

## ADOLESCENCE AND MANIFESTATION EMOTIONS IN THE FAMILY

<sup>a</sup>ZUZANA MIČKOVÁ

*Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metóda, J. Herdu č. 2, Trnava, Slovakia*  
 email: *a.mickova1@gmail.com*

We have studied the expressiveness of the family in connection with expressing real emotions. We are interested in gender differences in positive and negative emotional expressiveness of adolescents. The research sample consists of high school students (N = 110, M = 46, F = 64, AM 19.3). We have used the Family Environment Scale (Hargasová, Kollárik, 1986), the scale of expressivity (Barchard, 2001). We have found that the low family expressiveness is associated with emotional expression outside the family, which means the lower degree of expressiveness in the family, the higher level of negative expressivity in an individual. Gender differences have shown that women perceive the possibility of expressing their emotion in the family more positive than men, but men reached a higher score for expressing emotions.

Key words: adolescent, family environment, negative expressivity, positive expressivity

### 1 Family environment and positive and negative expressivity

According to Sobotkova (2007) the unique atmosphere in the family is determined by communication abilities of family members and these communication skills determine a successful functioning of the family. Successful family functioning is determined by positive feelings of safety and security. According to Oravcová (2004) these feelings come from the fact that parents protect and support their children. Adolescents see this support when their parents listen, they seek to understand and can accept their emotions whether positive or negative. Elliott (2009) states, that the communication process is important for an interactive relationship.

Positive interactions, communication family systems, and parents togetherness creates space for feelings ventilation and space for emotion expression. The communication system may be open or closed. The perception of the communication channels contributes to adolescents feelings, and to what extent they can express their own emotions. The openness of the system helps the adolescent perceive the expressiveness of their family. Veldova (2007) argues that the communication is very important for the development of all family members.

According to Goddetova (2001) communication is effective when a teen is willing to listen, understand and accept what parents said. Melgosa (2001); Gregg Shale (2010) state that if a parent with an interest in listening is helping an adolescent to analyze and solve the situation, which means that is creating an atmosphere in which the adolescent can express his/her emotions.

Communication is a two-way process and for successful expression of emotions mutual listening and acceptance is necessary. Adolescent therefore perceive this through the communication channels and participates with his/her parents on communication schemes. Teenager is very sensitive to the way in which parent communicate with him/her, and observe feelings and emotions of a parent. Adolescent needs to feel that parent value and hear his/her opinion.

Gregg Shale (2010) states that open communication is involved in evolution of personality and emotions. He also states that individuals who can communicate with their parents are happier and more confident. One of the communication schemes are close communication channels, which means that parents seek to enforce their own opinion and do not care about an opinion of their growing children. Adolescent in this case does not develop their communication skills, and mostly close himself from a family world. They start using friendly relations instead to express their opinions, attitudes, and in the same time the environment outside the family becomes the room for expressing their emotions. The openness of communication channels in family is a productive relationship between parents and adolescents. (Melgosa, 2001; Carr-Gregg, 2010). Expressing

feelings therefore begins in the family, where we learn to express our feelings towards each other and other people.

Positive and negative feelings which family members show to each other represents the general climate of the family in which we learn to express our feelings (Ševčíková, 2012; Vašasová, 2004). According to Vágnerová (2005) teenagers considered feelings as a part of intimacy and Rosenberg (2008) adds that the ability to express feelings helps in resolving interpersonal conflicts and in establishing social contacts. Ševčíková (2012) in this regard states that the direct socialization is represented by parents' emotions, and their response to adolescents' behaviour and their conversations about positive and negative feelings. Indirect socialization is only typical for description of the overall family atmosphere and own parent's expressivity. Both direct and indirect factors have a significant impact on the overall development of adolescents. Halberstadtová et al. (in Ševčíková, 2012) state that emotional climate is heavily dependant on parent's emotional response.

This positive parent's expressiveness teach adolescents of understanding, positive emotional well-being and pro-social behavior (Ševčíková, 2012). Freedom in expressing own opinion give adolescents a feeling of empowerment. Understanding and respect enhances the value of their being. (Macek, 2003, 2004). Segrino and Flora (2011) argue that the ignorance of negative feelings may cause problems with their regulation, and respectively it can cause problems with coping with negative emotions such as sadness and anger. This may result into a problem with expression of their emotions. Acceptance and the ability to control and cope with emotions is a positive aspect in the regulation of feelings to themselves and in relationships. According to research of Cupach & Olson, 2006 in Segrino, Flora (2011) this is a source of positive relationships among peers.

