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# Negotiating Time, Authority, and Care: Working Parents and Parent-Child Relationships in Shaping Academic and Social Well-being of Indian Adolescents

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### Abstract:

**Background:** The context of parenting and parent-child relationship in urban India has undergone changes due to the exponential growth of dual-income families that have been facilitated by the changing pattern of the economy. These shifts in families are especially perilous during this time of development that we call adolescence – a period we know is not only social and academically stressful, but one that also fosters increasing autonomy. Understanding how parents balance of time, authority, and caring is central to promoting adolescents' academic success and positive social adjustment. **Aim:** This study intended to examine the relationship between Indian adolescents' academic and social well-being and the quality of working parents' parent-child relationships. **Methods:** A descriptive correlation design of research was used. This cross-sectional study was conducted by stratified random sampling among 400 IX and X standard students in urban India from government and private SSC Board schools. Quality of parent-child relationships, academic well-being, and social well-being were measured with validated and standardized research instruments. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, independent sample t-test, ANOVA, and regression analysis. **Results:** Results showed a highly significant positive relationship between academic and social well-being and the quality of the parent-child relationships. According to regression research, the level of parent-child connections predicts teens' involvement in academic and social activities. Also, sex and type of school were found to be different. **Conclusion:** The work status of parents, regardless, the quality of parent-adolescent relationships emerges as an important aspect of teenagers' academic and social health. It is possible that promoting relational engagement among working families in the Indian context would lead to the comprehensive development of their adolescents.

## Introduction

There has been a dramatic social, economic, and familial reconfiguration of India in the past decades, with parents being involved more in the workforce, globalization, and urbanization. The incidence of dual earners is on the rise in urban India, particularly among middle-class households as per national labor statistics (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018). Although this transition has been beneficial for family income and gender equity, it has also changed previously established parental supervision and emotional availability patterns, raising important issues regarding parent-child relationships and adolescent outcomes.

Steinberg (2014) states that adolescence is an important phase of development during which it is marked by augmented scholastic anticipations, identity making, emotional acuity, as well as social reorientation. This era is linked to high-stakes board examinations, high expectations on the part of parents and competitive learning settings within the Indian context. Whereas social well-being encompasses the relationship with the peers, emotional stability, and sense of belonging, academic well-being in the adolescence stage extends beyond academic achievements to encompass motivation, self-regulation, and involvement (OECD, 2017). Parent-child bond is also of great influence in both of these worlds.

The time, authority, and care are always negotiated in a family life in case parents work full-time. With increased autonomy in the teenagers, the structure of authority can shift; time can be restricted in the heavily supervised activities and spending time together; and care can be given, but it is increasingly done not physically but by emotional aid. The family systems theory shows that such structural changes affect the outcomes of adolescent adjustments and relationships (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Most importantly, parental work is not necessarily bad, but what matters is whether parents manage emotional attachment, responsiveness and surveillance in a way that leads to developmental results.

Warm, responsive, and communicative parent to child relationships are also associated with higher academic achievement, better emotional regulation, and the development of greater social competence in teenagers according to empirical studies (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg, 2001). Conversely, too much control, lack of emotion or uneven monitoring might cause social issues and stress and/or disengagement with academics. Furthermore, the findings of the study conducted in India indicate that the perception of teenagers on the support and availability of their parents is a better predictor of their wellness in relation to their state of employment (Verma and Sharma, 2017; Kaur and Bhardwaj, 2019).

The increasing literature on parental practices and teenage outcomes still has three great gaps. First, a significant part of the literature, especially Indian, is limited to discussing only the parenting approaches without referring to the problem of time limitations and working parents in particular. Second, although social well-being and academic achievement are closely interrelated, the existing studies often focus on academic performance and do not sufficiently represent the latter. Third, the lack of empirical studies of urban Indian teens in board-based systems of education (where performance pressure and parental involvement are of particular significance) is evident.

In light of these gaps, the present study examines how employed parents balance time, power and care in the parent-child relationship and the influence that the choice has on the academic and social well-being of adolescents. That is why this study is an integrated one, it is not limited to the simplistic assumptions made about parental employment, and is developed on a development perspective and the family systems perspective. Instead, it highlights more mundane parenting styles, viewed emotional support, and quality relationships as supportive elements with regard to teenage outcomes.

