

Vol 3 Issue 12 Jan 2014

ISSN No : 2230-7850

International Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

*Indian Streams
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

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A STUDY ON EXPRESSION OF ANGER AMONG THE PARENTS AND THEIR ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS

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Abstract:-The paper investigates the anger expression of parents and their adolescent college going daughters. A sample of 122 undergraduate female students and their parents were taken and administered the STAXI questionnaire. Data related to Eight variables – state anger, trait anger, trait anger temperament, trait anger reaction, anger-inward (suppression), anger-out(expression), anger control and anger expression (Ax/Ex) were collected and statistically analyzed. Results show a significant difference between the mother's anger expression and that of their adolescent daughters, and also the father's anger expression and the daughter's trait anger temperament.

Keywords:Adolescent Daughters , trait anger , analyzed , physiological.

INTRODUCTION:-

Anger is defined as an “experiential state consisting of emotional, cognitive and physiological components that co-occur, rapidly interacting with and influencing each other in such a way that they tend to be experienced as a single phenomenon” (Deffenbacher, 1999, p. 295)

Spielberger and colleagues (1983) defined anger as an emotional state consisting of feelings of varying intensity. These feelings range from mild irritation or annoyance to fury and rage. Spielberger (1988) introduced the following: a) State Anger - “the intensity of angry feelings at a particular time”; b) Trait Anger – “general propensity to experience and express anger without specific provocation”; Anger-Out refers to responding with physical or verbal aggression, while Anger-In refers to anger that is actively suppressed by the individual. Anger-Control, on the other hand, according to Burney, (2001, p.2) is defined as “the frequency with which an individual attempts to control the expression of anger”. Anger Control is defined as “a proactive cognitive-behavioral method used to resolve instrumental and/or reactive responses to anger”

Averill (1983) claimed that most people become moderately angry anywhere from several times a day, to several times a week. Concerning the demonstration of anger, anger may be “either expressed outwardly or inwardly” (Swaffer & Hollin, 2001, p. 91). Unhealthy behavioral expressions of anger can range along continuum from explosive rage (verbal and physical), to simmering, fuming, and silent discontent. Ineffective ways of expressing anger include blaming, venting, misdirecting one's anger toward a neutral third-party, silent submissions, and ineffective fighting (Lerner, 1985; Finchman and Jaspers 1980).

Researchers have examined the role that anger may play in the context of family systems and, in particular, how parental anger may be related to the outcomes of children and adolescents (Kimberly Renk et al 1999). Behaviorism emphasizes that the whole system of overt behavior whether it's natural or in relation to a stimulus is built up out of the learning process, while social learning theories implies that behavioral change can occur through observational learning when reinforced with adequate payoffs. If a child sees his parents rant and rave, cuss, and hit one another in anger, he'll learn to handle anger poorly himself. Parents are the ones who set the tone for the home environment, and they need to take primary responsibility for ensuring that anger is expressed in a civil and constructive way (W.Doyle Gentry,PhD 2007).

According to Kimberly Renk et al (1999) parental disposition toward anger and anger expression may inadvertently threaten the emotional security of children and promote emotional and behavioral difficulties in children. Trait anger and anger expression of both fathers and mothers are contributing to an overall family climate as well as playing a role in the parenting behaviors exhibited by both parents. As a result, the parent-adolescent relationship may be compromised in some

way, resulting in the emotional and behavioral problems of adolescents. When exposed to parental anger, children and adolescents may experience emotional and behavioral disturbance in the form of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (Davies & Cummings, 1994).

The emotion based internal beliefs or mental representations which the mother may establish, influence their emotional expressions which in turn may affect the child's emerging schema for emotional experience and expression (Dunsmore, J. C., & Halberstadt, A. G. (1997).

