

Moving Out: Exploring Negotiations Between Emerging Adults and Parents of Indian-Origin Around Relationship

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Abstract:

This study explores the negotiation processes between emerging adults and their parents, focusing on how their communication patterns and, in turn, their relationships changed after the young adults moved out of their parental homes for higher education. Using narrative analysis, interviews were conducted with eight participants (four parent-child dyads) to examine how they managed conflicts, disagreements, and compromises. Key themes included communication patterns such as seeking help, persuading each other, and negotiating needs. The evolving parent-child relationship is characterized by a generally cordial bond, with parents acknowledging their children as emerging adults. However, the level of autonomy granted remained relatively limited, and hence, an imbalance exists between independence and parental involvement. The study also reveals that having conflicts and miscommunications impacts the parent-child relationship, which in turn influences the psychological well-being/ mental health

Introduction

Life for young people in recent decades is a time of experimentation and exploration of wide-open possibilities that make the years from late teens to emerging adulthood fascinating, overwhelming, and eventful (Joseph, 2012). Various research papers providing insights into young adults' psychological and social development have been produced in recent decades due to investigations into the distinct human development stage from post-adolescence to fully functional adulthood. The new and different period in the developmental stage extends from the late teens to mid-twenties and has been described in academic circles as emerging adults. It is the time between adolescence and fully self-sufficient adulthood for young people in the West, ages 18 to 25 (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2006). According to more recent research, emerging adults are reaching complete independence in their late 20s rather than mid-20s (see Cote, 2006; Hoder, 2014). Embedded in a system of broader contexts, such as family, school, peers, and the neighborhood community, parent-child relationships are shaped by cultural guidelines and values (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). The current family structure landscape has seen a marked rise in long-distance relationships, especially between parents and their children.

The increasing prevalence of this phenomenon demands a critical analysis of any potential effects on the developmental paths of emerging adults or people transitioning from adolescence to full adulthood. The transition period from childhood to adulthood, characterized by growing independence, self-discovery, and autonomy, offers a unique perspective for examining the effects of long-distance parenting. As a result, the time between finishing adolescence and beginning adulthood is now seen as a separate stage in a person's life rather than a brief transition (Arnett, 2015). Reaching adulthood is a process that either

happens within the family of origin or depends on the family of origin, claim Scabini, Marta, and Lanz (2006). The literature on emerging adulthood has identified family relationships as a central theme (Swanson, 2016). This study explores this phenomenon to illuminate the nuanced ways in which it shapes the experiences of young people in the transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood. An individual's life is enriched by communication, which is also essential for the family environment to maintain harmonious relationships among family members. However, Crocetti and Meeus(2014) argued that 76.9% of their participants reported having a positive relationship with their parents, while 43.6% reviewed that the relationship improved moving from adolescence to emerging adulthood. They also stated that their communication with their parents has developed as they reach adulthood. Parents undoubtedly want the best for their children, including their education, and they are willing to send them to study abroad, which forces them to navigate long-distance relationships.

College years are the most significant transition in a student's and parent's life. The first year of college is marked by a variety of meaningful, life-altering events that frequently coincide; in particular, students usually encounter several challenges related to getting used to living away from home (Shim et al., 2009). The prevalence of parental long-distance relationships presents an understudied area in emerging adulthood, defined by the pursuit of independence and self-discovery. According to Arnett (2004), children and parents develop a new bond during the emerging young adult phase. Children's relationship with their parents will also change as they grow older. Due to the increased distance between parent-child relationships, there's a communication gap, often leading to wrong decisions among emerging adults. Usually, due to miscommunication between parents and children, the autonomy to make decisions has also changed over the years. The emerging adult's perception of independence can differ from that of their parents.

Objectives

To understand the emerging adults' negotiations with parents around relationships.

To understand the negotiation processes between emerging adults and their parents, including how miscommunication is managed, compromises reached, and agreements established.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study rests in its ability to advance the disciplines of sociology, psychology, and family studies. The study intends to contribute to discussions on family dynamics, relationships, and the broader implications for emerging adults' well-being by examining how parental long-distance relationships influence autonomy for negotiation and relationship patterns. The results may also be helpful in the real world, providing direction to families, teachers, and counselors on how to help people deal with the difficulties of physical parental separation with their emerging adults at this critical developmental stage.

Research Questions.

How do parents and emerging adults perceive/ describe negotiations around them after moving out?

