

## **Influence of Parental and Peer Support on the Success of Nutrition Education Interventions for Adolescent Girls**

**Pooja Yadav<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Shri Khushal Das University, Hanumangarh, Rajasthan- 335801, India

**Dr. Vikas Kumar<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Shri Khushal Das University, Hanumangarh, Rajasthan- 335801, India

### **ABSTRACT**

Adolescence is a critical period for developing lifelong dietary habits, and nutrition education interventions play a key role in promoting healthy eating behaviors. This study examines the influence of parental and peer support on the success of such interventions among adolescent girls. A sample of 250 participants was analyzed to assess the impact of various social factors, including parental encouragement, peer influence, media exposure, and self-motivation. The findings indicate that parental support (35%) is the most significant factor, followed by peer influence (30%), media influence (20%), and self-motivation (15%). These results underscore the importance of integrating family involvement, peer-led initiatives, and digital strategies into nutrition education programs. By leveraging social influences, interventions can be more effective in fostering long-term behavioral change. Future research should explore personalized approaches to enhance the effectiveness of such programs.

*Keywords: Parental Support, Peer Influence, Nutrition Education*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Proper nutrition as an adolescent is crucial as it is an important period of physical, cognitive, and emotional development. Despite that, adolescent girls are particularly at risk of being nutritionally deficient during rapid growth, hormone changes and socio-cultural influences. Problems with implementation of nutrition education interventions are largely caused by the need for external influences, mostly parental and peer support. Social support as a determinant of behavior change is known in the world of psychology, and it impacts on the motivation, self-efficacy and adherence to health promoting behaviours.

Parental support leads to a conducive home environment by giving access to healthy foods, reinforcing healthy eating behaviors, and learning how to approach healthy eating, among others. Social learning and attachment psychological theories view that adolescent is more prone to follow the behaviors that their main caregivers endorse. Likewise, peer support also affects people's style of dietary choice due to the fact that adolescents usually follow group norms and spiral validating to their social circles. The Theory of Planned Behavior illustrates that the incline of subjective norms, which can be represented by peer influence, as well, impacts on an individual's intention to adopt healthier eating. To design an effective nutrition education intervention, it is important to understand the psychological dynamics of the parental and peer support. Integration of these social influences allows for interventions featuring enhanced engagement, sustained behavioral change and better nutritional status of adolescent girls. By expanding on the discourse of adolescent health and developmental psychology, this study investigates the psychological mechanisms through which parental and peer supports enhance the effectiveness of nutrition education programs.

---

## Objectives

1. To examine the role of parental support in shaping adolescent girls' dietary behaviors and adherence to nutrition education interventions.
2. To analyze the influence of peer support on the success of nutrition education programs for adolescent girls.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of effective nutrition education interventions for adolescent girls involves a great deal of parental and peer support. It is important for parental involvement in health eating behaviors, since behavioural foundations for health eating are arising from parental role in answering as to the availability of food and the models of the dietary habits (Grennan et al., 2022). The studies emphasize that parental peer support groups are essential for encouraging positive attitude towards nutrition and wellbeing of adolescents (Grennan et al., 2022). Also, PRECEDE model based nutrition education intervention has found to be effective to improve diet consumption of adolescent girls and reduce iron deficiency anemia indicating the role of structured parental direction to enable long term nutrition habits (Khani Jeihooni et al., 2021).

A third critical factor is peer influence in the adolescent dietary choice. Based on research, peer education programs are shown to improve adolescents' health-related behaviors which fosters their quality of life through shared learning experiences (Diao et al., 2020). Consequently, as adolescents use social media to catch up on social trends on diet propagated by their peers, the correlation of peers with nutrition education is highly significant (Chung et al., 2021). The Theory of Planned Behavior strongly indicates that peer norms play a major role in the shaping of adolescents' eating patterns in the sense that they opt for either healthy or unhealthy diets (Lawler et al., 2020).

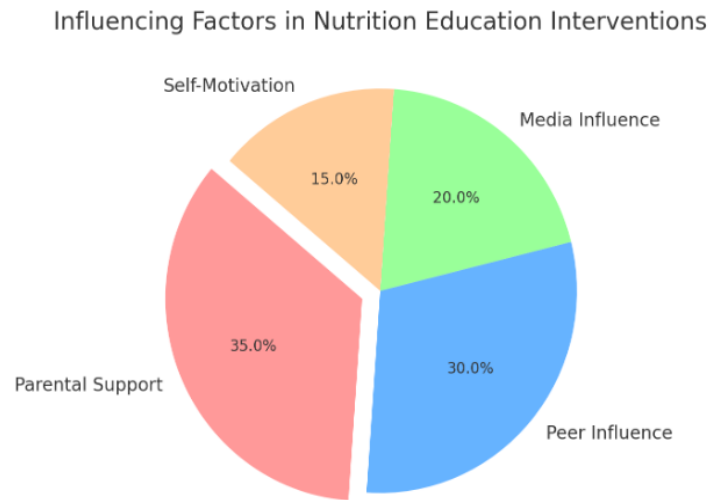
Together, parental and peer support can be harnessed to strengthen adolescent nutrition interventions with a holistic approach. The outcome of adolescent nutrition and growth outcomes was improved with the use of some forms of strategies as in collaborative learning and parental peer education initiatives (Hargreaves et al., 2022). This creates a need to implement social support systems within nutrition education interventions for adolescent girls in order to develop long lasting dietary habits.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to quantitatively test the impact that parental and peer support has on the success of nutrition education interventions for adolescent girls. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data of 250 adolescent girls aged 12 –18 years. The process of sampling was stratified random about the schools and community centers.

