INFLUENCE OF HOME ENVIRONMENT ON SELF DEROGATION AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

Sindu George

Abstract

The objective of this correlational study was to find out whether there is any relationship between self-derogation among adolescents and home environment. Results were derived from 400 grade 11 students from ten higher secondary schools of Kerala state, India. Pearson correlation measured relationships at the whole sample and subsample level, supporting the hypothesis that self-derogation is a product of unfavourable home environment. The correlation analyses involving the four dimensions of home environment established negative substantial relationships between self-derogation and each of study habits, parental attitude and family relations; but a low, negligible relationship with material facility. The study reveals that emotionally congenial family interactions and a cognitively stimulating environment are essential for healthy overall development of a positive self-concept during adolescence.

Keywords: Self Derogation, Home Environment, Adolescents, Parental Attitude, Family Relation

Introduction

The problem of promoting mental health in the educational context in a developing country like India, occupies high priority on the agenda for human development. Attaining the goal of mental health for all is critically related to the planning and complementing educational programme (Barouta and Mishra, 1997). In India, children constitute nearly 40% of the population, a significant portion of which suffer mental ailments. Yet, despite the existence of sound policy guidelines, scant attention has been paid to the provision of service or to setting up priorities for research and training for child mental care (Kapur, 1995).

Research reveals that home environment and parental attitude influence the children to a great extent. It affects the psychological development of children, which consists of cognitive, language, emotional, social, moral and sexual development. The humanistic psychologists maintain that the development of normal personality is geared towards the self.

Home environment plays an important role during the early years of life, family members are responsible for the self concept and personality traits the child develops. Even though personality development of the child is affected by a variety of factors, within which the quality of home environment available to each child is of utmost importance. There are many reports about teenagers and young people ending their lives when confronted with the hard realities of life due to lack of optimism and self confidence.

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Currently most educationists, sociologists and parents are concerned over increasing and very high suicide rate, alcoholism, drug addiction, indiscipline, sexual violence, communal riots and student unrest. All these pin point to one fact that at no point of time in the life of most of these people, there was an attempt to mould their character, they grow up without proper refinement of their character which is leading to indiscipline, lack of respect for elders, teachers and ultimately self respect.

The area of interest of this study was the effect of home environmental dimensions on self derogation in younger generation. The term self derogation means negative self attitude or negative self feeling (Kaplan and Polonsky, 1969) which refers to the characteristically negative effect evoked in a person by consideration of his self-image. It is inversely related to mental health and is detrimental to the effective development of personality and thus can make an individual's behaviour pathological. Several studies have asserted intimate relationship between negative self attitude and the genesis of any of a variety of modes of psychologically and/or socially defined deviance (Kaplan and Meyrowitz, 1970). Of the different variables which determine self derogation, the role of home environment is very crucial. The term environment refers to the conditions, forces and external stimuli which impinge upon the individual. It is a shaping and reinforcing force that acts on the individual.

Objective

The present investigation intended to study the inter relationship between home environment and self derogation and focused to specify the interactive relationship, if any.

Hypotheses

Based on the review of previous research, the following hypotheses were summarized.

H1. There will be significant negative relationship between home environment and self derogation within the whole sample and subsample levels.

H2. Each of the home environmental dimensions will have significant influence on self derogation.

H3. The correlation coefficients between home environment and self derogation for the whole sample and relevant subsamples will differ significantly.

H4. The correlation coefficients between each of the home environmental dimensions and self derogation will differ significantly.

Methods

The study examined the relationship between home environment and self derogation, specifically among adolescents. As the characteristics of the problem and area of study determine the method of investigation, normative survey method was found most appropriate.

Sample and Participants

The population of the study was students attending higher secondary schools of Kerala state, India. Since it was not possible to conduct an investigation on the total population, the study was confined to pupils attending year XI of ten selected schools of two districts of the state, Malappuram and Calicut. The size of the sample was fixed to 400 as larger the sample size

The data were collected by personally contacting the selected higher secondary school principals and class in charge. The SD scale, questionnaire and general data sheet were distributed to each individual.

Instruments and Measured Variables

The study has been designed with the dependent variable of self derogation and independent variable of home environment. Self derogation of the students was measured using Self Derogation Scale constructed and standardised by S.S.Raj (1990), Department of Psychology, University of Kerala, India, where it has been operationalized as the sum of the scores of the ten levels, namely,

1) Inferiority complex
2) Seriousness
3) Self accusation
4) Pessimism
5) Suicidal tendency
6) Introversion
7) Seclusion
8) Depression
9) Destructiveness
10) Self devaluation

The test material consisted of 50 items (25 positive and 25 negative statements). The items on the SD scale were scored using a 5 point scale from (A) "Strongly Agree" to (E) "Strongly Disagree".
the $r'$ value was -0.19, which was against the hypothesis. The correlation coefficient between the variables parental attitude and self derogation was -0.59 which showed a negative substantial correlation between the two variables. The $r'$ value between study habits and self derogation was -0.47 and for family relation and self derogation it was -0.65, indicating a negative substantial correlation, justifying the second hypothesis as it was proved that self derogation is the product of unfavourable home environment (Table 2). The following pie diagram shows the influence of each of the home environmental dimensions on self derogation.