In this research, the author provides the contextually situated evidence to the family studies and educational psychology, focusing on the Indian teenagers. Its findings must aid parents, teachers, school counselors and lawmakers in contributing to the general growth of teenagers in the era when families are changing their structures.

## Literature Review

The parent-child bond is one of the most important influencing factors of the developmental outcomes in young people, including academic achievements, and social life. It has already been demonstrated by a considerable amount of international studies that parental involvement, including emotional support, communication, monitoring, and engagement, is strongly related to positive mental health and academic performance among teenagers (OECD, 2024; Takahiro et al., 2012). The involvement of parents has been linked to reduced occurrence of poor mental health, such as anxiety

and loneliness, among the Indian youth, which has supported the protective role of parental involvement in the adolescent years (Hasumi et al., 2012).

Parental employment both affects and does not affect family functioning. Research on the relation between the employment of parents and the wellbeing of children suggests the possible effect of workplace independence and flexibility on parenting quality and consequently on outcome in children. Increased job autonomy (through employment) results in that parents are less overreacted and more involved, enhancing children adaptive capacity (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2019). Conversely, the availability of their parents might be restricted based on the high workload requirements and time levels, which might affect the process of emotional and behavioral development among teenagers.

In particular, research on parental employment in India and similar developing contexts mostly focuses on the employment status of mothers. For instance, studies on working and non-working mothers show variations in the motivation, emotional maturity, and personality development of teenagers. In comparison to peers of non-working moms, adolescent children of working mothers have demonstrated a variety of outcomes, such as increased independence, but, in other studies, decreased emotional availability and self-motivation (e.g., Desai & Jain, 2016; Singh & Kiran, 2014).

Adolescent well-being is significantly influenced by relationship quality, which goes beyond employment position alone. The quality of parent-adolescent relationships is positively associated with psychological well-being and is regulated by elements like perceived support and communication quality. Stronger parent-adolescent ties are linked to greater psychological well-being and reduced peer-related stress, according to studies conducted in India with both working and non-working mothers (e.g., studies in Punjab showing significant positive associations between parent-adolescent relationships and adolescent psychological well-being).

Furthermore, Indian research highlights that parental behavior, warmth, and control significantly predict adolescents' behavioral problems. Maternal warmth and control, along with paternal control, were shown to predict internalizing and externalizing behaviors in adolescents (e.g., in community-based studies evaluating parenting attitudes in India). Emerging evidence suggests that fathers play a crucial yet often underexplored role in adolescent well-being. Recent qualitative research in India found that employed fathers contribute substantively to adolescents' healthy behaviors, including nutrition and physical activity, although long working hours constrain their ability to invest time, underscoring the need to consider fathers' work schedules within parenting research.

- **Gaps in Existing Literature**

- Limited attention to dual-working parents: Although maternal employment has drawn considerable attention, research on the combined effects of both parents' employment on adolescent outcomes and relationship quality in India is scarce.
- Relational systems are underrepresented: Few studies in India specifically relate teenage academic and social well-being in working households to the quality of the parent-child connection (e.g., communication patterns, emotional support).
- Absence of integration with well-being constructs: Although a lot of research has been done on psychological factors, there are not many integrated studies that look at how work-family dynamics interact with social well-being and academic achievement at the same time.

## **Materials and Methods**

- **Research Design**

The current study uses a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design. This approach is appropriate because the study's goal is to investigate current correlations between variables—that is, the traits of working parents, the quality of parent-child relationships, and the academic and social well-being of adolescents—without changing any of the variables.

The layout permits:

- Analyzing relationships between adolescent outcomes and parental employment-related factors
- Evaluation of predictive correlations
- Investigation of group disparities according to demographic factors like gender and school type

### Study Setting

The study was conducted in urban India, focusing on secondary school students enrolled in SSC Board–affiliated schools. Urban settings were selected due to:

- Higher prevalence of dual-working parent households
- Greater academic pressure linked to board examinations
- Exposure to modern work–family dynamics
- **Population of the Study**

The population comprised adolescents studying in Classes IX and X, as this developmental stage coincides with:

- Heightened academic demands
- Increased autonomy
- Greater sensitivity to parental support and supervision

### Target Population

- Adolescents aged 14–16 years
- Students with at least one working parent
- Enrolled in government and private SSC schools
- **Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

#### ▪ Sample Size

A sample of 400 adolescents was used because it was considered sufficient to have sufficient statistical power and representation.