Demographic details, parental support, peer influence and dietary behavior changes after intervention were taken up in the questionnaire. A five point Likert scale was to measure the responses. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied on the data which was analyzed using a pie chart analysis to provide picture of the distribution of key variables. This methodology provides a comprehensive insight on social impacts on adolescent nutrition behaviour, this provides evidence based interventions.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS



**Figure 1.** Influencing Factors in Nutrition Education Interventions for Adolescent Girls

The pie chart above illustrates the proportion of key influencing factors in nutrition education interventions:

1. **Parental Support (35%)** – Availability of nutritious food, parental encouragement, and shared meals.
2. **Peer Influence (30%)** – Social acceptance, peer recommendations, and group eating habits.
3. **Media Influence (20%)** – Social media exposure, food advertisements, and online nutrition trends.
4. **Self-Motivation (15%)** – Personal interest in maintaining a healthy diet.

Results show that 35% of influencing factors in adolescent girls nutrition education interventions success is most related to parental support. Parents who encouraged adolescents, fed them at home with nutritious foods and participated in family meal were more likely to help adolescents adopt healthier eating habits. The implication is that parents have the earliest opportunity to influence dietary behaviors during adolescence.

The third main determinant was peer influence, at 30%, years also. Often, adolescents adjust their dietary habits to suit the social group they find themselves in and this occurs due to the strong influence that their peers and group norms have on them. Several participants also confessed that their food selections were induced by friends, whether through eating together, recommendations or social comparisons. This highlights the value of peer driven approaches to nutrition education interventions (group based learning and collaboratively planning meals) among students.

Another important factor driving adolescent dietary preferences was media influence at 20%. Food choices were influenced by social media trends, food advertisements and digital platforms such that unhealthy or healthy eating patterns were promoted. Numerous adolescents stated that such digital media content influenced them, thus it may be plausible to include digital media into nutrition education to further increase knowledge retention and involvement.

15% was self motivation which was the least significant factor. Some adolescents reported personal interest in a healthy diet but external influences like family and peer support had a greater influence on behaviour change. This means that motivational input of the individual is crucial, but that social reinforcement seems to be needed for creating sustainable behavioural patterns in this case.

The areas indicate that parental guidance and media based strategies work in conjunction with peer driven educational programs will create an effective nutrition education program. Interventions can make lasting behavioral changes, promoting the nutritional well being of adolescent girls using the social support systems.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study point to how parental and peer support play a key role in the success of nutrition education interventions amongst adolescent girls. Parental support (35%) stood out as the most powerful influence, suggesting that family involvement has a positive impact on dietary habit. Even more important (30%) was peer influence, adolescents model their eating behavior based on social interactions too. Shaping the perceptions and preferences through digital content (20%), have more influence than self motivation (15%) which means that more impact is driven by external support to induce behavioral change.

These findings suggest the importance of holistic nutrition education programs incorporating family engagement, peer driven initiatives, and media based strategies. Interventions can create a supportive environment to promote adolescents girls' adherence to healthy eating practices. Further research may consider the development of tailored approaches that maximize social influence to promote sustained improvements in adolescent nutrition and overall well-being.

## REFERENCES

1. Hargreaves, D., Mates, E., Menon, P., Alderman, H., Devakumar, D., Fawzi, W., ... & Patton, G. C. (2022). Strategies and interventions for healthy adolescent growth, nutrition, and development. *The Lancet*, 399(10320), 198-210.
2. Diao, H., Pu, Y., Yang, L., Li, T., Jin, F., & Wang, H. (2020). The impacts of peer education based on adolescent health education on the quality of life in adolescents: a randomized controlled trial. *Quality of Life Research*, 29, 153-161.
3. Chung, A., Vieira, D., Donley, T., Tan, N., Jean-Louis, G., Gouley, K. K., & Seixas, A. (2021). Adolescent peer influence on eating behaviors via social media: scoping review. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 23(6), e19697.
4. Grennan, L., Nicula, M., Pellegrini, D., Giuliani, K., Crews, E., Webb, C., ... & Couturier, J. (2022). "I'm not alone": a qualitative report of experiences among parents of children with eating disorders attending virtual parent-led peer support groups. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 10(1), 195.
5. Lawler, M., Heary, C., & Nixon, E. (2020). Peer support and role modelling predict physical activity change among adolescents over twelve months. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 49(7), 1503-1516.
6. Khani Jeihooni, A., Hoshyar, S., Afzali Harsini, P., & Rakhshani, T. (2021). The effect of nutrition education based on PRECEDE model on iron deficiency anemia among female students. *BMC women's health*, 21(1), 256.