



Rethinking the Parenting Practices in Nepal: The Parental Discipline and Its Association with the Adolescents' Psychological Wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical period of rapid physical, emotional, and social development. The parental discipline influences the adolescents' psychological development, but their parents' harsh behaviors to them can lead to the negative psychosocial outcomes. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the parental discipline and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents who are studying in different schools in Nepal. A descriptive

cross-sectional study with the probability multi-stage random sampling technique was applied to select the sample. Data were collected using a structured, self-administered, and standard tool, using Ryff's psychological wellbeing 18 items seven-point scale with six dimensions of well-being. They include autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose of life, and self- acceptance. The study employed descriptive (frequency, percent, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation and independent t test) for data analysis. Among the findings from the 201 adolescents, a total of 47.8% reported a positive perception of the parental discipline. The mean scores for the parental discipline and the psychological wellbeing were 101.38 ± 7.28 and 55.9 ± 9.18 , respectively. The analysis indicated a statistically significant association between the parental discipline with the type of school and a strong negative correlation between the parental discipline and the adolescents' psychological wellbeing ($r = -.359$, $p = 0.000$). Additionally, no significant difference in the psychological wellbeing was found, in which the measurement was based on age, sex, birth order, type of family, and school. Less than half of the adolescents demonstrated a positive perception of parental discipline. Overall, the study

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showed a low psychosocial wellbeing; however, the strict discipline may negatively affect their adolescents' psychological wellbeing. These findings highlight the importance of adopting the balanced and supportive parenting approaches.

KEYWORDS: Adolescents, parental discipline, psychological wellbeing, social development

INTRODUCTION

The adolescents undergo significant changes in their personal and social identities. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health (WHO, 2024). This transitional period often involves emotional instability, identity exploration, and increased influence of peers, which may lead some adolescents to engage in behaviors that conflict with the family or societal expectations (Shrestha, et.al. 2022). At this time, the parental control and discipline play a crucial role in shaping the adolescents' behaviors, values, and attitudes (Kwok & Fang, 2022). Globally, one in seven 10-19-year-olds experiences a mental disorder, accounting for 15% of the global burden of disease in this age group (WHO, 2025). In the context of Nepal, the prevalence of mental disorder was 5.2% and the current suicidal thoughts was 3.9% while that of the lifetime suicidal attempt was 0.7% (NHRC, 2020). Adolescence is the more vulnerable period of onset of the mental health problems due to the developmental and social challenges.

The adolescent psychosocial wellbeing involves a combination of emotional stability, positive social relationships, and mental health; all of which are strongly influenced by family, peers, and environment (UNICEF, 2022). Promoting the adolescents' wellbeing and addressing their exposure to the adverse experiences and risk factors are very

essential. These efforts not only contribute to their immediate state of well-being during their adolescence but also help to safeguard their long-term physical and mental health into adulthood (Shrestha, et.al, 2021)). Fostering the psychosocial wellbeing during their adolescence plays a crucial role to ensure the healthy and positive life outcome.

The way adolescents perceive the parental control significantly affects their emotional wellbeing, social development, and family relationships (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). The effective parental discipline is widely recognized as a protective factor that promotes the self-esteem, resilience, and healthy psychosocial development, while the excessive or authoritarian control often leads to the negative outcomes, including poor communication, conflict within the family, and reduced academic performance (Wang & Liu, 2018). The study shows a strong association between the parental discipline and adolescent's psychosocial outcomes. The positive discipline practices like support, motivation with rewards, and consistent guidance are linked to the higher self-esteem, self-acceptance, autonomy, social relation. Whereas the negative discipline is associated with adversely (Gawali & Bedi, 2019). The parental discipline influences the adolescents' psychosocial well-being, especially leading to the positive or adverse outcomes.

