self-Concept ($r=.279$, $p<.01$) of college going students.

From Table 3, it could be observed that except for *Carelessness vs. Protection* (Mothers) and *Freedom vs. Discipline* (Mothers), the rest of the dimensions of Perceived Parenting of mothers and fathers affected one or more dimensions of Self Concept in the sample under study. Therefore, Hypothesis H3 which predicted that there will be significant positive relationship between between Perceived Parenting and Self Concept of college going boys and girls can be partially accepted.

Sample Demographic Characteristics Table

Table 4

Distribution of demographic character of: Educational level of parents.

Level of Education	Mothers	Fathers
Undergraduate or below	36	26
Graduate	45	38
Postgraduate and above	19	36

Discussion

In the present study, Self concept and perceived parenting of college going adolescents was studied to find the differences in boys and girls. Further, correlation between Self concept and perceived parenting was also evaluated.

Gender differences on Perceived Parenting:

From the findings of the present study, it was observed that there were no significant gender differences with respect to how adolescents perceived parenting except in the area of role expectations from fathers and marital adjustment between parents. The urban Indian circles have witnessed a slow but gradual transition over the years in recognizing and accepting women as being at par with men in terms of potential and prestige. This has meant a significant impact in parenting as far as how boys and girls are viewed, nurtured and invested upon. Greater sensitization towards equal treatment and regard towards both the boys and girls in the family has led to narrowing the gap between differences in Perceived Parenting to a large extent as can be indicated from this study too. However, this may differ in different communities and social circles where patriarchy is dominant.

In the present study, boys were found to have a more realistic role expectation of their fathers as compared to girls (refer Table 1). Despite being progressive in ideologies, this shows that patriarchy may be still deeply rooted in many circles of our society. This can be seen in how boys are groomed to be future breadwinners of the home and hence, more resources are focused towards developing his social standing in terms of being well educated, finding a good job and so on. There is no confusion as to the role he is expected to someday assume as the patriarchal head and provider of the home. This may not be the case with girls. While parents may not discourage daughters to pursue their dreams, a failure might not be a cause of much concern as she can be married and well off. However, their sons carry a more realistic expectation to keep up the family status as well as future success, reinforcing patriarchal norms when it comes to role division and expectations.

Yet another dimension which yielded significant differences between boys and girls was Marital Conflict vs. Adjustment where girls showed greater sensitivity towards marital conflict in the family (refer Table 1). Research shows that while boys tend to offer practical solutions to conflict and get done with (Davies, Myers & Cummings, 1996), girls tend to take a more mediatory role and regulate their involvement or avoidance to the conflict in turn becoming more exposed and affected by it (Goeke-Morey, Cummings, Harold & Shelton, 2003; Davies et. al., 2002; Davies & Windle, 1997). Furthermore, in a society like India where the mother-daughter bond is strong, mothers tend to open up to their daughters about marital and family issues even more than anyone else in the family. This could be a possible reason as to why girls perceive marital conflict more strongly than the boys.

Gender differences on Self Concept

Self Concept is a dynamic psychological construct that develops over time. Studies on gender differences in Self Concept during adolescence show inconclusive results varying from the presence of significant differences (Harper & Marshall, 1991) to the absence of it (Ostgard-Ybsandt & Armelius, 2003; Armelius, 2001). Where there were gender differences, it was generally the trend that boys showed higher levels of Self Concept than girls (Kaur & Singh, 2017; Singh, Goyal & Singh, 2016; Bhat & Netragaonkar, 2014).

In the present study, no significant gender differences were observed in the overall self concept of boys and girls nor in the sub-dimensions of Social, Temperamental, Moral and Intellectual Self concept (refer Table 2). The boy-girl dichotomy persists strongly in the life events of an Indian and extends from being just a biological difference to a matter of social difference, difference in allocation of family resources and opportunities to education, health care and nutrition (Chowdhury & Patnaik, 2013). Earlier studies reported that Indian girls showed signs of low self esteem and feelings of inferiority and low worth about themselves (Cormack, 1961; Kakar, 1978). With changing times and a more sensitized attitude towards boys and girls, women especially in the urban and semi-urban circles have been empowered to participate in activities beyond home (Chowdhury & Patnaik, 2013). These could have contributed towards narrowing the Self Concept gap between boys and girls in present times.