How do emerging adults perceive/ describe their relationship before and after moving out?

How does distance influence Parents' and Emerging adults' autonomy in relationships and negotiations?

Review of Literature

Parent-child (Emerging Adults) relationship after moving out

According to Stelle and McKenney(2018), While adverse outcomes were linked to higher parental psychopathology regardless of the quality of the parent-child relationship, the lowest rates of mental health issues for emerging adults were associated with more significant parental psychological problems and higher-quality parent-child relationships. Furthermore, the results of this study show that parents still impact their developing adult children. The study indicates parental bonds affect emerging adults' mental health and lives.

As adolescence ends, many emerging adults see increases in their level of well-being; however, emotional adjustment issues, such as depression and anxiety, are more common among college students. Some parents cannot support their children financially, although financial support from parents can lessen stress and facilitate emotional adjustment. Emotional adjustment in these situations may depend on maintaining positive relationships with parents. Parent-child relationships were generally high caliber, mainly when parents gave more significant financial support. Nonetheless, there was a correlation between male students' elevated anxiety and more substantial relationships, as well as more financial support. Findings could aid educational institutions in creating parent programs by illuminating the complex relationships between parental support and students' mental health(Lindell and Colleagues,2020).

It's important to understand that geographically close family relationships give rise to long-distance relationships when the child needs to study abroad or move away from home. The strong desire to uphold relationships that have already been established in the past is the reason why a family can maintain long-distance relationships (Dansie, 2012).

Additionally, Sestito and Sica (2014) found that most second-year college students described their parent-child relationship as mutual, warm, horizontal, and close, though it has changed over time. Students from the previous year appeared to be experiencing internal conflict, though, as they did not feel they had already achieved adult status despite describing horizontal parent-child relationships in which parents treated them as such.

According to Kloep and Hendry (2010), a majority of the parents they interviewed chose to postpone their children's independence, and roughly 32% of them were reluctant to part with them because they found it difficult to accept their children's growing independence and thought their parental role was waning.

Emerging Adults and Parents on negotiation Pattern after moving out

Studies have shown that while living apart from their parents was not linked to closer relationships, students who lived apart from their parents expressed higher levels of satisfaction with communication. Lastly, geographic distance did not influence emerging adults' assessments of the quality of their parental relationships (Sumner and Ramirez,2019). Portugal et al. (2019) said a research gap exists because of the need for appropriate measures in parent-child communication. Emphasized the communication process as an essential factor in explaining parent-child relationship quality.

According to research on children studying abroad and parents dealing with long-distance relationships, every family has a unique method for preserving family communication when navigating long-distance relationships. To create a harmonious family dynamic, long-distance couples must disclose themselves to one another and have a sense of trust in one another. According to this study, parents and kids are dedicated to preserving family communications to remain stable and prosperous in long-distance relationships. Overall, the findings indicated that a person's efforts to keep family communication open in a long-distance relationship strengthen their commitment to it(Rachmadi and Colleagues, 2022)

Horstman and Colleagues (2016) assumed that because parents often attribute negative and avoidant thoughts to their children and children attribute controlling thoughts to their parents, they are unaware of each other's disparities in how they perceive conflict. In times of conflict, parents usually direct their attention toward the dynamics of the conversation, while children tend to interpret the content of the conversation more literally (Sillars, Smith, & Koerner, 2010).

Another study reports on emerging adults on the general characteristics of the entire family system, supporting most studies addressing relationships within the family. According to Crocetti and Meeus (2014), nearly half of the participants mentioned notable changes in family relationships. Most of them believed that their family relationships were more reciprocal, with participants still living with their parents, reporting higher reciprocity and improved communication, particularly among those who had already departed the parental home. They also argued that 76.9% of their participants reported having a positive relationship with their parents, while 43.6% reviewed that the relationship improved moving from adolescence to emerging adulthood.

Research Gap

A study conducted by Shim et al. (2009) said that a dyadic or triadic study, for example, involving both students and their parents, would likely provide insights into how parents develop and/or cope with skill sets that deal with financial issues (decision making) during their children's transitional period. By involving parents, one could also consider how parents' perceptions may differ from those of their young adult children regarding the determinants of adulthood. It is important to remember that most research into parenting styles has focused on families with children and adolescents, with only a few analyzing the impact of parenting style during emerging adulthood (McKinney and Brown, 2017). According to Lindell and Colleagues (2019), One gap is that the collected data from emerging adults rather than their parents (which is, notably, another limitation, given that parents and children have different perceptions of their relationships [Birditt et al., 2009]).