Sigfusdottir, Farkas, and Silver (2004) propose that negative family interactions may contribute to one experiencing increased negative emotions such as anger and depressed mood, as the effects of family conflict are, in part, mediated through anger. Thus, adolescents who witness conflict between parents may learn to respond to difficulties by using aggressive behavior. Similarly, Reid and Patterson (1991) suggest that a child's opinion and disposition with regard to anger and aggression are shaped and modified through family interactions. Early coercive family interactions serve as models of aggressive behaviors and, in turn, children are reinforced for such behaviors. Hence, children who are exposed to angry interactions between parents may "learn to respond to difficulties by using aggressive behavior" (Sigfusdottir et al., 2004, p. 518)

According to Bowlby, people's early attachment relationships with their primary caretakers shape the internal working models they bring with them to other significant relationships (Bowlby, 1988). Dix (1991) presents compelling evidence for the relationship between parent emotional expression and child adjustment. He concludes, in part, that negative emotion expressed by parents can promote child negative perceptions of their relationship. Emery's view was that both boys and girls are distressed by background anger between parents and exhibit problematic behaviors as a result. For instance, boys tend to show more aggressiveness, whereas girls tend to display withdrawal, anxiety, or may even remain very well behaved (Emery, 1982). Sigfusdottir, Farkas, and Silver (2004) proposed that negative family interactions may contribute to one experiencing increased negative emotions, such as anger and depressed mood, as the effects of family conflict are, in part, mediated through anger. Thus, adolescents that witness conflict between parents may learn to respond to difficulties by using aggressive behavior (Sigfusdottir, et al., 2004).

Mothers influence early emotional development by the way in which they perceive their own role in a child's emotional growth. Maternal perceptions may affect willingness to model emotional strategies and the extent to which children learn about emotions in families (Dunsmore, J. C., & Karn, M. A. 2001). Brannigan, A., et al suggested that harsh parenting practices generally defied by the amount of parental expressed anger, low amount of praise of the child, high levels of parental disapproval inconsistent parental behavior and negative emotions have been linked with child behavior problems across culture including externalizing and internalizing problems and noncompliance (Brannigan, A., et al 2002). Researches by Flannery et al., (1993) Papini & Seby, (1987) show consistent results on the link between changes in parent affective expression and relationship change with adolescents. In two studies done by Kimberly Renk, et al which examined the relationship between parental trait anger, parental symptomatology, and children's and adolescents' emotional/behavioral problems, Study 1 suggested that parental trait anger did not serve as a mediator between parental symptoms and children's emotional/behavioral problems while Study 2, suggested that parental trait anger did serve as a mediator between parental depression and adolescents' emotional/behavioral problems. For internalizing behaviors, inward anger expression and trait anger were mediators in father-son dyads, and outward anger expression was a mediator in mother-daughter dyads. For externalizing behavior, inward anger expression was a mediator in father-son dyads, and outward anger expression was a mediator in mother-son dyads. (Kimberly Renk et al 1999) These results suggest the importance of examining parental dispositions toward anger in relation to the psychological symptoms family members may experience and their anger expressions.

METHOD:

122 female under graduate college students aged between 17 and 20 were randomly administered the STAXI questionnaire. Their respective parents were given the same questionnaire to fill at the PTA meet. Only those students with both the parents alive and living together were selected. Personal information was taken through a Performa prepared by the instructor.

The STAXI by Spielberger, (1988) is a self rating questionnaire containing 44 items where the subjects rate themselves on a four point scale (1 to 4 from almost never to almost always) that asses the intensity, frequency of the angry feelings, its expression and whether it is suppressed or controlled. The components of STAXI scales are state anger, trait anger, anger temperament, anger reaction, anger-inward, anger-outward, anger control and anger expression. It is a standardized test, for individuals above 13 years of age, designed to provide easy administration and scoring.

After data collection, scoring was done as per the instructions in the manual and scoring key. The data was analyzed using t-test

RESULTS

Table 1
“t” test and significance level of anger expression of mothers and their adolescent daughters.

