



Gender-wise relationship between children's behaviour and parenting style

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Manuscript Received: 09.09.2013; Accepted: 22.07.2014

Abstract

The study aimed to find out the relationship between parenting style and behavior of children. The study was conducted on 100 girls between the age group of 7-8 years and their parents (both mother and father). Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) by Robinson (1995) was used to measure parenting style. Vineland adaptive behaviour scale developed by Sparrow *et al.* (1984) was used to assess the behaviour of the children. The results highlighted that in case of girls authoritative mother parenting style was positively and significantly correlated ($r=0.45^*$) with adaptive behaviour of children. Authoritarian maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.27$) with children's adaptive behaviour and permissive maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.36$) with children's behaviour. Results further reflect that in case of boys authoritative mother parenting style was positively and significantly correlated ($r=0.45^*$) with adaptive behaviour of children. Authoritarian maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.27$) with children's adaptive behaviour and permissive maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.36$) with children's behaviour but, in case of paternal parenting style, authoritative parenting style was positively and significantly correlated ($r=0.45^*$) with adaptive behaviour of children. Authoritarian maternal parenting style was positively correlated ($r=0.48$) with children's adaptive behaviour and permissive maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.27$).

Key words: Adaptive Behaviour, parenting style, socialization, academic skills, family integration.

Introduction

Parents exert a major influence on the way children express personality characteristics and behaviours. Parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. It plays a very vital role in the up-bringing of children. It is the duty of the parents to properly

rear their children and up bring them to be a very responsible person in the society. Authorities on child development have generally accepted the assumption that parents, as primary caregivers, exert the original and perhaps the most significant influence on the development of the child's present and future emotional health (Pretorius, 2000). A child's development is therefore strongly influenced by the immediate family - particularly by their home

environment, their social environment and the culture in which they grow up. The development of children's learned social skills and behaviours is subject to significant moulding and modification by the environments in which they grow and develop. Therefore, the relationship between a parent and child is of utmost importance – the nature of interaction, discipline and dealing with the child's behaviour and emotions have an impact on the developing child. The example set by parents is extremely important as a basis for interpersonal relations and social behaviour. The researcher is, therefore, of the opinion that child-rearing practices, as an environmentally orientated developmental process, play an important role in the child's development and how children carry themselves in life.

The researcher, as a pre-primary educator, daily observes the behaviour of five-year old children within the pre-primary field as well as the interaction styles between these children and their parents. The researcher is of the opinion that parents do not have the necessary styles to cope with these five-year olds, which causes more problems for the educator. Given the substantial role families play in children's lives, the researcher is of the opinion that this must be further investigated. The current study therefore aims to contribute to existing literature by obtaining better understanding of the parenting styles used on the developing child by focusing on the five-year old group. The study was done at Evergreen pre-primary in Gauteng and the focus will be on the parents of the five-year old group. The typical stage of development of a five year old is the early childhood years, which last from about the age of two to the age of six. During this stage of development, certain behaviours such as walking, talking or the emergence of a sense of self occurs (Louw *et al.*, 1998). This highlights the researcher's opinion that parents are still seen as the role models for their children and that appropriate parenting styles within this age group are vital.

The way in which a parent raises his child is considered a parenting style. (Ayers, 2002) agrees upon four styles of parenting namely the Permissive Parent, Authoritarian Parent, Uninvolved Parent and the Authoritative Parent. There are different dimensions within each parenting styles and each style is important as it focuses on certain interaction patterns and will be discussed accordingly. A parent showing little interest in what the child is trying to communicate and ridiculing a child's emotions, believing that children's feelings are irrational, is seen as the permissive parent. The permissive parent is also known as the dismissing parent and tends not to problem-solve with the child. Within the authoritarian, also known as the disapproving parent, the style used is reprimanding, disciplining or punishing the child for emotional expression, whether the child is misbehaving or not. The parent believes the child uses negative emotions to manipulate and they believe that negative emotions show bad character traits. The uninvolved parent tends to be permissive and does not set limits. This type of parent is also known as the laissez-faire parent who offers little guidance on behaviour and does not teach the child problem-solving skills. The authoritative parent, or emotion coach, uses emotional moments as a time to listen to the child.

The parent empathizes with the child by using soothing words of affection; helps the child label the emotion he/she is feeling and offers guidance on regulating emotions. For the purpose of the current study, the focus will be on the three main types of parenting styles, namely the Permissive Parent, Authoritarian Parent and the Authoritative Parent. According to Pretorius (2000) other parenting styles have been conceptualised, but these three main types are commonly studied. Specific child-rearing techniques may lead to certain behavioural consequences such as delinquency and aggression among those whose parents are harsh, excessively lenient or inconsistent. Gottman (1997) emphasises

the importance of the parents' role by stating that parents need to examine themselves or be more aware of them. Farrell (1995) describes how parents may have problems in coping with day-to-day life to the extent that there is little space left to devote to being an effective and loving parent.