Method

Samples

The participants included parents and their children (emerging adults) who have recently moved out due to higher education. A dyadic type was used in this study involving both emerging adults and their parents; by involving parents, one could also consider how parents' perceptions may differ from their young adult children regarding negotiation and decision-making patterns. The study comprises 8 participants, of which four groups included the parents and their children, of whom 4 are parents and four are emerging adults. Purposive sampling is used for the sampling method, where understanding experiences, viewpoints, or behaviors is prioritized over-generalizing to a broader population.

Data Collection

The approach for the study is the qualitative method with a narrative approach, which involves collecting and analyzing people's stories about their experiences to gain interpretation (Overcash, 2003). The primary objectives of narrative analysis are to comprehend the significance individuals attach to their experiences and how their narratives relate to broader social and cultural phenomena. The underlying principle of narrative analysis is the recognition that narratives play a crucial role in human experience and understanding. Through storytelling, people construct meaning and shape their identities, beliefs, and values. Consequently, studying narratives can provide valuable insights into individuals' experiences and perspectives (Rashid, 2023). The interview questions were developed separately for parents and their

children, around 16 for parents and 18 for emerging adults. The questions were developed based on relationships, negotiations, and decision-making patterns after the child(emerging adult) moved out. After the interview questions were created, the supervisor reviewed and approved them. The interview questions in this study were formed by analyzing other research studies with similar topics. The methods of asking survey questions, including open-ended questions and using questionnaires created by other researchers, served as valuable references during the creation of the interview schedule for this study.

Procedure

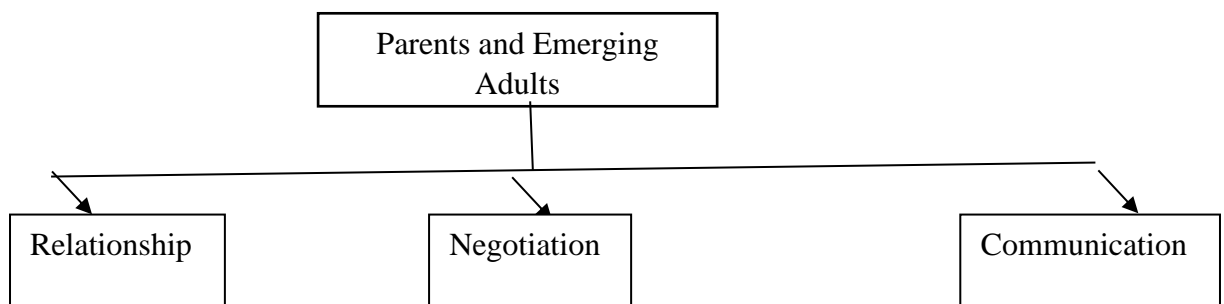
The interview was conducted online, and the researcher interviewed the participants based on their availability; however, due to their physical unavailability, the interviews were conducted online (Google Meet, Zoom meetings). The interviews were recorded; consent was obtained from participants for both audio and video. During questioning time, interviews were recorded, and consent was obtained. A self-developed semi-structured interview was used for data collection. The expert's opinions on the field of education will ensure the instrument's validity.

During the discussions, detailed notes were taken in addition to audio recordings. A recording app captures the audio uploaded to a Google Drive for secure storage. Before the discussions, participants provided their consent online via Google Forms before the talks occurred. Transcription apps and manual methods were used to transcribe recorded conversations. Care has been taken to ensure that the transcriptions are done verbatim, without including any names of the participants, to avoid misinterpretations and maintain confidentiality.

Results

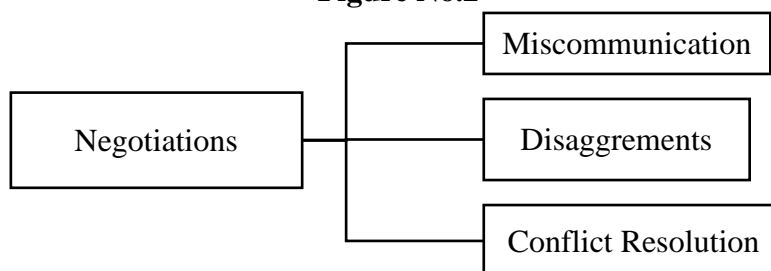
The study's results can be summarized into three main themes related to parents and their emerging adults: relationships, negotiations, etc. The major themes include relationships, communication patterns (before and after moving out), and negotiations/conflicts/ disagreements/ miscommunications.