Dimensions	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig(2 Tailed)	Significance Levels
State Anger	Mother	122	21.16	5.978	.589	242	0.556	NS
	Daughter	122	20.67	7.025	.589	235.968		
Trait Anger	Mother	122	20.41	5.103	2.250	242	0.025	0.05
	Daughter	122	21.79	4.434	2.250	237.361		
T-Anger Temperament	Mother	122	7.89	2.382	1.556	242	0.121	NS
	Daughter	122	8.35	2.307	1.556	241.753		
T-Anger Reaction	Mother	122	8.92	2.067	3.863	242	0.000	0.01
	Daughter	122	9.93	2.009	3.863	241.801		
Anger Inward	Mother	122	19.64	4.919	1.069	242	0.286	NS
	Daughter	122	20.27	4.285	1.069	237.536		
Anger Outward	Mother	122	19.05	4.594	2.307	242	0.022	0.05
	Daughter	122	20.40	4.565	2.037	241.990		
Anger Control	Mother	122	21.92	4.306	1.925	242	0.055	NS
	Daughter	122	20.93	3.720	1.925	237.003		
Anger Expression	Mother	122	32.85	9.763	2.472	242	0.014	0.05
	Daughter	122	35.75	8.471	2.472	237.284		

Statistical analysis of overall sample of mothers (N=122) and their daughters (N=122) displayed in table 1, shows that there is significant difference at 0.05 levels on trait anger, while there is no significant difference between the state anger of mothers and daughter. Table 1 also shows that there is significant difference at 0.01 levels between the anger reaction of the mothers and daughters, while there is no significant difference between them in anger turned inwards and there is significant difference at 0.05 levels in anger showed outwards. Similarly while there is significant difference at 0.05 levels between the anger expression of the mothers and daughters, there is no significant difference in anger control of the sample. These analyses suggest that the daughters seem to be influenced more by the personality traits of the mothers and tend to develop these

consistent behavioural traits. This also suggest that the way anger is expressed or handled by the daughters happen though social, observational learning from their mothers.

Table 2
“t” test and significance level of anger expression of fathers and their adolescent daughters

Dimensions	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig(2 Tailed)	Significance Levels
State Anger	Father	122	22.25	7.900	1.661	242	0.098	NS
	Daughter	122	20.67	7.025	1.661	238.738		
Trait Anger	Father	122	21.03	4.812	1.273	242	0.204	NS
	Daughter	122	21.79	4.434	1.273	240.394		
T-Anger Temperament	Father	122	9.54	2.731	3.672	242	0.000	0.01
	Daughter	122	8.35	2.307	3.672	235.422		
T-Anger Reaction	Father	122	9.50	2.553	1.449	242	0.149	NS
	Daughter	122	9.93	2.009	1.449	229.326		
Anger Inward	Father	122	19.66	3.651	1.190	242	0.235	NS
	Daughter	122	20.27	4.285	1.190	236.051		
Anger Outward	Father	122	21.22	4.965	1.342	242	0.181	NS
	Daughter	122	20.40	4.565	1.342	240.309		
Anger Control	Father	122	20.83	4.587	0.184	242	0.854	NS
	Daughter	122	20.93	3.720	0.184	232.110		
Anger Expression	Father	122	36.02	9.311	0.245	242	0.807	NS
	Daughter	122	35.75	8.471	0.245	239.868		

Statistical analysis of overall sample of fathers (N=122) and their daughters (N=122) displayed in table 2 shows that there is a significant difference at 0.01 levels in Trait anger temperament between the father and daughters there is no significant difference between any of the other variables assessed. This suggests that daughter's tendency to get influenced by the way anger is handled or expressed by the father is not as high as it is with the mother. But still it can have an impact in

daughter's disposition towards anger.

Further, the mother's influence on the daughter's anger expression suggests gender identity having its own influence on social learning.

CONCLUSION

Parental anger and its expression tend to have a strong impact on the way adolescent females handle and express anger. Mother's influence is significantly higher on the daughters when compared to that of the father suggesting gender identity influencing the process of development of personality traits and behaviour associated with negative emotions such as anger. Hence necessary step have to be taken to provide intervention to the parents to effectively manage their negative emotions such as anger much at an earlier stage to prevent the cycle being carried over to the next generation.

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