However, the present study shows gender differences in the areas of Physical Self Concept where boys had a higher level of Self Concept than girls (refer Table 2). A higher level of Physical Self Concept among Indian adolescent boys was also reported in an earlier study by Singh, Goyal & Singh (2016). This may be indicative of the fact that boys are directly or indirectly encouraged to support/develop a macho image. Also, puberty and the accompanying physical development marked a positive experience in the case of young boys (Agam, Tamir & Golan, 2015). On the other hand, the findings may also be indicative of the unrealistic ideals of physical beauty that girls are constantly exposed to. In a digital age where the urban youth are increasingly engaging with social media, Instagram feeds, advertisements, their notions of physical fitness and attractiveness is constantly being

shaped by what they are watching. Pervasive media messages floated via TV and magazines have also done much to raise unrealistic notions of body image and beauty, promoting a negative self concept among girls (Leaper, 2002). The Indian media is not bereft of this influence and has promoted the notion of perfect figure in the image of thin fashion models (Rekha & Maran, 2012). Globalisation and the growing culture of consumerism in Indian cities have made it a prime target for Western multinational companies to promote not only their commodities but their ideals of physical beauty (Chakraborty & De, 2014). The average urban Indian girl finds herself not only at the crossroad of the traditional and the modern, but is also influenced by her peers, family and media which can lead to dissatisfaction (Swami et al. 2010) and lower physical self concept.

The study also showed that boys had a higher level of Educational self concept than girls. Educational Self Concept is chiefly concerned within the framework of educational institutions. It differs from Intellectual Self Concept which taps into the intellectual capacity an individual possesses to tackle different problems in life. A characteristic feature of the Indian society is the prestige and glory accorded to academic success. Educational achievement has been equated to family's status and reputation (Joshi, 2005) and fulfilling parental expectations of academic success has been found to contribute to development of self concept among Indian youth. Students also reported experiencing pressure to attain high educational standards (Bhattacharya, 2000) showing how important educational attainment is for boys in the Indian context. While boys and girls may not lack the intellectual capacity to excel equally well (no gender difference observed in Intellectual self concept), it is possible that the disparity observed in Educational self concept is engrained in the settings of the Indian family. Global studies revealed and reported the existence of parental bias in expecting their sons to perform better in the science and maths streams compared to their daughters (Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002; Eccles et. al., 2000) despite the fact that they actually scored equally well in lower school grades. This was found to be true of the Indian scenario too. Anand (2014) found that parental expectations are different for boys and girls in India. While girls are encouraged to take up softer careers like arts, home science and so on, boys are encouraged to excel in science and maths. This environment of comparison and competition with boys in the arena of education has been linked in earlier studies to girls showing under-confidence and low self esteem (van de Werfhorst et al., 2003). Furthermore, the Indian family system runs along

the lines of patriarchy and this influence extends over to the educational sphere too. This is supported by recent studies reporting that the choice of discipline and career for an Indian woman still often lies with the family rather than the individual herself (Chanana, 2014). Such circumstances may contribute to a lower Education self concept also owing to lower control over the circumstances.

Perceived Parenting and Self Concept

The findings of the present study showed that perceived parenting and self concept of Indian adolescent have a mutual influence on each other. Earlier research investigating this relationship had yielded similar results. In a study conducted by De & Sengupta (2011) among college going youth in Kolkata, a positive association was observed between parental support and self concept with higher scores on parental support reflecting in higher levels of self concept. Sathyabama & Jerryda (2014) reported significant relationship between perceived parental attitudes and self esteem during adolescence. Another study by Badgular & Mundada (2014) on adolescent students in Maharashtra also reported that parenting had a direct relationship with self concept. Lower scores on parental warmth, acceptance and care led to unsatisfactory self concept and vice versa.