The previous studies have explored the adolescent psychological wellbeing using the standardized tools such as Ryff's psychological wellbeing scale. A cross-sectional study conducted in Kerala, India, among the adolescents aged 15-17 years reported the variations in levels of psychological wellbeing and found significant associations with gender and type of family, indicating the influence of socio-demographic and familial contexts on the adolescents' mental health (Arjun et al., 2022). Similarly, a cross-sectional

study carried out among the adolescent school students in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India that examined the psychological wellbeing and its determinants. The findings suggested that the psychological wellbeing is influenced by a range of factors, including the study subjects with females, studying in English medium, private school, belonging to unreserved category, having educated father or mother, working father or mother, at least one parent working at distant place, and residing in the joint family whose parents are living together, who gets attended by someone after returning from school are having the higher psychological wellbeing than the other group (Shalini et al., 2021). These studies emphasize that the adolescent psychological wellbeing is a multidimensional construct shaped by the individual, familial, and educational factors, highlighting the importance of supportive environments in promoting the positive mental health outcomes.

In addition, a descriptive survey method was conducted on the psychological well-being of secondary level students in Assam, India. The random sampling technique was adopted to recruit the students in the study. The Ryff's psychological wellbeing scale was used in the study. The results showed that the majority of them have an average psychological wellbeing. The study also reveals that the female students have better well-being than the male students (Borah & Nisanth, 2024). Furthermore, a school-based cross-sectional study was conducted among the adolescents to assess the psychosocial wellbeing of adolescents and identify the factors associated with the psychological well-being among the adolescents of migrated and non-migrated parents. The socio-demographic, interpersonal, and migration-related factors were assessed. The pre-tested "Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire" was used to measure the psychological well-being of the participants. The

findings showed that 11.50% of the adolescents under the high difficulties indicating the poorer psychosocial wellbeing. Further, the study revealed that the female students, Janjanati ethnic groups, non-Hindus, and those studying in the private schools had the poorer psychosocial wellbeing (Khanal et al., 2025). A quantitative correlation study was also carried out to explore the relationship between the disciplining techniques used by the parents and the psychological wellbeing of adolescents. To assess the disciplining techniques five-point rating scale was developed which consisted twenty statements.

Based on the selected dimensions of psychological wellbeing, only eighteen items measuring autonomy, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance were selected from Ryff's psychological wellbeing scale. The study was conducted on a total 242 adolescents, both boys and girls age range, varying between 13 and 18 years. Pearson's correlation was computed to correlate the eight disciplining techniques used by the parents and three dimensions of psychological wellbeing of adolescents. In the case of psychological aggression, r values $-.196$ and $-.294$ exhibited a significant negative correlation with the positive relation with others and self-acceptance respectively. Time out, corporal punishment, and penalty also confirmed a significant negative correlation with the positive relation with others and self-acceptance. The reward as the positive technique used by the parents showed a positive correlation with autonomy and self-acceptance of the adolescents (Gawali & Bedi, 2019). These studies emphasized the parental discipline has a significant influence in the adolescents' psychosocial well-being.

The parental discipline is a key determinant of the adolescents' psychosocial wellbeing. The way adolescents perceive and experience the parental discipline shapes their self-

esteem, relationships, and coping abilities. The study examined the relationship of parental discipline and psychosocial wellbeing as well as the differences in the psychological wellbeing within the different groups of students, which helped guide the parents in adopting an effective parenting practice and intervention for promoting the positive mental health.

RESEARCH METHODS

The quantitative analytical study was conducted in two secondary schools from Ward No. 7 of Besishahar Municipality, Lamjung. The population comprised of all the students of class 8 and 9 of selected schools with a total of 265 adolescents. A multistage random sampling technique was used. One ward was chosen randomly using a lottery method; There is a total of five (three private and two public) secondary schools. Using the lottery, one private and one public school (namely, Vidhya Bikash Secondary School and Shree Janabikash Secondary School) were chosen for data collection. From the selected schools, a complete enumeration of the students of class 8 and 9 was taken as a study sample. The students who were present in the class on the day of data collection and willing to participate in the study were included.

