

ABSTRACT

- Positive relationships with parents have the potential to strengthen adolescents' emotional well-being.
- Secondary data analysis of data collected from the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) studies was used for the current research.
- The sample consisted of 8875 adolescents in grades 7, 8, 9, and 10, across 314 schools in the United States.
- Chi-square analyses indicated that parental figures who possessed qualities of being understanding, promoting independent decision-making, supportiveness, and being caring were attributes that positively affected adolescent feelings about their appearance and feelings related to their mood.
- Results from the present study showed that positively perceived parental involvement had a positive effect on the adolescent's emotional well-being and feelings pertaining to their body.

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Study: This study is significant to the field of social welfare because exploring familial relationships such as those between adolescents and their caregivers can offer insight into how adults can build and maintain healthy relationships with their children.

Purpose: To examine the effects of parent involvement on adolescent emotional well-being.

Research Question: Do family attributes affect child/adolescent emotional well-being?

Hypothesis: A positive perception of parent/guardian involvement improves child/adolescent emotional well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Relevant studies have identified a positive association between the quality of parent-adolescent relationships and adolescent well-being.
- Literature is not limited to one definition of the quality of parent/caregiver involvement. Often different attributes of parent and child relationships are assessed and used as predictors of relationship involvement quality.
- The results of research that does exist suggests that more time spent with a mother and father and parent relationship quality effects adolescent emotional health.
- Gaps in the literature include primarily studying the dynamics of the interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their mothers, fathers, and peers. Not many studies identify other possibilities of caregiver dynamics
- Additionally, when looking at emotional well-being in literature, body image perception and satisfaction are not considered to be emotional well-being and a contribution to overall mental health.

METHODS

Research Design

- The current study is a secondary data analysis of data collected from the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) studies conducted in the 2009-2010 school year in the United States.
- The population of the HBSC study during 2009-2010 consisted of students in grades 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 attending public, Catholic and other private schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia
- The instrument used to gather this data was by survey distribution and consisted of two parts, the first part containing data for the students and the second part containing data for the administrators.
- Questions among the study consist of those related to substance use, physical health, family systems, body image, and other various health-related behaviors and attitudes
- For the purpose of this research and determining what familial attributes affect student emotional well-being, only the first part of data from the original study was used due to it containing student responses

Sample

- The Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey used in the original 2009-2010 study was administered to school-aged children in the United States.
- Initially, 475 schools within the United States were chosen to participate in the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) studies. Among those schools, 161 schools did not participate in the study
- The originally collected data consisted of 12,642 eligible students from 314 participating schools in the United States
- Due to the current study's design, only surveys from grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 were included. The current study's sample size is 8875 students.

