



Original Article

Parental Encouragement among Higher Secondary School Students in Gwalior City: Does gender and subject stream influence the level of parental encouragement?

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Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the parental encouragement of higher secondary school students of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, with the reference of gender and subject stream of the students. The descriptive survey method was utilized, and two hundred students were picked from 14 government higher secondary schools by multistage random sampling. Dr. Kusum Agarwal's scale (2019) was used to assess parental encouragement, and data were analyzed by the t-test, mean and S.D. percentages. They found that the majority of the students were of average parental encouragement level. There was a significant variance between the genders but not between subject streams in the variable under study.

Keywords: Parental Encouragement, Higher Secondary Students, Gender, Subject Stream.

Introduction

In the field of secondary schooling, parental encouragement is known to be one of the most powerful environmental factors that impact the students' academic, emotional, and personal development. It is the care, encouragement, guidance, appreciation, and confidence that parents offer the child to help them to have positive attitudes toward learning and fulfill their learning objectives. Rossi (1965) "When father and mother approve or disapprove of any activity related to education or revoke any hurdle felt by the student in the process or guide him in right or wrong, this entire spectrum activity comes within the purview of parental encouragement. Supporting parents to build a home culture that supports academic engagement, self-confidence, perseverance, and resilience, key factors that will greatly affect students' learning success.

The level and type of encouragement that parents provide could differ by students' demographic make-up, particularly by gender and subject stream. Gender differences in parental encouragement have received a great deal of attention, as parental expectations for girls and boys are frequently influenced by social/cultural norms. Many societies may allow children access to different forms of encouragement, such as parents encouraging the daughter to be more disciplined and organized and more focused on her studies and the son to be more independent and focused on his career. Educational opportunities and sensitization on gender equality, however, have resulted in many families turning to equal encouragement for their male and female students. The results of research on gender differences in parental encouragement have been mixed, however, ranging from small differences to no differences.

The same applies to students' subject stream (science and arts), which could affect the extent and nature of parental encouragement. Science education is synonymous with higher academic expectations, competitive entrance examinations, and higher career opportunities. Therefore, parents can give further academic guidance, emotional support, and learning materials to students of the science stream. However, parents of the arts student might place greater emphasis on the process of learning and on creative and communicative abilities and on overall development, rather than exam results.

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However, there are a number of studies that indicate that modern parents place a higher premium on all subjects and try to encourage their children equally, regardless of the subject stream they are studying. Successful parents often express their love and encouragement through words and actions to help the child to improve; parental encouragement may vary according to culture and society, but it always has a positive impact; parental encouragement is the perception of the child that his parents are encouraging him/her. In keeping with long-standing research, researchers Laurence Steinberg and others (1992) found that positive encouragement by parents to their adolescents' academic performance has the strongest impact when delivered within an authoritative parenting style. They proposed that a home environment of warmth, support, appropriate supervision, and open communication provides an environment that facilitates parental encouragement to affect students' educational outcomes positively. In turn, Henry Codjoe (2007) in *The Educational Experiences of African-Canadian Youth* concluded that the family environment and parental encouragement are important factors in the academic success of students. His results showed that school children with consistent support, guidance, and encouragement from their caregivers tended to achieve good academic results and were motivated in their learning activities.

The information on whether there is a difference in parental encouragement along subject streams and genders is significant, as it can affect the motivation, self-confidence, academic anxiety, and overall academic performance of the students. This recognition allows educators, school counselors and policymakers to design approaches to encourage equal opportunities for parental involvement and to ensure that all students are getting the emotional and academic attention they deserve. The present study, therefore, investigates whether significant differences/contrasts were found between the pupils with respect to gender and subject stream with respect to the variable. The findings will help to deepen the understanding of the patterns of parental involvement and their potential effects on students' learning experiences and performance.

Review of related literature:

Lakshmanan and Rajasekaran (2021) found that parental encouragement and scholastic achievement were highly positively correlated among the adolescent students. They concluded that it was evident that pupils who were more encouraged by parents did better at school, regardless of their academic stream.

Based on the review conducted by Rozia Bashir and Najmah Peerzada (2022), the researchers found that there were several empirical studies related to parental encouragement and found that there is a positive relationship between consistent encouragement from parents and students' motivation, self-confidence, learning behavior, and academic performance. They also indicated that in general, demographical factors (gender, academic

stream) have a limited impact on how successful parental encouragement is compared to the quality of the parent-child relationship and noted that this effect is small.

Puju (2017) discussed the relationship of parental encouragement and educational performance in 200 students of Kashmir. The study reveals that students who were more encouraged by their parents were academically more successful. Additionally, it revealed that there was a difference in the amount of parental encouragement received by boys and girls.

Objectives

- To find out the prevalence of parental encouragement in higher secondary schools.
- To compare the level of parental encouragement among the higher secondary school students in reference to gender.
- To compare the level of parental encouragement of higher secondary school students of different subject streams (arts and science).

Null Hypotheses

H01: Male and female Higher secondary school students in Gwalior city do not differ significantly with respect to the variable under study.

H02: No significant difference between the discipline stream and parental encouragement for adolescent students.