#### ▪ Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling method was used in order to represent the key demographic variables proportionally.

### Stratification Criteria

- Gender (boys/girls)
- Type of school (government/private)
- Grade level (IX/X)

**Table 1: Sample Distribution**

Category	Boys	Girls	Total
Government Schools	100	100	200
Private Schools	100	100	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>400</b>

- Variables of the Study

**Table 2: Variables and Operational Definitions**

Variable Type	Variable	Operational Definition
Independent	Working Parents	Parents engaged in full-time or regular paid employment
Independent	Parent–Child Relationship Quality	Adolescents' perceived emotional support, communication, and monitoring
Dependent	Academic Well-being	Academic performance, motivation, and engagement
Dependent	Social Well-being	Peer relationships, emotional adjustment, and school connectedness
Control	Gender, School Type	Demographic variables controlled during analysis

- **Tools and Instruments Used**

The reliability and validity were achieved using standardized and validated instruments.

- **Parent–Child Relationship Scale**
  - ❖ Measures perceived emotional closeness, communication, and parental involvement
  - ❖ Self-report format completed by adolescents
  - ❖ Responses recorded on a Likert scale
  - ❖ Higher scores indicate stronger relationship quality
- **Academic Well-being Measure**

Academic well-being was assessed using:

  - ❖ Self-reported academic performance
  - ❖ Recent examination scores (where available)
  - ❖ Items related to learning motivation and study discipline
- **Social Well-being Scale**
  - ❖ Assesses:
    - ❖ Peer interaction
    - ❖ Emotional adjustment
    - ❖ Sense of belonging at school
    - ❖ Social participation
- **Reliability and Validity of Tools**
  - Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha
  - Scales with alpha values  $\geq 0.70$  were considered acceptable
  - Content validity was ensured through expert review
  - Pilot testing was conducted on a small subsample to ensure comprehension
- **Procedure for Data Collection**