Figure No.1



Negotiations

Figure No.2



Most of the parents mentioned no miscommunication between them and their children. However, in certain interviews, the parents have mentioned their negotiation pattern.

Ria's Mother: "No miscommunication as such. She accepts what I say, and I accept what she says, and if there is anything, we discuss it and sort it out."

Ram's Mother: "Miscommunication was related to the age gap and generation gap because when I tell him something, he won't accept that, but in my opinion, my viewpoint is correct, and according to him, his viewpoint is correct other than that there is no such miscommunication between us."

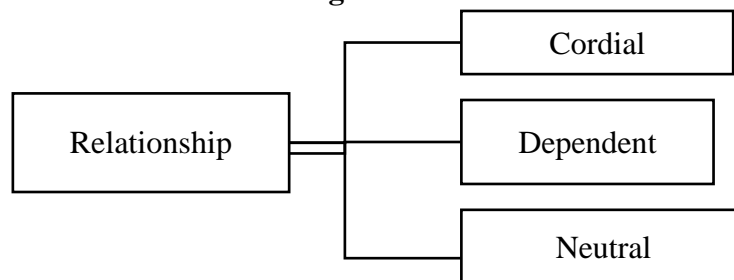
Shreya's Mother: "So, there is no question of negotiation because of the decisions we Make. We used to call daily morning and evening, so in between classes, there are no major decisions to be made, so there is no question of negotiation."

Shreya: "We don't have much miscommunication. I try to talk it out as soon as we talk, but I think the recent miscommunication was about when I wanted to join the gym. We try to compromise, and sometimes I get the upper hand, and sometimes my parents get the upper hand. I talked to my parents about a flat because flats are much cheaper than PG, but we had disagreements about that."

Ria and her mother demonstrate smooth negotiation, where both mother and daughter respect each other's viewpoints and resolve differences through conversation. The negotiation is peaceful and does not involve significant conflict or power dynamics. In the case of Ram's Family, negotiations are made through clashing perspectives, mainly due to generational differences. Ram's mother highlights the challenge of aligning their viewpoints, likely leading to more contentious negotiations where both parties assert their beliefs. The negotiation process here may involve more tension but is acknowledged as part of the relationship. The other dyad (Shreya and her mother) handles negotiation through regular communication, preventing significant conflicts. While Shreya's mother perceives little need for negotiation, Shreya's perspective reveals a more dynamic process, where compromises are made, and control is shared between parent and child. Shreya's negotiation involves her desire for independence and her parents' preferences, highlighting a balanced negotiation process.

Relationships

Figure No.3



The bond between a parent and child is both vital and often tumultuous. For some parents, their relationship with their child remained unchanged after the child moved out, while for others, it brought about challenges—ranging from minor adjustments to significant upheavals—that they had to navigate and work through.

Shreya: "My relationship with my parents was very cordial, and I consider my mother to be my friend. So I can share everything with her. I also have to be mindful of the boundary that she is not my friend- friend, and she is my mother, so I have to communicate and talk to her by keeping that in mind."

Shreya's Mother: "Friendship, where she could talk about anything openly without hesitating. There is no change; it's the same; we both talk openly to each other."

Ram's Mother: "There was no change; if there is anything, it is increased; it would be the bonding."

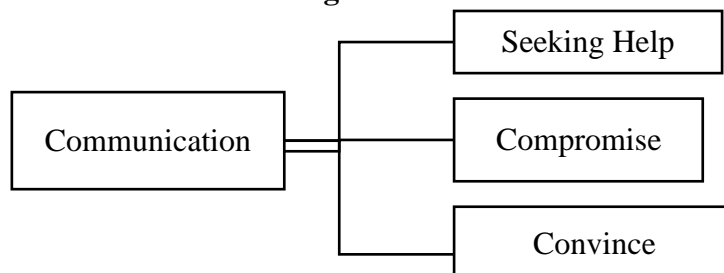
Ram: “Before moving out, it was like very close, but when I went to the hostel, and all that closeness and all got over.”