In the present paper, apart from discussing the main findings, an attempt has also been made to understand the results in the context of Baumrind's parenting styles. Baumrind (1971) proposed three primary styles of parenting i.e., authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles. The eight dimensions of perceived parenting tapped in this study can be seen to fit in the larger framework of Baumrind's parenting styles. For instance, Authoritarian parenting style is characterized by high control, demands, strictness, punitive discipline and low responsiveness. Features of parenting like indulgence, acceptance, overprotection and lenient standards find similarities with a Permissive parenting style. On the other hand, Authoritative parenting style is marked by high yet realistic expectations, warmth, acceptance, support and constructive discipline (Savitha & Venkatachalam, 2016).

The results of the study show that adolescents' parental perception of warmth, acceptance, realistic role expectations and discipline of both mothers and fathers had a significant positive influence on self-concept across dimensions. They also sync with

features of Authoritative parenting style and have been considered highly idealistic for the development of children in previous studies (Yarahmadi, 2015; Radhika & Joseph, 2013). A parental environment of warmth, support and active involvement in the lives of their wards has been shown to cultivate feelings of self-worth and value in the child's personality (Myers & Myers, 1992). Participant data also shows that the aspect of Realism showed a stronger contribution of both mothers and fathers and also influenced more dimensions of self concept than the others. Parental attitude of realism implies having realistic and achievable expectations of performance from the child by taking into consideration their unique capabilities and the realities of the outside world. Such parents are sensitive to the capacities of their children and their circumstances (Badgujar & Mundada, 2014). They are sensitive not to tax their children with unattainable or utopian standards and this reflects in a positive self concept in the developing youth persona. It contrasts with parents who have utopian expectations and set high and unrealistic expectations of performance from their children, not being sensitive to their abilities as well as limitations, and thus causing unwanted pressure and anxiety on the children. It follows then that the perception of parents as more realistic by the participants of the present study was associated with positive self concept. Earlier studies reported a positive influence of behaviour by parents who were more highly educated (Dumont et al., 2012). In the present sample, 74% of fathers and 64% of mothers had a graduate or above level of education (refer Table 4). The rest had an undergraduate level of education. Educated parents tend to have a more broad minded approach and sensitivity to the learning pace and styles lowering the pressure from children to fulfil unrealistic goals. This provides children an atmosphere of warmth, confidence and acceptance to develop to the best version of themselves. On the other hand, parents from low income households miss out the chance to be actively involved in their child's welfare or miss out on physical presence due to the need to grab every opportunity to earn (Neuman, 2002).

Self concept scores of participants also showed significant associations with perceived indulgence, freedom and protection of parents which are indicative of a permissive style of parenting. Studies have shown how neglectful parenting can hamper children's social skills and often lead to loneliness (Nayak & Kochar, 2016). On the other hand, parents who are indulgent in their children's upbringing take up a more peer-like approach and facilitate interaction with them (Berg, 2011). This is reflected in the results of the present study which showed that perceived indulgence of both mothers and fathers

had a strong influence on social and temperamental self concept of the adolescent. However, being over permissive with respect to freedom reflected negatively on the intellectual self concept of adolescent as such parents are less demanding and avoid confronting their wards (Baumrind, 1967). This can lead to a compromise in not pushing the children to realize their full intellectual potential, which in turn could lower their intellectual self concept. This becomes even more crucial in a country like India where academia remains a highly competitive platform. When parents were not demanding and low in supervision, it has been shown to reflect in poorer grades and school performance (Sanstharan & Othman, 2017).

Yet another dimension that showed strong association between parenting and self concept was that of Marital Conflict vs. Marital Adjustment. When children perceive a healthy marital adjustment between their parents, it was found to improve their self concept. Marital adjustment provides a harmonious, secure and peaceful environment which is essential for the development of positive self concept in the growing up years. Young people who have witnessed marital affection and low marital hostility have been shown to have higher levels of self concept (Bishop & Ingersoll, 1988). On the other hand, when young girls are exposed to more marital conflict, it has been known to be detrimental to their self concept even if they may be in a congenial relationship with their parents individually (Amato, 1986). Further, the socio-economic standing of the families can play an important role. Sanstharan & Othman (2017) mentions that low income families tend to experience more conflict due to stress. The study sample belonged to middle income families and they were well settled in cities. It is possible that this could have reduced the stress level thereby minimizing the chances of conflicts of such nature.