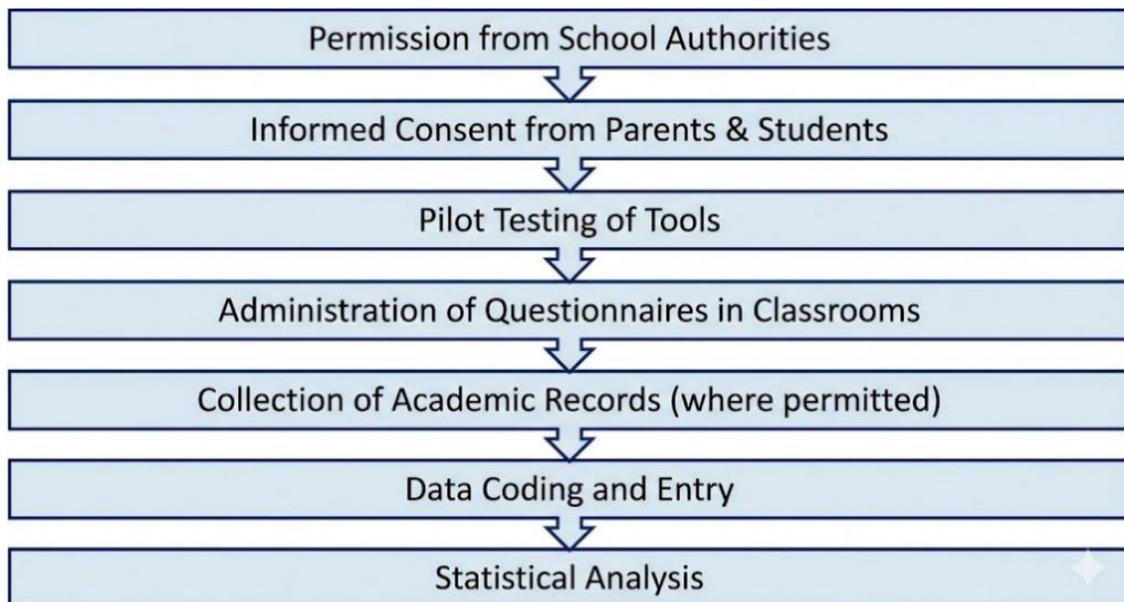


Figure 1: Flowchart: Procedure for Data Collection

- **Ethical Considerations**
  - Prior permission obtained from school authorities
  - Informed consent taken from parents/guardians and assent from students
  - Participation was voluntary
  - Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained
  - Data used solely for academic research purposes
- **Statistical Techniques Used**

Data were analyzed using SPSS software.

**Table 3: Statistical Techniques and Purpose**

Statistical Tool	Purpose
Mean & Standard Deviation	Describe sample characteristics
Pearson's Correlation	Examine relationships between variables.
Independent t-test	Compare gender and school-type differences.
ANOVA	Compare multiple group differences.
Regression Analysis	Predict academic and social well-being.
Mediation Analysis	Examine indirect effects via relationship quality.

Significance was tested at the  $p < .05$  level

- **Delimitations of the Study**
  - Study limited to urban SSC schools
  - Only Classes IX and X included
  - Self-report measures may be subject to response bias
  - Findings may not generalize to rural populations

### Results

The results of the statistical analysis of data gathered from 400 secondary school pupils are presented in this chapter. The analyses were carried out to investigate the connections between the traits of working parents, the quality of parent-child relationships, and the academic and social well-being of teenagers. In line with the study's stated goals and assumptions, descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used.

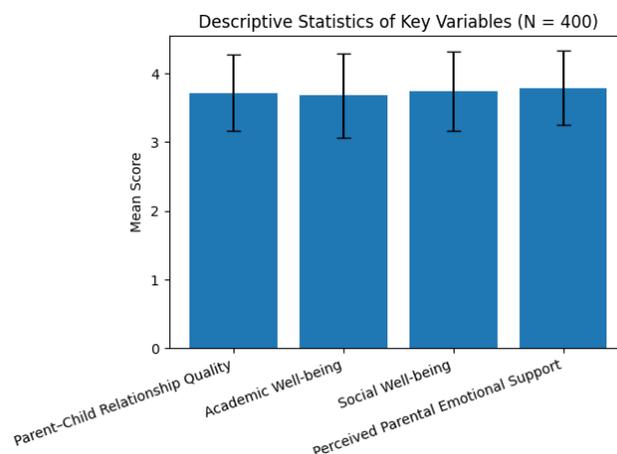
- **Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables**

Descriptive statistics were computed to understand the general trends and distribution of scores across the major study variables.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (N = 400)**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Parent-Child Relationship Quality	3.72	0.56
Academic Well-being	3.68	0.61
Social Well-being	3.74	0.58
Perceived Parental Emotional Support	3.79	0.54

The mean scores indicate that, on average, respondents reported moderate to high levels of parent-child relationship quality, academic well-being, and social well-being.

**Figure 2: Mean scores and standard deviations of key study variables (N = 400)**

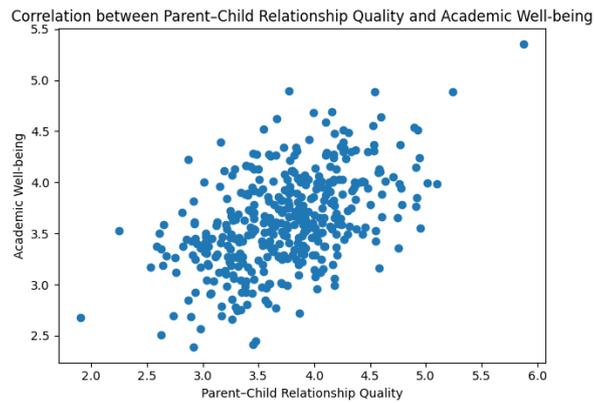
- Relationship between Parent–Child Relationship Quality and Academic Well-being**

To examine the relationship between parent–child relationship quality and academic well-being, Pearson’s product–moment correlation was applied.