The dyads in question have differing perspectives on their relationships. In the first group, both parties share a similar understanding of their bond, which is more friendly. However, Shreya acknowledges that despite this friendship, she remains aware that her mother is still her parent. Therefore, she carefully considers what she shares with her mother, filtering certain decisions. In contrast, the second dyad (Ram and his mother) has completely different views on their relationship. The mother feels their bond has strengthened, while the child believes it has weakened. This disparity may stem from their differing priorities. The mother had expressed a desire for her child to become independent, and the child mentioned that after moving out, he would frequently call his mother for advice on everything, which the mother found exhausting. From the child's perspective, he might have perceived a decline in their connection since the mother didn't address this issue after he moved out.

Ram's Mother: “After going there, it was hectic because almost every time he used to call me and say that he wanted to come back home, so the first two days, I made him understand softly, but one day, I scolded him by asking “Ok, even if you are coming here, what is your next plan?” even now there are certain things regarding food, since he is living alone he has to do daily chores such as laundry, etc. Earlier, two months ago, it was challenging, but now he is managing it.”

Communication Patterns

Figure No.4



The communication pattern differs from parent-parent, parent-child, and child-child; for some, it may be more of seeking advice and making compromises, and for others to be silent. These communication patterns can improve or affect the relationship between a parent and their child.

Shreya's Mother: “She seeks advice, and she asks whether it's right or wrong, and based on that, I will make her understand why it is right or why it is bad, and if you are making this decision, then this.... Can be the consequences.”

Shreya: “I am being more honest and open after moving out because I know that my parents are worried about me, and I am the sole contact. I talk to them every day. That's my only thing, and I don't tell them everything, but I tell them the majority of the things that are going on in my life. I skip a few that I know they won't agree with and all that they won't see from my point of view. I tell them almost everything and filter out and talk to them every day.”

Ram's Mother: “He knows the financial limit, and according to that, he spends, so even if he is going out, he will inform me and get my permission; if I am unable to pick up the call, he will just drop a text saying that he is going out. Compromise is regarding family matters; other than that, we don't have any compromises as such. He is a forgiving person, but unlike him, I am a very straightforward person. Communication is the key for us to reach a compromise.”

Ram: “Initially, if my were hesitant to give money, I usually don’t go for it, but if it is a genuine situation, I will convince them on what is the cause for it and all, so like that I would convince them usually. I convince my parents. Actually, I tell them the cause and the reason behind it, so that makes them understand me.”

Priya’s Mother: “ I will tell her I will blackmail her if you're doing that. I won't talk to you, then she would be like “No ma” because that she could never tolerate that. That is the one thing I will do from the childhood. If you are doing like this, I don't know I won’t text or talk to you then there's a “no amma”, “no amma” I won't do that. Then I think so many sorry’s like that still it happens.”

Priya: “I know what I want. Basically. I've never clear distribution between need and want, So I know what I want, and I come straight to the point without filtering like how we used to go, and ask our parents for the school trip and we go in circle and then come to the point. But now I get to the point and get done with it, If they say “NO, I will ask the rationale behind it, if they say “yes” well and good, I will move forward.”

In the case of Ram and his mother, their relationship is marked by clear, direct communication and negotiation. Both parties value transparency and reasoned dialogue. Ram’s use of rational persuasion strengthens his ability to influence decisions, while his mother’s straightforward approach maintains clear boundaries. The balance of compromise suggests a relationship built on respect and logic. Meanwhile, in the other dyad(Shreya and her mother), their communication pattern is a mix of honesty and diplomacy. The mother's advisory role complements Shreya’s selective transparency, fostering a bond that balances guidance with independence. However, the information filtering on Shreya’s part may suggest underlying tension or fear of judgment. Finally, in the case of Priya and her mother, their pattern is rooted in emotional dependency and directness. The mother's use of emotional blackmail reflects a relationship dynamic where control is maintained through emotional pressure. However, Priya’s assertiveness indicates a shift toward more adult, straightforward communication, suggesting growing independence despite her mother’s influence.

Discussion

Based on Bowlby's (1969) conceptualization, attachment is defined as a long-lasting, loving connection between an individual and an attachment figure that offers that individual comfort and safety. The existence of attachment figures determines a child's attachment behavior. In the realm of parenting and parent-child interactions, attachment is a crucial subject. The term "attachment," first used to describe Bowlby, describes a young child's inclination to seek out and receive solace from one or more reliable carers in times of fear, worry, or vulnerability. A person's attachment style may alter when they reach adulthood because of their increasing parental autonomy. Parents continue to be significant attachment figures for emerging adults since this stage of life is seen as an extended period of reliance on them (Umemura et al., 2014; Selby, 2000). According to Syed and Mitchell (2013), The four foundations of Emerging Adulthood experiences are fundamental identity development processes: feeling "in-between," possibilities, instability, and self-focus. Hence, when switching to universities, young adults can require a stable relationship between parents and children to investigate the new University environment.