During adolescence according to Schrodta, Ledbetter and Ohrt (2007 in my sister's, Flora, 2011) teenager creates a specific communication tactics with his/her parents. According to Goddetova (2001), parents and adolescents manage their communication spontaneously, with emotions and understanding. During conversations, they are discovering different attitudes, emotions, and reactions which affect the whole communication. However, they may have different impressions and feelings from the same conversation, which can undermine their mutual understanding. The philosophy of many parents according to Ševčíková (2012) is that they believe that negative emotions should be controlled, and their expression should be suppressed. However, this way individuals learn and reduce external expression of their feelings. This philosophy creates potential concerns about the feelings and consequent fear of expressing them. Other parents (in ibid) try to stay in touch with their own feelings and this expression is accepted. In conclusion, it shows that acceptance of feelings creates space for expression of both positive and negative emotions.

### 1.1 Factors of expressivity

In the previous chapter we have paid particular attention to the family atmosphere and expressivity. Factors which contribute towards expressiveness are many. We will concentrate on the main ones. The trust between parent and child is important when expressing emotions. Posse and Melgosa (2002) state that physical contact, openness and willingness to talk and laugh will build the necessary confidence in children. Furthermore, the authors state that another part of open communication is active listening. Krivohlavý (1993) adds that it is also the most important phase of the personal communication. The author also stresses that attention, empathy, peace, kindness, interest and respect towards ones who is talking (and so on) are other important factors. Another important element is a credibility of the listener, which enhances the feeling of the trust on the other side (Krivohlavý, 1993).

If teenager experiences a disappointment in the area of expectations, this can affect his/her perception on other relationships and this feeling of distress can result in reduced need of expressing their feelings and emotions. Parent personality and feeling sharing with others can be seen as other factors of expressiveness. Špaňhelová (2010) considers sharing as the main determinant for mutual communication. The emerging interactive relationships of adolescents in the social environment can be considered as an important factor of expressiveness in adolescents. Williams (2003) states, that we can see those emotional expressions between friends of adolescents. In addition Vágnerová (2005) states that during adolescence the relationships transforms and conflicts become more common between parents and children.

This may divert teenagers emotional expressing into the environment of friends instead. Other factors must be mentioned such as: natural parental authority, self-reflection, and the ability of different viewpoints. Adolescents tend to be largely tolerant towards mistakes of adults, but only if parents are able to recognize their own mistakes and failures. Expressiveness in adolescents is associated with the ability of parents to have an open conversation but discretion and sensitivity are very essential part.

## 2. Problem characteristic and Research Methods

All listed factors are part of a positive family atmosphere Satirová (2006). One of the attributes of a positive family atmosphere is positive emotional relationships. For our research we selected subscales of expressiveness which helps us to detect the degree to which the adolescent may behave at home. We are interested in the relationship between expressivity of families and expression of positive and negative emotions. In verifying the research hypothesis, we used a questionnaire ŠRP (Hargašová, Kollárik, 1986). For our objectives, we used the subscale of relational dimensions-expressiveness. Next, we used a range of positive expressivity (PES) and then scale of negative expressivity (NES) (Barchardová, 2001 in Ševčíková, 2012). Family Environment Scale (SRP; Hargašová, Kollárik, 1986) as self-checking method is revised version of the original Family Environment Scale, Moosa, and Moosa (1981).

The scale captures behavior which depends on a person, but also an environment. This is one of the first scales, which focuses specifically on family perception, while is investigating the systematic nature of the family. Adolescent evaluates the family expressiveness to the extent to which he/she perceive the ability to express their emotions. The range of positive expressivity and PES range of negative expressivity NES are created by Barchardová K. (2001). The scales were translated into Czech language in 2010, while the psychometric characteristics were firstly validated on 372 respondents, from age group 15-24 years in the study in Brno (Ševčíková, 2012). The range of positive expressivity contains elements of positive emotions such as affection, happiness and laughter. The range of negative expressivity contains elements of negative emotions in general, but especially in areas of anger, sadness, and fear.