**Table 5: Correlation between Parent–Child Relationship Quality and Academic Well-being**

Variables	r	p-value
Parent–Child Relationship Quality × Academic Well-being	0.52	< .001

The correlation coefficient indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between parent–child relationship quality and academic well-being among adolescents. The relationship was statistically significant at the 0.001 level.



**Figure 3: Scatterplot showing the relationship between parent–child relationship quality and academic well-being**

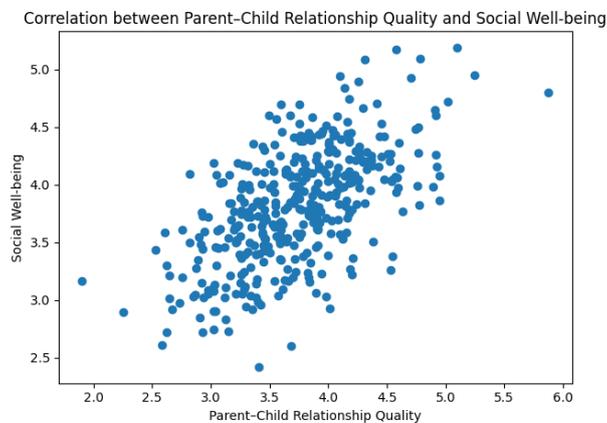
- Relationship between Parent–Child Relationship Quality and Social Well-being**

Pearson’s correlation was also used to assess the association between parent–child relationship quality and social well-being.

**Table 6: Correlation between Parent–Child Relationship Quality and Social Well-being**

Variables	r	p-value
Parent–Child Relationship Quality × Social Well-being	0.58	< .001

The results show a strong positive correlation, suggesting that higher quality parent–child relationships are associated with higher levels of social well-being among adolescents.



**Figure 4: Scatterplot showing the relationship between parent–child relationship quality and social well-being**

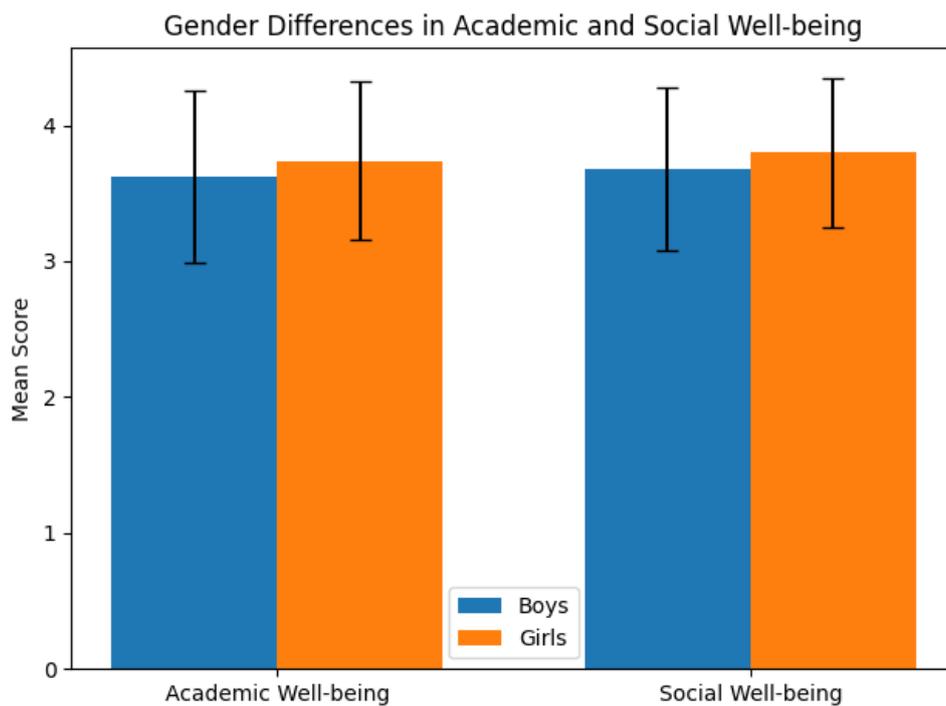
#### 4.4 Gender Differences in Academic and Social Well-being

Independent samples **t-tests** were conducted to examine whether gender differences existed in academic and social well-being.

