

# Role Of Parental Expressed Emotions As Contributing Factor Of Depressions In Adolescents

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Parents are the child's first role model and perform a vital part in the upbringing of their children. Parental influence has a long-lasting effect on the life of an individual and children, learn, act, react, intimate, and behave like their parents. Parental expressed emotions as determinant of adolescent depression proposed a novel framework and for understanding its mechanisms of action current study has been planned.

**Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was conducted to find out the parental expressed emotions as determinant of depression in adolescents. Purposive sampling technique was used to measure the effects of parental expressed emotions in adolescents. Researcher selected 500 parents (500 mothers & 500 fathers) and 500 adolescents of same parents during the period of March 2021 to October 2022. For that purpose parental expressed emotions scale and adolescents' depression scale were used and data were analyzed by applying regression analysis as well as descriptive statistics.

**Results:** Finding reveals that father and mother both expressed emotions caused depression in adolescents with minor diversity as fathers expressed emotions caused 30 %, hostility 16 % Whereas, mother expressed emotions of critical comments caused 50%, hostility 0.080% depression in adolescents.

**Conclusion:** Parental negative expressed emotions are recommended to improve in positive ways, so that the adolescent's psychopathology like depression can be reduce at initial level.

**Key words:** Parental expressed emotions, Hostility, Negative-remarks, Emotional-over involvement, Warmth, positive comments, Adolescents, depression.

## Introduction

A Parent is among the most important people in the lives of young children and from birth to whole life children learned and rely on them. It is universally known that parents provide comfortable home environment that brings

contentment in children's life. As adolescence is a transitional period which not only endures their voyage of self-discovery but repeatedly tried adjusted to novel experiences. These life challenges provoked distress among adolescents and according to Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development; identity crisis is a critical part of development during

adolescent age when the concept of self-identity developed (Gross & Francis, 1987).

The construct of expressed emotion was initially introduced in 1966 by Brown and Rutter, they explained “expressed emotion” as emotions expressed by one family member to another in the form of criticism, hostility, and emotional over-involvement. Parental emotional expressions are found closely associated with children mental health issues. While children consistently observed unhealthily frustrated, stressed, upset, and irritating parental behavior, it became a leading cause of children’s emotional and behavioral issues in the future (Ogundele M. O, 2018).

Adolescents suffered several environmental stressors and along with parental behaviors leads to childhood distress. Particularly, the Influence of expressed emotions is one of the vigorous predictors of psychological disorders in adolescents because the extra demands of caregivers with the conflict of the personal needs of the adolescents affect teenager’s mental health (Leff & Vaughn, 1987). Expression of emotions is significant risk factors and co-relate for the particular disorder as depression and a general cause of psychopathology in children and adolescents (Hibbs et al., 1992). Studies indicated the association between parental high expressed emotions with mood and other mental disorders in adolescents (Asarnow, Tompson, Woo & Cantwell, 2001; Butzlaff & Hooley, 1998).

However, emotions expressed by parents are consistently associated with the more detrimental course of mood, anxiety, and other mental disorders in young people (Peris & Miklowit, 2015). additionally, parental high expressed emotions strongly correlated with the occurrence of severe depression. Furthermore, depression is a common mental disorder in adolescents. Which characterized by persistent sadness, lack of interest, sleep and appetite, Fatigue and poor concentration. Further, depression considered being the leading cause of the global burden of disease in people aged

15 to 19 years it affecting more than 264 million people worldwide (WHO, 2021).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-fifth edition (APA-2013) and World Health Organization highlight the commonalities of depressive disorders in all age groups, especially young people. The increasing rate of depression in adolescents is an alarming issue (Calam, 2009). Furthermore, parental hostility and rejection are the key factors of depressive symptoms in adolescents. Specifically, high parental rejection related to depressive symptoms in youth (Gonzales-Tajera et al., 2005).

### **Methodology**

This study was conducted in the different cities of Pakistan from Mar 2021 to Oct 2022. The target population was parents and their adolescents. Five hundred parents (500 mothers & 500 fathers) and 500 adolescents of same parents were selected. Adolescents from 12-19 years (boys =46% & girls= 54%) recruited from the community and educational institutes. Researcher approached the family (father/mother& adolescents) as a cluster for measuring parental expressed emotions and measures the direct effect of the emotional expression on the mental health of their adolescents. The sample was collected from different areas, while socioeconomic status, cultural background, work and age considered. Inclusion criteria comprised the parents of all ages, parents excluded from the study who were single or divorced and suffered from any mental and physical disability. The study was approved by the Advanced Studies and Research Board (ASRB) from the University of Gujrat. Informed consent was taken from the parents and their adolescents. Purpose and procedure explained and parental expressed emotions scale and depression scale was given to the parents and adolescents respectively. The respondents were thoroughly instructed about how to respond to the statements. The respondent’s identity confidentiality of data was insured. At the end they were thanked for their participation.