Wider et al. (2016) believe feeling "in-between" positively correlates with parent communication and trust. Arnett (2014) connects the experience of being "in-between" with independence. According to his theory, the feeling of being in between happens when emerging adults still depend on their parents in some capacity to ensure their success, which is not sufficient for self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, Emerging adults

attained independence with less parental oversight; they, in some way, continue to rely on their parents for few things and consistently ask for their guidance. This is consistent with the existing results of parent communication being the most critical factor for predicting the EA(Emerging Adulthood) experience of being "in-between." When guardians are attentive and mindful of emerging adults' emotional condition through Verbal communication, it will impact their feeling of independence. According to the study's conclusions, parental trust is the most critical predictor of EA experiences regarding identity exploration, self-focus, and potential. Surprisingly, in this study, communication and mutual trust play a huge role in the parent-child relationship. In contrast, parental communication is the most significant predictor of EA experiences related to feeling "in between." Meanwhile, the most crucial predictor of EA's feeling of instability is parental estrangement(Wider et al., 2016).

Studies have shown that while living apart from their parents was not linked to closer relationships, students who lived apart from their parents expressed higher levels of satisfaction with communication. Lastly, geographic distance did not influence emerging adults' assessments of the quality of their parental relationships (Sumner and Ramrez,2019). Portugal et al. (2019) said a research gap exists because of the need for appropriate measures in parent-child communication. Emphasized the communication process as an essential factor in explaining parent-child relationship quality.

Conclusion

The study provides a nuanced understanding of the negotiation processes between emerging adults and their parents, focusing on relationships and communication after moving out. Through in-depth qualitative interviews with parent-child dyads, it became clear that parents often wish to foster independence in their children. However, the transition is not always seamless, leading to various negotiation patterns. In conclusion, the study reveals that negotiating independence between parents and emerging adults is multifaceted, shaped by communication, emotional ties, and differing perceptions of autonomy. While emerging adults seek more independence, parents are often willing to support this transition, all with varying degrees of involvement. The findings suggest that the transition to independence is a delicate balancing act, where both parties must continuously navigate their evolving roles in the relationship.

Limitations and Recommendations

The study focuses solely on emerging adults between the ages of 19-24, limiting the generalizability of the findings to individuals outside this age range. Young or older emerging adults may have different experiences, perspectives, or developmental challenges that are not captured within this specific age group. Only one male participant was interviewed, making it difficult to generalize the findings to the broader male population. The predominance of female participants means the study lacks a balanced gender perspective, which could influence the themes explored, especially about gendered differences in communication or relationship dynamics. The study primarily relies on mothers' attitudes without father figures' input. This limits the study's exploration of parenting dynamics to one side of the parental relationship. The absence of male or father perspectives may change the understanding of how parental roles affect the development and experiences of emerging adults.

Future research can investigate how cultural contexts, particularly in NRI (Non-Residential Indian) communities, influence the dynamics of parent-emerging adult relationships. Cross-cultural comparisons between individualistic cultures (e.g., Western nations) and collectivistic cultures (e.g., India) can shed light on how differing cultural values shape communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, and

emotional closeness between parents and their emerging adult children. A focus on NRI families will offer insights into how migration and living in a foreign culture impact traditional Indian parenting styles and family relationships.

Research comparing collectivistic and individualistic cultures should investigate how these cultural orientations impact parenting approaches and interactions between parents and emerging adults. While collectivistic cultures emphasize interdependence, familial ties, and respect for parental authority, individualistic cultures may foster independence, assertiveness, and self-reliance in developing individuals. The effects of these varied parenting philosophies on emerging people's emotional, psychological, and social development might be studied, especially in the case of NRI families where children and their parents reside in culturally disparate settings.

Future research should examine the impact of fathers on emerging adults, even if this study focuses on the function of mothers. In particular, the dynamic between fathers and their developing adult children impacts communication, negotiation, emotional bonding, and conflict resolution themes. Diverse parenting philosophies between fathers and mothers may result in diverse relationship results. Studying paternal roles in many cultural contexts, particularly NRI situations, might help us better understand how fathers support developing adults' emotional and psychological health.

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