**Table 7: Gender Differences in Academic and Social Well-being**

Variable	Gender	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Academic Well-being	Boys	3.62	0.63	2.41	.016
	Girls	3.74	0.58	-	-
Social Well-being	Boys	3.68	0.60	2.89	.004
	Girls	3.80	0.55	-	-

The results indicate statistically significant gender differences in both academic and social well-being, with girls reporting slightly higher mean scores.



**Figure 5: Gender differences in academic and social well-being among adolescents (N = 400)**

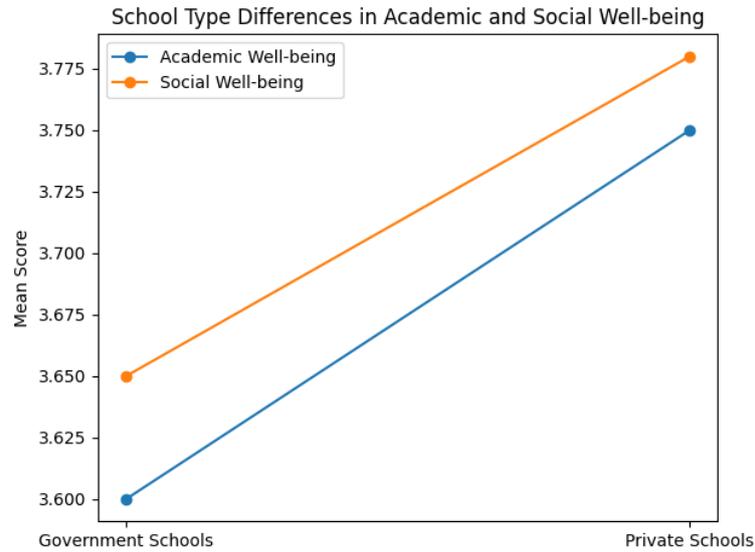
#### Effect of School Type on Academic and Social Well-being

One-way ANOVA was applied to determine whether academic and social well-being differed between students from government and private schools.

**Table 8: ANOVA Results for School Type Differences**

Variable	F-value	p-value
Academic Well-being	6.27	.013
Social Well-being	4.89	.028

The findings suggest a statistically significant difference between school types for both academic and social well-being.



**Figure 6: Mean differences in academic and social well-being by school type**

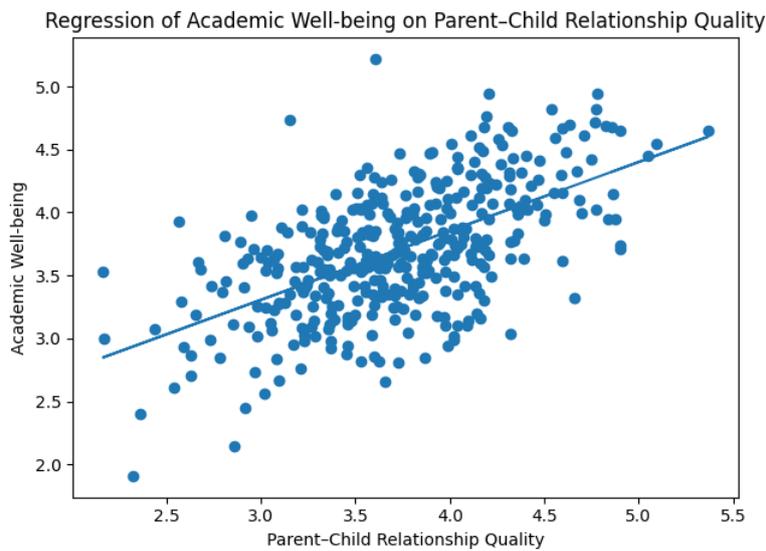
• **Predictive Role of Parent–Child Relationship Quality on Academic Well-being**

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether parent–child relationship quality significantly predicts academic well-being.