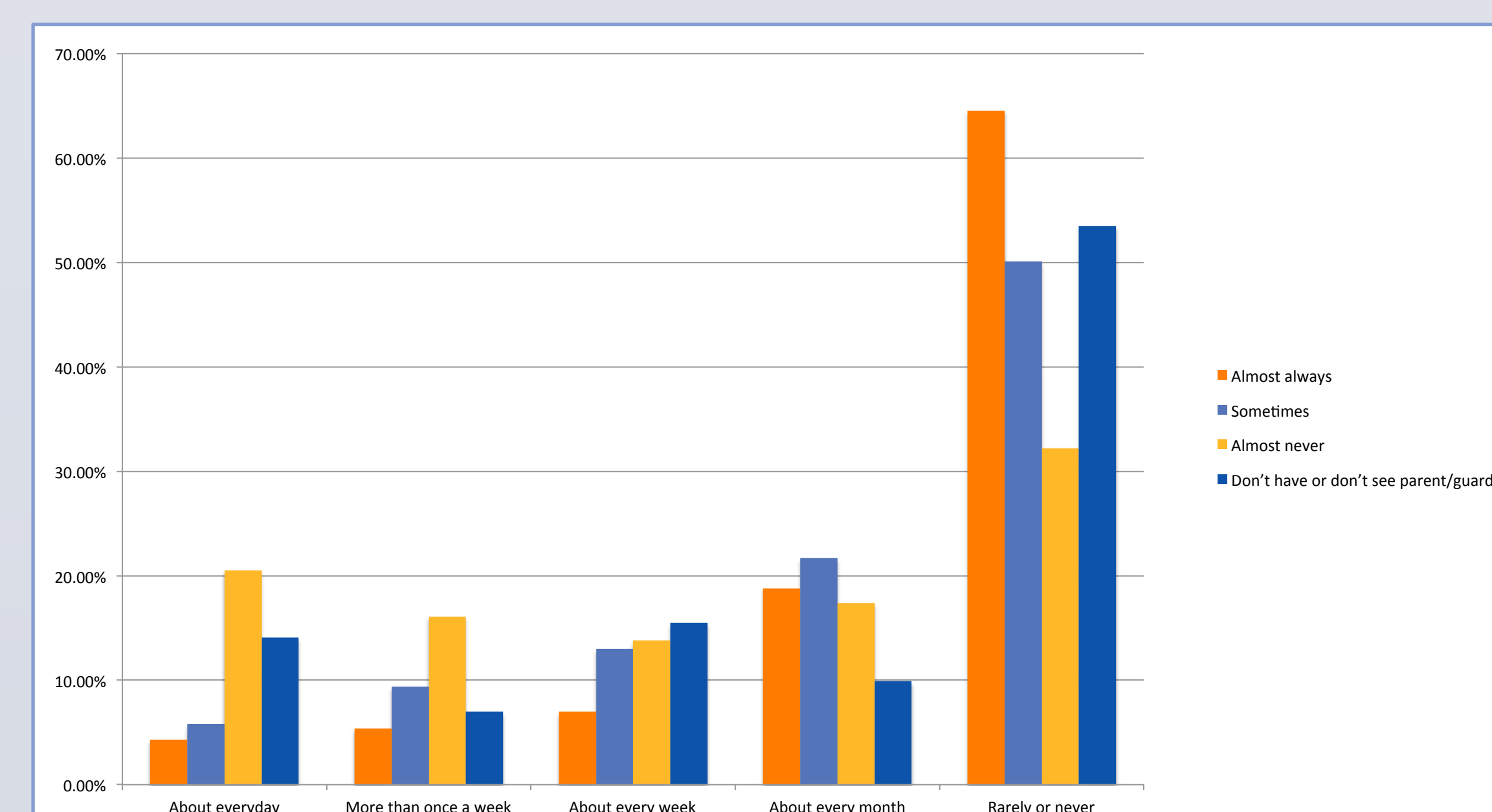
Measures

- Independent Variable: Parent/Guardian Involvement**
 - 8 Self-Report questions, 4-point Likert scale
 - Examples of the items included [my parent or guardian] "Helps me as much as I need," "Is loving," "Likes me to make my own decisions," and "Treats me like a baby".
- Dependent Variable: Adolescent's Emotional Well-Being**
 - Feelings about Body*, 6 Self-Report Questions, 5-point Likert Scale
 - Examples of the items included statements such as, "I hate my body," "I feel comfortable with my body," or "I feel anger toward my body".
 - Feelings in the Past 6 Months*, 3 Self-Report Questions, 5-point Likert Scale
 - The items included "feeling low," "irritability or bad temper," and "feeling nervous".

RESULTS

Feelings

- There was a statistically significant relationship between the adult responsible for the adolescent's care and how often the adolescent felt low in the past six months, $X^2(24, N=8482), 164.17, p = .00$.
- Among adults responsible for care, adolescents who lived with both mother and father reported the highest rates of rarely to never feeling low (56.1%).
- There was a statistical significance between the degree to which an adolescent's parent/guardian helped them as much as they need and how often the adolescent felt irritable in the last six months, $X^2(12, N=8379), 412.92, p = .000$.
- A student with a parent/guardian who almost always helped them as much as they need reported the lowest rates of irritability in the last six months (41.6%).
- The relation between how often the parent/guardian understood the adolescents problems and how often the adolescent felt low in the past six months was also statistically significant, $X^2(12, N=8290), 839.74, p = .00$.
- Adolescents with parents/guardians who almost always understood their problems reported the highest rates of rarely or never feeling low (64.5%).



Feelings about Body

- There was statistically significant relationship between the degree to which the parent allowed the adolescent to do the things they like and what the adolescent's thoughts were on their body, $X^2(12, N=8438), 123.53, p = .000$.
- Adolescents who had parents/guardians who almost always let them do the things they liked reported the highest rates of thinking that their bodies are about the right size (63.8%).
- The relation between how often the parent/guardian made the adolescent feel better when they were upset and whether the adolescent felt anger toward their body was also statistically significant, $X^2(12, N=8168), 348.34, p = .000$.
- Adolescents with parents/guardians who almost always made them feel better when they were upset reported the highest rates of strongly disagreeing that they had feelings of anger towards their body (62.5%)
- Evidenced by the frequencies cross tabulated in the table below, there was a significant relationship between parent/guardian being loving and the adolescent's feelings about their body, $X^2(12, N=8174), 360.68, p = .000$.
- Students with parents/guardians who were almost always loving were less likely to have negative feelings about their bodies (3.4%).

Criteria	Parent Is Loving				Chi	df	P
	Almost always	Sometimes	Almost never	Don't have or don't see parent/guardian			
Strongly disagree	56.4%	35.6%	32.0%	46.9%	360.68	12	.000
Disagree	21.6%	26.0%	19.4%	18.4%			
Neither agree or disagree	12.9%	20.4%	16.9%	12.2%			
Agree	5.8%	10.6%	16.2%	12.2%			

DISCUSSION

Strengths and Limitations

- This study confirmed that positive qualities of parental involvement increased adolescent emotional well-being.
- In addition, the findings supports the utilization of parent-based interventions, noting that enhancing relationship with a parent can be beneficial for adolescent development.
- This study is a cross-sectional survey. Therefore the direction of causality between perceived quality of the parent involvement and adolescent's socio-emotional well-being was challenging to determine.
- Findings from the present study may not be an applicable generalization for races of all of the youth represented in the sample

Implications and Future Research

- Social workers should consider tailoring their interventions to strengthening the parent-adolescent relationship.
- School-based social workers should consider implementing concurring parent and adolescent workshops covering the common mental health concerns presented in high school.
- It would be a benefit to future studies if researchers incorporate data from adolescent self-reports, in addition to parent self-reports.
- Additionally, it would be invaluable to identify other measures of parenting that could help explain more about how different parental factors influence adolescent emotional well-being.