A self-administered structured questionnaire was prepared for distribution, which had three parts. Part I was related to background variables: age, sex, grade, school type, religion, ethnicity, family type, and birth order. Part II consisted a questionnaire to measure the adolescents' perceived parental discipline. The instrument consisted of 25 items in 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree that included both the negative and positive statements. The negative statements scoring was reversed. The possible score for the parental discipline was 25 to 125 and classified as the positive attitude ($\geq$ mean) and the negative

attitude $<$ mean (Kassis et.al, 2025). Part III included a questionnaire to measure the adolescents' psychological wellbeing: a standard tool by Ryff's psychological wellbeing 18 items seven-point scale having six dimensions; autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose of life, and self-acceptance. The psychological well-being scale for the adolescents is a psychometrically sound and culturally adapted instrument validated with the adolescents in the school contexts. Pre-testing of the instrument was done in 28 students of Earthly Paradise Secondary School, Lamjung, which has a similar setting and characteristic to check the clarity, sequence, and feasibility of the instrument.

Data were collected after getting an approval from the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) of the Institute of Medicine and selected schools. Initially, the school principals were informed and then the class teachers of the respective classes were also informed about the objective, process, and significance of study. The parental consent was obtained with the help of the respective class teachers.

Data were collected during the time allocated by the class teacher such as during the students' break time, ensuring that the regular classes were not disrupted. The questionnaires were distributed among the student participants. After the data were collected, anonymity was maintained by coding all the filled up questionnaires. The collected data were classified, coded, and analyzed, using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Finally, descriptive (frequency, percent, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearsons's correlation and independent t test) were used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results obtained from the analysis of data were assessed for the parental discipline and psychological wellbeing among the adolescents. Among 265 adolescents approached during the study, data were obtained from only 201 adolescents with a response rate of 76%.

Table 1

Background Characteristics of the Adolescents (n=201)

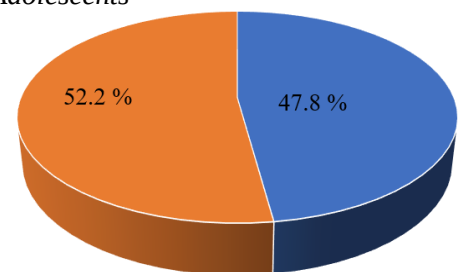
Characteristics	Number	Percent
Age in Years		
≥15	102	50.8
<15	99	49.2
Mean ± SD (14.54±1.16)		
Gender		
Girls	103	51.2
Boys	98	48.8
Type of family		
Nuclear	152	75.6
Joint and Extended	49	24.4
Birth Order		
First born	89	44.3
Second born	66	32.8
Third born and above	46	22.9
Ethnicity		
Janjati	125	62.2
Brahmin/Chhetri	34	16.9
Dalit	32	15.9
Madhesi	6	3.0
Kirat	4	2.0
Class/Grade		

Grade 9	118	58.7
Grade 8	83	41.3
Enrolled School		
Public	123	61.2
Private	78	38.8

A total of 50.8% of the adolescents were aged 15 years and above, with a mean age of 14.54 ± 1.16 years. Slightly more than half (51.2%) were girls. Regarding their religious affiliation, 46.8% follows the Hindu religion. In terms of ethnicity, 62.2% belonged to the Janajati group. Most of the adolescents (75.6%) were from the nuclear families, and 44.3% were the first-born children. Additionally, 61.2% of the adolescents were enrolled in the public schools, with 58.7% studying in Grade 9 (see Table 1).