**Table 9: Regression Analysis Predicting Academic Well-being**

Predictor		$\beta$	t	p
Parent–Child Relationship Quality		0.51	12.18	< .001
Model Summary	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
	0.52	0.27	148.36	< .001

The model explains 27% of the variance in academic well-being.



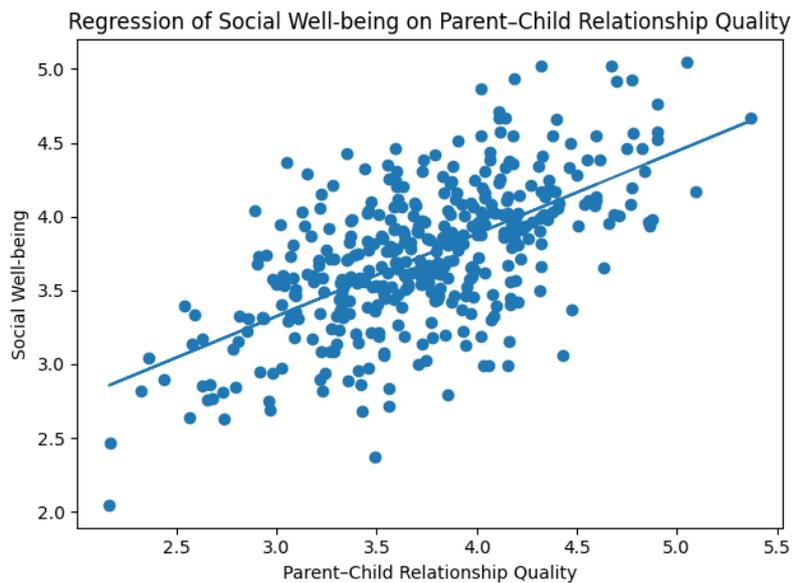
**Figure 7: Regression of academic well-being on parent–child relationship quality**

- **Predictive Role of Parent–Child Relationship Quality on Social Well-being**  
Regression analysis was also conducted with social well-being as the dependent variable.

**Table 10: Regression Analysis Predicting Social Well-being**

Predictor		$\beta$	t	p
Parent–Child Relationship Quality		0.57	14.02	< .001
Model Summary	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
	0.58	0.34	196.56	< .001

Parent–child relationship quality accounted for 34% of the variance in social well-being.



**Figure 8: Regression of social well-being on parent–child relationship quality**

## Discussion

The current research investigated the time, authority, and care negotiations between working parents and child in parent-child relationships and how these variables influence academic and social well-being among the Indian teenagers. The findings could be useful in understanding how the quality of relationships influences growth outcomes of adolescents in urban India, and not employment status of parents.

The results indicated that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the quality of the parent-child relationships and academic well being. The relationship between communication, emotional support and parental involvement with better academic motivation, engagement and performance among adolescents was established. This finding is in line with substantial amount of global studies that have indicated a responsive and supportive parenting leads to self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and academic competency among adolescents (Steinberg, 2001; Wang and Eccles, 2012).

The results are also in line with earlier studies conducted in the Indian setting that parental support and availability as perceived by teenagers should be significant predictors of academic functioning, particularly in examination-oriented educational systems (Verma and Sharma, 2017). The results have proven the idea that general academic success in coping with time constraints can be achieved by meaningful use of time when the working parents are able to monitor academic performance and pay emotional support to adolescents, which makes them better cope with academic issues.

Parent-child relationships quality was observed to concur to social well-being in a larger positive meaning and implied that relational factors are particularly significant to the emotional adaptability of

teenagers and peer functioning. The adolescents also reported the enhanced levels of social integration, emotional stability, and school connectedness when they were exposed to warmth, open communication and perceived caring.

This finding does in accordance with the family systems and attachment-based position, which emphasize that stability and encouraging parent-child relationships contribute to social competence and emotional stability (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006; Armsden and Greenberg, 1987). This kind of relationship security is said to safeguard teenagers against stress and social disorientation within Indian families that are undergoing transitions due to dual-earner arrangement. The results support previous Indian studies that have revealed that emotional parental attention shields adolescents against anxiety and social withdrawal (Kaur and Bhardwaj, 2019).