Method and Sample

In the present study, the descriptive method was used, as it was found to be suitable for analyzing the status of the selected variables in the context of higher secondary school students. A multistage random sampling was used to choose a representative sample of the target population. The sample was taken from fourteen govt. In Gwalior City, Madhya Pradesh, the higher secondary schools are located. The number of students selected in class XI randomly was 200. For meaningful comparisons, it was made sure that the sample was split up equally by gender, with 100 male students and 100 female students. Likewise, the two main discipline branches were equally represented, with 100 students from each of the arts stream and the science stream. This balance allowed the investigator to study differences across the variables in the study in relation to both gender and subject stream.

Data collection tool:

Parental Encouragement Scale (PES) (2019). Parental encouragement was measured by the Scale (PES) designed by Dr. Kusum Agarwal. It is made up of 80 parts. A higher overall score means that the child feels that the parents are more encouraging, while a lower score means that the child feels that the parents are less encouraging.

Data Analysis & Interpretation. Analysis & Interpretation of Data.

The data was analyzed using SPSS Statistics 26. Statistical techniques, such as percentage, mean, S.D., and the t-test, were used for analysis.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1: Prevalence of Parental Encouragement (N=200).

Levels Of Parental Encouragement	N	Percentage
<i>Extremely High</i>	6	3
<i>High</i>	27	13.5
<i>Above Average</i>	41	20.5
<i>Average</i>	96	48
<i>Below Average</i>	17	8.5
<i>Low</i>	11	5.5
<i>Extremely Low</i>	2	1
<i>Total</i>	200	100%

Table 1 shows that 3% of the students (200) have an extremely high level of parental encouragement, 13.5% have a high level, 20.5% have an above-average level, and 48% have an average level of parental encouragement. 8.5%

report having less than average parental encouragement, and 5.5% and 1% report having low and extremely low levels of parental encouragement, respectively.

Comparative analysis

Table 2: Test of significance with reference to gender

Gender	N	Mean	S. D	t-Value	p	Significance
Male	100	242.08	26.90	2.52	.879	Significant
Female	100	251.26	24.53			

Table 2 shows a comparison of parental encouragement scores by gender. The t value obtained (2.52) indicates that the difference between the mean scores is significant at the 0.05 level ($t > 2.52$, $p < 0.05$). This finding indicates that there is a gender difference in parental encouragement. Additionally, the mean scores comparison

shows a higher parental encouragement level among female students. This means that parents are more supportive and encouraging of girls than boys. So, the null hypothesis: "There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in Gwalior City with respect to parental encouragement" has been rejected.

Table 3: Test of significance on Parental Encouragement with respect to subject stream

Subject Stream	N	Mean	S. D	t-Value	p	Significance
Science	100	249.02	25.45	1.27	.604	Not Significant
Arts	100	244.32	26.63			

There was no significant difference among the adolescents in parental encouragement when broken down by subject stream (Table 3, $t = 1.27$, $p > 0.05$). Although science students obtained marginally a higher mean ($M = 249.02$) than arts students ($M = 244.32$), it is not statistically significant. This indicates that parents' encouragement is equal for both the subject streams. It, therefore, accepted the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant difference between the higher secondary school students based on subject stream with regard to parental encouragement.

Discussion and Conclusion

The descriptive analysis showed that most students had a moderate level of parental encouragement. This could be because parents are aware of the importance of education, despite their other family and occupational responsibilities, with average levels of encouragement observed amongst most students. In general, it can be said that the level of parental encouragement in the students sampled is not low and not high, but at a moderate level. It underscores the importance of ensuring a favorable school environment and creating a supportive home environment to support students' academic development, self-confidence, and overall growth. The present finding agrees with the study conducted by Saraswat (2011), where the majority of

the students in his study found a moderate level of encouragement in the family. Likewise, Kumar and Rani (2018) reported that the higher secondary students had average parental support, meaning that parents are involved in their children's education, but it is not as intense as it is in others' homes. The present study's t-test data shows that there is a difference in parental encouragement between male and female students and that females feel they are more likely to receive encouragement from their parents than males. The study shows that there is significant difference between parents' encouragement among the higher secondary students in terms of gender, where the girls find themselves encouraged by parents as compared to the boys. This underscores the importance of parental and teacher support for all children equally to ensure that all learners are motivated to develop in all areas of learning. The finding in the present study is similar to that of Carter and Wajthiewicz (2000), who studied 25,000 8th-class students and reported that parental encouragement was different in males versus females. Their results showed that, in general, parents encourage and involve their daughters more than their sons.

The results also indicated that there was no significant difference among the students of science and arts in the variable under study. In the present finding, it is found that there is no significant difference between the

parental encouragement level of the science and arts students in the higher secondary level, which is consistent with the finding of Kapoor (2018). Although science students achieved marginally a higher mean score than arts students, it was not statistically significant. This indicates that parents invest a similar amount of encouragement in the education of their children in all streams. The findings of the present study have highlighted the importance of parental involvement for the psychological well-being of the higher secondary students and their education. The results indicate that strategies should be put in place to ensure that parents are actively involved in their children's academic and emotional progress by teachers, school administration, and other education stakeholders. Schools can hold regular parent-teacher contacts, awareness campaigns, and counseling sessions to enhance home-school partnerships. These can help to boost emotional well-being, motivation, and learning experiences, leading to better academic achievement and learning outcomes for students.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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