### 2.1 Hypotheses

H1: The total expression of emotion is stronger in families with a positive perception of the family

H2: The expression of positive emotions is associated with positive perceptions of family environment

H3: Expressiveness of family environment will be more prominent in women than in men

H4: We assume that the expressivity (PES / NES) will be higher in women than in men

### 2.2 Results and their interpretations

H1: We assume that there is a positive relationship between the overall expressiveness (PES positive expressiveness/ negative expressiveness NES) and expressivity in the family (opportunities to express emotions in the family – SRP). The variables included in the test have do not have a normal

distribution (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test Sig. <0.05), therefore in order to test the hypothesis we chose to calculate the nonparametric Spearman rank correlation coefficient. The result is shown in Table 1 in the column entitled "Full set", the statistical significance is called Sig <0.001. We see the observed relationship as statistically significant; it is a relationship of moderate negativity. A negative value means that the higher the score of expressiveness in the family (expressiveness dimension SRP), the lower the score of overall expressiveness (PES / NES). In overall this means: higher the degree of possibility to express individual's emotions in the family, the rate of the overall expressiveness in the family is lower. This is an opposite relationship from what we expected, therefore the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1 Results and additional results for H1: Spearman's rank correlation coefficient

	Overall Expressiveness	Full Set	Men	Women
Family Expressiveness	Spearman's coefficient	-0,46	-0,427	-0,466
	Sig.	0,000	0,003	0,000

In the Table 1 we can see the results of our investigation between relationships separately in women and men. We also used the non-parametric test, where the variable of family expressiveness is not normally distributed in men and in women. Based on statistical significance (men: Sig. <0.01; women: Sig. <0.001) we consider relationships to be significant. The direction and intensity of coefficients are interpreted the same way as the whole dataset. There is an existence of moderate negative direction between relationship in family expressivity (relational dimension of the CFP) and the overall expressiveness (PES/NES).

H2: We assume that the positive expressivity (PES) is positively connected to the expressiveness in the family. Same as in the previous hypothesis, we have used the calculation of the Spearman rank correlation coefficient to verify the hypothesis, since the positive variable of expressivity is not normally distributed in entire file (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test: Sig. <0.05). The results are shown in the Table 2, where in the second line under the heading, we can see the value of statistical significance, which is Sig. <0.001. Observed coefficient is statistically significant and reflects a moderately negative relationship. The higher the score of positive expressivity (PES), lower the value in family expressiveness (relational dimension of the CFP). Positive perception of expressiveness in family environment does not increase the expression of positive emotions of an individual in their family. The hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2 Results and additional result to H2: Spearman's correlation coefficient

	Overall Expressiveness	Full Set	Men	Women
Family Expressiveness	Spearman's coefficient	-,333**	-,357*	-,285*
	Sig.	0	0,02	0,02

The Table 2 shows calculations of correlation coefficients for the relationship between family expressivity and positive expressiveness independently in men and women. According to statistical significance Sig. <0.05 we considered these relations as important in both men and women – it is negatively directed relationships. For men, results are moderate and in women are weak.

Table 3 Additional results for H2: Spearman's correlation coefficient

	Negative Expressiveness	Full Set	Men	Women
Family Expressiveness	Spearman's coefficient	-,455**	-,384**	-,476**
	Sig.	0	0,01	0

Relations between expressivity in the family (SUI) and negative expressivity (NES) in the whole group and also in men and women separately have been statistically evaluated. The results are presented in the Table 3. As we can see, in all three groups there were statistically significant relationships between expressivity in the family (relational dimension of the CFP) and negative expressivity (NES). Relationships are moderately negative. We interpret that the lower level of perceived expressiveness in the family, or respectively weaker atmosphere for expressing emotions in the family, the greater negative individual's expressivity.

H3: We assume that women perceive family environment more positively for expressing their emotions. The hypothesis was verified by using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test, but not because of the normal distribution of the family expressiveness's variable in two groups (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test: Sig. <0.05). On the basis of statistical significance (Sig. <0.05) we perceive the difference as significant although was found higher expressiveness in the family (SUI) in women than men. We interpret that women perceive the possibility of expressing their emotions in the family more positively than men. Hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4 Test Results of H3: Mann-Whitney U test (Men N=46; Women N = 64)

	Gender	Average ranking	Mann-Whitneyho U test	
Family Expressiveness	Men	46,72	U	1068
	Women	61,81	Z	2,49
	Total		Sig.	0,01

H4 Women will express positive and negative emotions more intensely than men in their family. In the hypothesis H4 we were verifying the difference in total expressive variables PES/NES between men and women. We have used non-parametric variations comparison test (Mann-Whitney U test), since the total variable expressivity in the group of women does not have a normal distribution (Sig. <0.05). Results of the overall expressiveness comparisons are mentioned in the first part of Table 5. Statistical significance was calculated by the difference Sig. <0.001, and this difference is significant. Higher total score in total expressiveness is in men compared to women. We interpret that men show emotion in greater extent. The hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5 Results and additional results to the H4 (Mann-Whitney U test)