### Data Analyze

Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were carried out by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-23) for windows

Normality analysis was conducted to determine the assumption of parametric tests. Shapiro-Wilk test used as the sample size was less than 2000). Values of skewness, kurtosis, mean and median were also explored for assessing the normality of distribution.

**Table-1: Normality Statistics for Variables of Adolescents and Parents (N=1500)**

Variables			Skewness		Shapiro-Wilk		Kurtosis		
	Mean	Median	Statistic	SE	z.value	Sig.	Statistic	SE	z.value
PEE	107.03	108.00	-.121	.109	1.11	.002	-.577	.218	2.64
DP	17.91	18.99	-.829	.109	7.60	.000	-.172	.218	0.78

Note. SE = Standard error

The table showed that the mean and median values for variables. The z-values of skewness

and kurtosis calculated. The value of skewness is below 1 and the value of kurtosis is below 3 so the data fulfill the requirement of normality.

**Table-2: Demographic Characteristics of the Parents Sample (N=1000)**

Variables	Mothers	N	Fathers	N
Age	25-35	147	25-35	246
	36-45	187	36-45	168
	46-above	166	46-above	86
Monthly Income	15000-30000	362	15000-30000	461
	31000-50000	73	31000-50000	31
	51000 above	65	51000 above	8
Occupation	Self Employed	60	Self Employed	394
	Employed	60	Employed	91
	House wife	380	Un-employed	15

**Table-3: Demographic Characteristics of the populations (N=1000)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
Total (n)	271	229
<b>Age</b>		
9-12 Years	60	51
13-15 Years	132	115
16-19 Years	79	63
<b>Institution</b>		
School	82	60
College	175	157
Others	14	12

In order to explore the role of parental expressed emotions in adolescent's depression, linear regression analysis was carried out and father and mother expressed emotions of Criticism,

hostility, emotional over-involvement, positive remarks and warmth has been explored separately.

**Table-4: Summary of linear Regression Analysis, Expressed emotions (critical comments, hostility, emotional over-involvement, positive remarks and warmth) of Fathers and Mothers as predictors of depression in adolescents (N=1500)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Δ R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Expressed Emotions of Fathers as the predictors of depression</b>					
Critical comments	0.550	0.303	0.301	215.979	0.00
Hostility	0.411	0.169	0.167	101.070	0.00
Emotional over-involvement	-0.254	0.064	0.063	34.323	0.00
Positive remarks	-0.299	0.052	0.050	27.451	0.00
Warmth	-0.418	0.174	0.173	105.185	0.00
<b>Expressed Emotions of Mothers as the predictors of depression</b>					
Critical comments	0.506	0.256	0.254	171.146	0.00
Hostility	0.283	0.080	0.078	43.489	0.00
Emotional over-involvement	-0.280	0.079	0.077	42.528	0.00
Positive remarks	-0.255	0.050	0.049	26.468	0.00
Warmth	-0.411	0.169	0.167	101.215	0.00

Above table illustrated the predictive effect of parental expressed emotions in adolescent's depression. Result indicated that father emotions of critical comments and hostility explained 30 %

and 16 % variance. While the other positive emotions as emotional over-involvement and positive remarks put slightly negative effects on depression, the last sub-scale warmth put significant negative effects on depression in

adolescents, showed 17% variance in depression.

By contrast, mother expressed emotions of critical comments of mothers explained 25% change in depression. As well as emotional over-involvement and positive remarks put slightly negative but significant effects on depression as  $p$ -value  $<0.00$ , the last sub-scale warmth put significant effects on depression in adolescents, showed 16% variance in depression. Thus, the results of the current study offered clear evidences that parental expressed emotions are the significant predictors of depression in adolescents.

## DISCUSSION

For rearing their children, both parent's role as a mother and father is different, both parents at the same time perform different responsibilities for the upbringing of their children. The father and mother role varies as a family develops, yet the father role shapes their child into an effective adult (Gezova & Katarina, 2015). Some researches explored the quality and nature of the child-father relationship and its effects on teenagers' wellbeing. Though, fathers' involvement and parenting (Pleck & Kelley et al., 1997; 1998). Further, mothers bear a divine role not only in the life of individuals but also in society and the world.