Figure 1

Perception of Parental Discipline among Adolescents



■ Positive Perception ■ Negative Perception

Figure 1 illustrates that a total of 47.8% of the adolescents reported a positive perception of parental discipline. Table 2 shows that the mean scores for parental discipline and psychological

Table 2

Correlation between Parental Discipline and Psychological Wellbeing (n=201)

Variables	Possible Score	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range	r Value	p Value
Parental Discipline	25-125	101.38	7.28	77 -121	-.359	0.000**
Psychological Wellbeing	18-126	55.9	9.18	33 -78		

*r = Pearson Correlation coefficient, ** significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Table 3
Association between Parental Discipline and Selected Variables (n=201)

Variables	Parental Discipline		χ^2 Value	P- Value
	Positive No (%)	Negative No (%)		
Age in Years				
<15	46 (46.5)	53 (53.5)	0.131	0.717
≥15	50(49.0)	52(51.0)		
Gender				
Girls	45(43.7)	58(56.3)	1.404	0.236
Boys	51(52.0)	47(48.0)		
Type of Family				
Nuclear	67(44.1)	85(55.9)	3.388	0.066
Joint and extended	29(59.2)	20(40.8)		
Class/Grade				
Grade 9	56(47.5)	62(52.5)	0.011	0.918
Grade 8	40(48.2)	43(51.8)		
Enrolled School				
Public	47(60.3)	31(39.7)	7.976	0.005
Private	49(39.8)	74(60.2)		

Test statistics= χ^2 Chi-square; * p value significance at <0.05

wellbeing were 101.38 ± 7.28 and 55.9 ± 9.18 , respectively. Overall, the adolescents demonstrated relatively the low psychosocial wellbeing, with the scores ranging from 33 to 78. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between the parental discipline and the adolescents' psychological wellbeing ($r = -.359$, $p = 0.000$). The negative value of the correlation coefficient indicated that as the level or strictness of parental discipline increases, the psychological wellbeing of

adolescents tended to decrease.

Table 3 presents the association between the parental discipline and the selected variables. The analysis indicates a statistically significant association between the parental discipline and the type of school ($\chi^2 = 7.976$; $p = 0.005$). However, no significant association was found between the parental discipline and other variables such as age, gender, and class of the adolescents studied.

Table 4 presents a comparison of the psychological wellbeing across the

Table 4
Difference in Psychological Wellbeing with in Different Groups (n=201)

Variables	Number	Mean	Standard Error	Confidence Interval	t-Test Value	P Value
Age in Years						
<15	99	55.7	.8774	-2.91-2.21	-.270	.787
≥15	102	56.08	.954	2.90-2.20		
Gender						
Girls	103	55.8	.942	-2.69-2.44	-.096	.923
Boys	98	55.9	.890	-2.68-2.43		
Type of Family						
Nuclear	152	55.8	.75	3.14-2.81	-.110	.913
Joint and extended	49	56.0	1.28	3.11-2.78		
Class/Grade						
Grade 9	118	55.3	.855	-3.907-1.280	-.999	.319
Grade 8	83	56.7	.990	-3.896-1.268		
Enrolled School						
Public	123	56.2	.825	1.331- -1.862	.573	.567
Private	78	55.4	1.048	1.334- -3.397		

Test statistics=t test; * p value significance at ≤0.05

different groups. The analysis indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the psychological wellbeing among the groups, as the p -values > 0.05 . This suggests that the variations in the group characteristics do not have a measurable impact on the psychological wellbeing of the adolescents.

Discussion

The findings of the study show that 47.8% of adolescents reported a positive perception of the parental discipline. The mean scores for parental discipline and psychological wellbeing were 101.38 ± 7.28 and 55.9 ± 9.18 , respectively. Overall, the adolescents demonstrated relatively a low psychosocial wellbeing, with the scores ranging from 33 to 78. Similarly, the study carried out among the high school students in Turkey revealed the overall scores on the psychological well-being scale were below the average, indicating comparatively the lower levels of psychological well-being among the adolescents (Barber et.al, 2005). In contrast, the study from Rajasthan, India where 84% adolescents had a good psychological wellbeing (Easow & Ghorpade, 2017). Likewise, a correlational study among the 8th and 9th grade school adolescents in southern India found that more than half (51%) of the adolescents exhibited the high levels of psychological well-being (Harikrishnan & Sailo, 2021). These findings suggest that the adolescents' psychological well-being may differ significantly across the sociocultural and environmental contexts.