	Gender	Average ranking	Mann-Whitney U test	
Overall expressiveness	Men	69,37	U	834
	Women	45,53	Z	-3,876
	Total		Sig.	0,000
Positive expressiveness	Men	63,89	U	1086
	Women	49,47	Z	-2,352
	Total		Sig.	0,019
Negative expressiveness	Men	70,54	U	780
	Women	44,69	Z	-4,225
	Total		Sig.	0

Additional results for H4: For completeness we performed calculations for gender differences separately for positive expressivity (PES) and negative expressivity (NES). The results can be seen in the second and third part of the Table 5. Differences in both variables are statistically significant for positive expressivity level - Sig. <0.05, and for the negative expressivity level - Sig. <0.001. In both variables higher scores are achieved in men and in negative expressivity score the difference is significant.

## 2.3 Conclusion and Discussion

We have found that expressivity of family atmosphere (possibility to express emotions) does not increase the expressiveness of an

individual (individual emotional expressing). We see this finding as very interesting. We assumed that the real display of emotions will increase in combination with the possibility to express emotions. We might assume that expressiveness contains many other factors that affect adolescent feelings in sense of exploration. Perception of family's expressivity in our research is however opposite and we could see lower levels of emotional expression. It can be concluded that one of the reasons for expressing emotions outside the family is developing friendships. As Rosenberg (2008) noted, expression of feelings helps in formation of social contacts. According to Vágnerová (2008) adolescent is more extroverted and his/her orientation to the external world is expanding. The interactive relationships of adolescents are expanding in the social environment and this can be considered as an important factor of expressiveness in adolescents. It can be considered that open communication channel in adolescent's interaction is a friend.

Another reason for concentrating on emotional expressions outside the family may be that parents are despite their own openness in the family, adolescent still see them as the authority, who often judges his/her behavior and tries to give advice they did not even asked for. Therefore, expressing emotions can be considered as a source of conflict for adolescents. According to Vágnerová (2008) during teenage years the relations will transform which can lead to conflicted behavior between parents and children. Furthermore, consideration must be also given to social and friendly relations which bring lots of new feelings (secret part of an adolescent) and the need to analyze feelings are concentrated among friends. In addition, Vágnerová (2005) states that teenagers see feeling as a part of intimacy. However, if adolescents perceive the family as a place where they cannot express their emotions, the negative expressivity of individual increases and negative emotions such as sadness, anger become apparent. It should be considered that closure of communication channels increases the tension which reflects in their behavior. The question is whether such behavior does not indicate a less positive family atmosphere. Vašasová (2004) and Ševčíková (2012) emphasize that the rate of positive and negative feelings in the family states the overall climate of the family. Emotional climate that adds to Ševčíková's (2012) study also depends on expression of parents' emotions. Lower level of perception of expressiveness in families may be related to the fact that fewer parents express their own emotions and mutual sharing of emotions is not sufficient enough. Špaňhelová (2010) see emotions sharing as the determinant for mutual communication. The reason for negative emotions may be a conflict between the possibility to express themselves and need to express their opinions, attitudes, and emotions. Ignoring negative feelings as stated by Segrino and Flora (2011) may cause doubts about the correctness of teen's emotions and they may develop problems with their regulation, which may lead to problems with coping with negative emotions such as sadness, anger. It can be argued that in family where adolescent has opportunity to express his/her feelings even if does not show too many emotions, the open communication does not create such problems as would a closure of communication channels. Positive expression of emotions in adolescents outside the family is related to the need to share emotions such as happiness, love and so on with friends. The concentration of negative feelings outside the family may also be related to parents' expectations. They expect that children will be successful but negative emotions are usually associated with negative experiences and failure. Adolescents do not want to disappoint their parents, so they tend to hide negative emotions. Parents can however take expressions of their child's negative emotions personally and this can be a source of conflict with each other. The examination of gender differences brought these findings. Men express their emotions in the family to a greater extent than women. The expressiveness in men in both positive and negative emotions is at a higher degree than in women. We can conclude that their openness in interaction with parents is stronger despite the fact that their perception of expressiveness in family is lower. Women perceive the expressiveness in family more intensely, but despite of it, their individual expressiveness is weaker.