### Table 2: Correlation between Self Derogation and the components of Home Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole sample</td>
<td>Self Derogation and Family Relation</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole sample</td>
<td>Self Derogation and Study Habits</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole sample</td>
<td>Self Derogation and Parental Attitude</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole sample</td>
<td>Self Derogation and Material Facility</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test of significance of difference established significant difference between the correlation coefficient for male and female students ($t = 8.64$ at 0.01 level) as well as rural and urban students ($t = 3.14$ at 0.01 level) but there was no significant difference in $r'$'s for the pair government and private school students at 0.01 or 0.05 level ($t = 1.44$). Thus the hypothesis 3 which stated the significant difference in correlation coefficients between the variables for subsamples was only partially substantiated.

The fourth hypothesis was that there would be a significant difference in the correlation coefficients obtained between the four components of home environment and self derogation. The six combinations were tested and the following combinations showed significant difference in $r'$ values at 0.01 levels;

- i) material facility with self derogation and parental attitude with self derogation.
- ii) material facility with self derogation and study habit with self derogation.
- iii) material facility with self derogation and family relation with self derogation.
- iv) study habit with self derogation and family relation with self derogation.

The combination 'parental attitude' with 'self derogation' and 'study habit' with 'self derogation' showed a significant difference at 0.05 level but for the combination 'parental attitude' with 'self derogation' and 'family relation' with 'self derogation' the difference in $r'$'s was not significant at 0.01 or 0.05 levels, resulted in partial substantiation of the fourth hypothesis (Table 3).

### Table 3: Test of significance of difference between 'r' of Home Environmental Dimensions and Self Derogation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>$r_1$</th>
<th>$r_2$</th>
<th>$Z_1$</th>
<th>$Z_2$</th>
<th>SEDZ</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.F &amp; S.D(r1) and P.A &amp; S.D(r2)</td>
<td>-0.198</td>
<td>-0.591</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.07098</td>
<td>6.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.F &amp; S.D(r1) and S.H &amp; S.D(r2)</td>
<td>-0.198</td>
<td>-0.472</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.07098</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.F &amp; S.D(r1) and F.R &amp; S.D(r2)</td>
<td>-0.198</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.07098</td>
<td>8.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.A &amp; S.D(r1) and S.H &amp; S.D(r2)</td>
<td>-0.591</td>
<td>-0.472</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.07098</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.A &amp; S.D(r1) and F.R &amp; S.D(r2)</td>
<td>-0.591</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.07098</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.H &amp; S.D(r1) and F.R &amp; S.D(r2)</td>
<td>-0.472</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.07098</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abbreviations used in the table:**

- S.D: Self Derogation
- M.F: Material Facility
- S.H: Study Habits
- P.A: Parental Attitude
- F.R: Family Relation

### Implications

Since these variables are important from the point of view of educational practices, the following suggestions can be worked for improving certain existing trends:

- i) There is a significant role for home to play in developing a positive self-feeling in children, especially in adolescents.
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ii) Special attention should be given to students those who are with high self derogation and should be trained to develop a positive attitude towards oneself.

iii) Teacher should know each individual intimately and those children with high self derogation should be treated with special care. The exact reason for their problem should be identified and rectified.

iv) In this mechanized age, many obligations of home are shifted to school. The teacher should keep in touch with the parents and make them aware of the need of facilitating a favorable home environment for the good mental health of the children.

v) Parents should take care of providing feasible home environment for the full fledged development of the personality of the individual.

vi) A healthy relationship between child, parents and teachers will be helpful in identifying the behavioural problems in children and adapting suitable remedial measures.

Directions for future research.

The study was limited in scope and hence the findings should be looked upon as presenting a part of the whole spectrum. A number of additional studies will be required to complete the whole picture. The desirable areas of further research in the light of evidence gained through the current study are cited here. Other independent variables such as caste, community, order of birth, cultural levels of family can be taken into consideration along with home environment. The degree of self derogation in children from broken families, from families of different socio economic status and the impact of parent-child conflicts or criticizing attitude of parents on self derogation can be investigated in detail. The influence of teacher student interactions and peer interactions on self derogation need to be explored further to get a clearer picture.

Conclusion

Though every effort has been taken to make the study as precise and objective as possible, few limitations have crept into the study. The year XI students were taken as a representative sample of higher secondary school students and it was not a state wide sample but confined to two districts. The project could be designed to employ a mixture of methods such as interview, case study etc. to provide a rich description about the various aspects of the study, but limitations of time and effort were the main obstacles. Acknowledging these limitations I would like to claim that the findings of this study will help the teachers and other concerned educationalist in understanding the interactions of the major behavioral area subjected to the study, home environment on one hand and self derogation on the other.

References