Involvement of Fathers in Parenting

An interesting observation arises out of the present study. Though parenting as a whole influenced self concept of adolescents positively, the contribution of fathers was found to be wider than that of mothers. Parenting of fathers across all dimensions has been shown to be related with self concept though in varying degrees. On the other hand, no significant relationship was established by mothers' parenting in the dimensions of Carelessness vs. Protection, Freedom vs. Discipline and Faulty vs. Realistic Role

Expectation across any dimension of self concept. The observations arising out of this study (both quantitative and qualitative) yet again highlight the longstanding tradition of patriarchal hegemony in the Indian society which still prevails even in present times. With a rising level of empowerment of women in education and their participation in the global taskforce, we see that the gender gap is narrowing down. Despite that, patriarchal influence and male supremacy remains and has been shown through this study to influence personality factors like self-concept and external factors like perceived parenting. Men continue to have an upper hand when it comes to decisions in the family or control of resources (Roopnarine, Krishnakumar &Vadgama, 2013).

Across the world, parenting has been long viewed primarily as the responsibility of mothers. Researchers in the past have noted that there is a substantial gap in the parenting literature on the role and involvement of fathers (Lansford et. al., 2014). Fathers play a unique role for the positive development of their children, far greater than is usually indicated or understood to be (Roopnarine, Krishnakumar &Vadgama, 2013; Parke, 2002). Studies show positive associations between involvement of fathers and child outcomes (Pleck, 2004). The present study further reinforces the contribution of fathers in the parenting process. While patriarchal nature remains, the study shows the positive influence (and not negative as has usually been) of parenting by fathers. As observed by Chaudhary (2013), one needs to broaden viewing of the Indian family on purely patriarchal terms. It is important to acknowledge the steps taken by today's fathers towards sharing the responsibility of parenting with the mothers. Increasingly, fathers especially in urban settings are becoming sensitized to care, foster, guide and assist in child upbringing (Björk, 2013; Tuli & Chaudhary, 2010; Saraff& Srivastava, 2008). Though they surely do not imply a complete change of attitudes towards gender roles in parenting, they are indicative of transitions from strict stereotypical role adherence towards a more accommodative role sharing.

Conclusion

The Indian family scenario is undergoing transition. Building upon research over time, the findings of this study suggest that there is a gradual narrowing of the gap between young Indian boys and girls in some psychological areas. Two such constructs that were focused in this research concerned how they perceived parenting by their parents and about their own self-concept. Except in few dimensions, there were no significant differences in how adolescent boys and girls thought about the two. Further, the study reinforced the

relationship between perceived parenting and self-concept during adolescence and youth. While the role of both parents is essential for healthy and wholesome parenting, the study highlights upon the often overlooked yet equally important role of fathers in the psychosocial development of his adolescent and young children. It challenges the vastly existing stereotypical notion of restricting the role of fathers in the family to that of a breadwinner or financial provider. In the present study, how young children perceived parenting of their fathers and its relationship with self-concept marked a wider and more significant influence than even their mothers. Needless to say, parenting needs to be increasingly understood as a shared responsibility (Tuli & Chaudhary, 2010). The psychological gap between young Indian boys and girls is seen to be narrowing down in terms of how they perceive important areas like parenting and self-concept. For best outcomes in the future, it must be followed by a narrowing of the rigid stereotypes surrounding the role of father-mother as provider-nurturer only and an embracing of parenting as a shared adventure.

Limitations

The study cannot be generalized for the larger population due to its small sample size and limitation to the region in and around Delhi NCR. The study also narrowed down its focus to two constructs, i.e, perceived parenting and self-concept. Future research can explore the dynamics of parenting with other constructs like locus of control, career decision making and so on to gain a more realistic and holistic picture.

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