The lower degree of openness in emotional expression in women may be related to feelings that they can hurt parents when

expressing their emotions. Women are more sensitive, emotional and have a greater need to share their experiences and feelings with their girlfriends. Adolescents are more focused on the social relations in terms of their interests, and goals. Their emotional charge does not apply so much to their intimate problems, which may affect their greater openness and directness. Social relations play an important role in expressiveness of adolescents. Negative expressiveness is increased in families with lower level of expressivity. The perception of expressiveness in family is one of the sources for understanding, positive emotions, and pro-social behavior. A lower number of respondents focusing on expressiveness in different environments can be identified as a limit of our research. The degree of expressiveness is linked to many other factors that have not been studied. Our research does not answer questions directed towards determination of expressivity and expressivity itself. In our further investigation we focus on personality traits with relations of expressing emotions and other dimensions in family environment relations.

#### Literature:

1. Gregg M.C., Shale, E.: *Pubertáci a adolescenti*. Průvodce výchovou dospívajících. Praha: Portál, 2010. 200 p. ISBN 97-880-736-7662-9.
2. Elliot, G. C.: *Family Matters*. The importance of Mattering to Family in Adolescence. Oxford : Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. 263 p. ISBN 978-1-405-16242-5.
3. Godetová, E.: *Umění jednat s dospívajícími*. Praha: Portál, 2001. 144 p. ISBN 80-7178-492-3.
4. Hargašová, M., Kollárik, T.: *Škála rodinného prostredia*, Bratislava, Psychodiagnostika a didaktické testy 1986.
5. Křivohlavý, J.: *Povídej, naslouchám*. Návrat: Praha 1993. 105 p. ISBN 80-85495-18-X.
6. Macek, P.: *Adolescence*. Praha : Portál, 2003. 144 p. ISBN 80-717-8747-7.
7. Macek, P.: *Adolescenti a jejich rodiče*. Důležitost vzájemné percepcie pro sebehodnocení dospívajících. In *Pedagogika*., 2004. roč. 54, č. 4, 342 – 354p. ISSN 0031-3815.
8. Melgosa, J.: *Žít naplno*. Kniha o dospívání. Vrútky: Advent Orion, 2001. 191p. ISBN 80-88960-61.
9. Oravcová, J.: *Systémový prístup k rodine*. In: Rodinné prostredie ako faktor socializácie a personalizácie osobnosti dieťaťa: recenzovaný zborník vedecko-výskumnej úlohy VEGA1/0244/03/. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici, 2004., 78-90 p. ISBN 80-8083-015-0.
10. Posse, R., Melogosa, J.: *Umenie výchovy*. 1. vyd. Vrútky: Advent Orion, 2002. 194 p. ISBN 80-88960-89-4.
11. Rosenberg, M. B.: *Nenásilná komunikace*. Praha: Portál, 2008. 224 p. ISBN 978- 80-262-0141-0.
12. Satirová, V.: *Kniha o rodine*. Vydavateľstvo: Práh. 2006. 364 p. ISBN: 8072521500.
13. Segrin, CH., Flora, J.: *Family communication*. 2nd. ed. New York: Routledge, 2011. 492 s. ISBN 0-203-85783-6.
14. Sobotková, I.: *Psychologie rodiny*. Praha: Portál, 2007. 224 p. ISBN 80-736-7250-8.
15. Ševčíková, J.: *Emočná expresivita adolescentov*. dizertačná práca. Brno: 218 p. Masarykova univerzita, 2012.
16. Španhelová I.: *Dítě a rozvod rodičů*. Praha: Grada, 2011. 184p. ISBN 978-80-247-3181-0.
17. Vágnerová, M.: *Vývojová psychologie I. Dětství a dospívání*. Praha: Karolinum, 2005 467 p. ISBN 80-246-0956-8.
18. Vašašová, Z. Vplyv štýlov výchovy v rodine na asertívne správanie adolescentov. In: Rodinné prostredie ako faktor socializácie a personalizácie osobnosti dieťaťa: recenzovaný zborník VEGA 1/0244/03/. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici, 2004. 122-130 p. ISBN 80-8083-015-0.
19. Veldová, Z.: Tabu v rodinné komunikaci očima adolescentů. In: *E-psychologie* [on-line]. 2007, roč. 1, č. 1 [cit. 2013-22-01]. Internet: <http://e-psycholog.eu/pdf/veldova.pdf>
20. Williams, A.: Adolescents relationships with parents. In: *Journal of language and social psychology*., 2003, vol. 22, no. 1, 58-65p. ISSN 0261-927X.

Primary section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AN