Differences in genders were identified as statistically significant with girls having a little better social and academic well-being as compared to boys. This finding also aligns with the past studies that reveal that teenage females are more often associated with higher instances of relational sensitivity, emotional sensitivity, and intellectual interest which could enhance their responsiveness to parental support (OECD, 2017).

The Indian sociocultural environment and metropolitan life in particular, might also affect such outcomes as girls might be subjected to more manipulative parental monitoring and emotional contact. Their results, however, indicate different patterns in socializations that require further studies as opposed to the existence of a natural gender advantage.

It was demonstrated that both intellectual and social well-being of pupils in government and private schools were significantly different. Such differences may be due to the differences in expectations of families, school-home patterns of communication and institutional resources. Most previous research has found that the environment of a private school often promotes an increased amount of involvement and academic oversight by parents, which could somewhat affect the well-being of the students (Jain and Puri, 2020).

It is imperative to keep in mind that school type did not work as a completely independent factor, but it intermingled with parental participation. This highlights the importance of procedures at the family level in every institution.

Parent-child relationship quality helped to explain a significant portion of the diversity in the outcomes among adolescents, as it was identified to be a key predictor of academic as well as social well being. These findings reinforce the principal assertion of the study that parental employment is moderated by the nature of relational engagement to produce a best outcome to the well-being of the teens.

The result is also significantly similar to previous research that demonstrates that the influence of parental employment is not necessarily damaging to the development of children, but its effects depend on the manner in which parents exercise authority, offer emotional support, and commit time (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2019). In such a way, the findings emphasize the processes of adaptation within the family and deny the lack-oriented accounts of the working parents.

The implications of the findings to the Indian working family caught between the demanding work and family demands are high. They argue that emotionally sensitive relationships, expressive, and inspirational are also helpful to teenagers as much as parental presence. Even in time-limited contexts, parents who emphasize on relationship quality have an advantageous effect on academic and social chronic course of their children.

These findings highlight that workplace policies supporting involvement and work-life of parents, cooperation between school and family, and parent-oriented intervention into educator and legislative roles are necessary.

The contributions made in the study have some limitations. Causal inference is limited because of the cross-sectional design, and response bias would occur because of self-reported data. Moreover, it has restricted the generalizability to rural settings due to the focus on urban teenagers.

Longitudinal designs should be employed in future research, consideration of parental perspective should also be considered, and the association between parenting practice and specific job characteristics such as shift work or work flexibility must also be investigated. There is also need to explore more on father involvement among the dual-earner Indian families.

## Conclusion

The aim of the present research was to explore the time, power, and care management of working parents in parent-child relationship and how these relation influence the social and academic well-being of the teenagers at Indian schools. The research, being grounded on realities of metropolitan dual-earner families, provides objective evidence that adolescent development is also greatly subject to the nature of the relationships as opposed to the occupation of the parents.

The findings indicate that adolescents with higher levels of emotional support and open parent-teen communication and frequent parental engagement have better academic well-being, report more motivation and interest, and, ultimately, have better social well-being, which is indicated by improved peer relationships and adapted emotions. These findings show that when responsiveness, monitoring, and emotional availability are exhibited, valuable parental involvement can be sustained even with demanding schedules of the working homes.

The differences and gender gap in schools and types of schools also demonstrate that the well-being of teenagers is established due to the complex combination of family, institutional, and socio-cultural environments. Importantly, the study disproves deficit-based assumptions regarding working parents because the authors show that adolescent outcomes do not inherently get negatively impacted by the employment out of the homes. Instead, developmental paths are defined by the way in which parents manage limited time and balance between nurturant and authoritative respect.

In a broader perspective, the research contributes towards the development of family research and educational psychology because it involves the application of theory across boundaries in the contemporary Indian family systems. It underscores the need of teachers, therapists, and lawmakers to transcend the particular academic indices and accept the significance of relationships between parents and young people to support the overall well-being of the adolescents.

Finally, in the rapidly changing Indian socioeconomic environment, the support of working parents by workplace policies, parent-educator courses, and school-home programs might be more than just essential in creating academically competent, emotionally stable and socially adjusted teenagers.

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