In this study, a correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between the parental discipline and the adolescents' psychological wellbeing ($r = -.359$, $p = 0.000$). The negative correlation coefficient indicates that as the strictness of parental discipline increases, the psychological wellbeing of adolescents tends to decrease. Likewise, a study

reported the significant relationships between the specific disciplinary practices and the adolescents' psychological well-being (Wang et.al, 2024). In addition, another study highlighted that the effective parental discipline acts as a protective factor by fostering the self-esteem and healthy psychosocial development, whereas the excessive control is associated with the adverse outcomes such as poor communication, family conflict, and reduced academic performance (Ma et al, 2022). Furthermore, a study conducted in India explored the relationship between the parenting and the adolescents' psychological well-being, emphasizing its role in shaping the mental health outcomes (Harikrishnan & Sailo, 2021). The parental control and discipline play a crucial role in shaping the adolescents' behaviors, values, and attitudes. However, the way they perceive the parental control significantly influences their emotional well-being, social development, and family relationships (Ma et al., 2022). Collectively, these studies suggest that the nature of parental discipline and the overall family environment play a critical role in influencing the psychological well-being of adolescents.

This study identified a statistically significant association between the parental discipline and the type of school ($\chi^2 = 7.976$; $p = 0.005$). However, no significant association was found between the parental discipline and other variables such as age, gender, and class of the adolescents studied. There were no statistically significant differences in the psychological wellbeing among the groups, as the p -values > 0.05 . This suggests that the variations in the group characteristics do not have a measurable impact on the psychological wellbeing of the adolescents. However, the evidences from the previous studies suggest that the gender differences may significantly influence the adolescents' psychological well-being. A study conducted in Tunisia

reported a statistically significant difference in the psychological well-being between the male and female students (Bahri, 2023). Similarly, a study carried out in India among the high school adolescents found a significant association between gender and psychological well-being $p=0.05$, (Steinberg & Morris, 2001) indicating that the psychological well-being varies across the gender groups.

CONCLUSION

About half of the adolescents demonstrated a positive perception of the parental discipline. Overall, the adolescents demonstrated relatively a low psychosocial wellbeing, and the strict parental discipline may have a negative effect on their psychological wellbeing. These findings imply that the stricter or more controlling parental disciplinary practices may have an adverse effect on the adolescents' psychological wellbeing, highlighting the importance of adopting the balanced and supportive parenting approaches.

The finding of low psychosocial wellbeing among the adolescents highlights an urgent need for comprehensive, school-based mental health support programs. The schools provide a critical platform for early identification, prevention, and intervention, as the adolescents spend a significant time in the school. Thus, integrating the mental health services within a school such as regular screening, counseling support, and peer support can help address the emotional and behavioral concerns at an early stage and promote wellbeing among the students.

In addition, these findings focus on the importance of supportive family environments in shaping the adolescent wellbeing. The policies should therefore emphasize the development of accessible and adolescent-friendly counseling services within both the school and community settings. In addition, the

parenting education initiatives are essential to equip the parents with the knowledge and skills related to the positive parenting practices, effective communication, and emotional support. Strengthening a collaboration between schools, families, and communities can create the supportive system that fosters the healthy adolescents' development.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This research was conducted independently without financial, political, or personal relationships that could inappropriately influence the study's findings or interpretations.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors collectively contributed to the successful completion of this study. Conceptualization and study design were carried out by the principal author. The data collection instruments were developed and validated by all authors. Data collection was conducted by co-authors. Data analysis was performed by the principal author with inputs from co-authors. The interpretation of results and preparation of the manuscript were undertaken collaboratively. All authors reviewed, edited and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to submission for publication.

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