Concerning emotional aspects, expressed emotion measures the quality of the emotional relationship, including hostility, criticism, warmth, and emotional over-involvement towards a target person (Vaughn & Leff, 1976). A research review explored that expressed emotions of parents were a key risk factor of child psychopathology in long-term outcomes. Even though, the expressed emotions considered the probability of recurrence in the prevalent mental disorders in children. Further, expressed emotion can cause the reappearance of mental disorder symptoms in a susceptible individual against

stress (Amaresha & Venkatasubramanian; Hooley, 2000; 2012).

To find out the difference in expressed emotions of both parents, regression analyses were conducted separately. The result of the current study reflects that expressed emotions of father critical comments caused 30% depression in adolescents [ $R = 0.303$ ;  $F(1,498) = 215.979$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ] while emotion of hostility caused 16.9% variation. [ $R = 0.169$ ;  $F(1,498) = 101.070$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ]. Though positive emotions found negatively associated with depression.

Regardless of it, that father is taking as an authoritative figure in many societies. Research suggested that there is a positive connection between father's involvement and adolescent positive growth (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Hawkins et al., 2007)

Current research finding revealed 30% out of 500 fathers showed criticism, 16% hostility, and 17% warmth emotions caused depression in adolescents. However, the relationship between parents and child has received specific attention, despite that, numerous studies representing an association among father/mother emotions, and depression in children.

In current study mother's critical comments caused 25% depression [ $R = 0.256$ ;  $F(1,498) = 171.146$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ] while emotions of hostility was insignificant and positive emotions appeared strongly and negatively associated with depression. It means that negative emotions caused depression while positive emotions effects negatively. Although limited researches available on the construct of mothers' expressed emotions and depression in adolescents. One study explored that the mother's level of criticism (critical expressions) toward the sons or daughters positively predicted the behavioral and emotional problems in adolescents (Smith et al., 2008). One longitudinal study result also in line

with the current. The study explained the emotional quality of the child and parent relationship and the functioning of adolescents. Research result indicated that mother warmth and praise (expressions of positive remarks) toward their children were negatively associated with the adolescent autistic spectrum disorder (Baker et al., 2011).

The current research also extended upon the previous study state the sequential system of maternal expressed emotion and adolescent and child depression by probing the part of expressed emotion through critical comments in depression and over a sequel period across five and more years. A study exhibited that there would be a high risk for developing depression more likely in the future if in the childhood mothers critical expression of emotions were high. This variance was striking, with findings 77% of respondents whose mothers were primarily accounted tall in the critical expression of emotion evolving a future occurrence of depressive symptoms as equated to those participants (43% ) whose mothers were firstly measured as low in expressed emotion of criticism (Jennifer et al., 2009). These findings are also consistent with current findings signifying that expressed emotion of critical comments is analytical of the development of depression in children (Hooley et al., 1986).

Very little literature exists to support the hypothesis of mothers' expressed emotions related to adolescent depression. Although only a few research results viewed that mother expressed emotions of critical comments particularly correlate significantly for depressive disorders, a study consistent with current results, representative associations among maternal criticism on the child with negative self-concepts and mothers of children with depression were significantly more likely to express high levels of emotions. (Jaenicke et al., 1987)

One research findings explained that the mothers who less controlled and expressed a higher number of positive remarks, the children of that mothers exhibited less depressive symptoms than the mothers of depressed children. These results are also reliable with present study that the emotions of positive remarks are the protective factor against child psychopathology (McCarty & Weisz, 2002).

Both parents' fathers and mothers are significant figures of the family and both have a strong impact on their children. Although, parental influence is not a debatable topic because the first home is a first institution of the children. Children learn everything through their parents, living style, life pattern and behaviors as well. Both parents play the assigning role in the home and out of the home but surprisingly the expressed behavior of the fathers and mothers have same effect on the children as current research finding suggested.

Overall results showed that father and mother both play a significant part in the mental health of their children. Father and mothers are considered two pillars in the family. Although they played a different role for the proper brought up of their children. Fathers are responsible for earning and mothers run household activities properly. But behaviour and emotional response of both parents have a important effect on the personality and psychological health of their children. Expressed emotions caused the occurrence of mental disorder symptoms in a susceptible person against family attitude. As mentioned previously further, adolescent's depression is a thoughtful community health worry. Current epidemiological study shows that about 11% of youth experienced depression (Avenevoli, Swendsen, He, Burstein, & Merikangas, 2015)

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