Behaviour is the action or reaction of a person in response to external or internal stimuli; conduct; manners or deportment, especially good manners; general course of life; treatment of others; manner of action; the activity of an organism, especially as measurable for its effects; response to stimulus; the functioning, response or activity of an object or substance (Roger, 2005). It includes the age-appropriate behaviors necessary for people to live independently and to function safely and appropriately in daily life.

Behaviour of children wholly depends upon the parenting styles adopted by parents. Adaptive behaviour also depends upon the behaviour of parents, style of upbringing parents-child relationship, emotion of parents, time devotion for children etc. Mother plays an important role in transition of egocentric child to the socialized one. She is the first informal teacher of the child who prepares the child to face the strange world with confidence. The child rearing practices used by parents contribute a lot in the adaptive behaviour of the child. Russell *et al.* (2003) investigated that mothers were more authoritative and fathers more authoritarian. It was found that significant impact of home learning environment and mother's education develops intellectual skill building in the children (Melhuish *et al.*, 2001).

Methodology

Hisar district of Haryana state was selected purposively for the present study. Village Ladwa and village Dabra were selected purposively from rural area and Hisar city was selected purposively from urban area. The sample consisted 100 girls and 100 boys between the age group of 7-8 years and their

parents (both mother and father). Hence, the total sample for the study was 600 (100 girls, 100 boys and 400 parents) from both location. Two types of variables i.e. independent and dependent were taken. The parenting style was as independent variables and Adaptive behaviour was taken as dependent variable. Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) by Robinson (1995) was used to measure parenting style i.e. authoritative, authoritarian and permissive, Vineland adaptive behaviour scale developed by Sparrow *et al.* (1984) was used to assess the behaviour of the children.

Results and Discussion

Correlation between childrens' behaviour and parenting style

Table 1 depicts that authoritative mother parenting style was positively and significantly correlated ($r=0.45^*$) with adaptive behaviour of children. Authoritarian maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.27$) with children's adaptive behaviour and permissive maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.36$) with children's behaviour.

Correlation between childrens' behaviour and parenting style

Table 2 depicts that authoritative mother parenting style was positively and significantly correlated ($r=0.45^*$) with adaptive behaviour of children. Authoritarian maternal parenting style was positively correlated ($r=0.27$) with children's adaptive behaviour and permissive maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.36$) with children's behaviour but, in case of paternal parenting style authoritative parenting style was positively and significantly correlated ($r=0.45^*$) with adaptive behaviour of children. Authoritarian maternal parenting style was positively correlated ($r=0.48$) with children's adaptive behaviour and permissive maternal parenting style was negatively correlated ($r=0.27$)

Table 1. Correlation between childrens' behaviour and parenting style (Girls)

Adaptive behaviour	Communication skill domain	Daily living skill domain	Social domain	Motor skill domain	Composite adaptive behaviour
Maternal parenting style					
Authoritative	0.45*	0.46*	0.24	0.22	0.45*
Authoritarian	-0.34	-0.17	0.12	-0.20	-0.27
Permissive	-0.30	-0.50	-0.32	-0.24	-0.36
Paternal parenting style					
Authoritative	0.40*	0.54*	0.25	0.40*	0.50*
Authoritarian	-0.31	-0.28	0.06	-0.05	-0.24
Permissive	0.27	0.24	0.27	0.39	0.23

Table 2. Correlation between childrens' behaviour and parenting style (Boys)

Adaptive behaviour	Communication skill domain	Daily living skill domain	Social domain	Motor skill domain	Composite adaptive behaviour
Maternal parenting style					
Authoritative	0.45*	0.46*	0.24	0.22	0.45*
Authoritarian	0.47*	0.45*	0.46*	0.50*	0.48*
Permissive	-0.30	-0.50	-0.32	-0.24	-0.36
Paternal parenting style					
Authoritative	0.40*	0.54*	0.25	0.40*	0.50*
Authoritarian	0.45*	0.43*	0.54*	0.50*	0.47*
Permissive	-0.34	-0.17	0.12	-0.20	-0.27

Inter-correlation among different domains of adaptive behaviour

Data presented in Table 3 showed that the communication skills were significantly correlated with daily living skill (r-0.64*), social skill (r-0.68*) and motor skills (r-0.60*). Daily living kills were

significantly correlated with daily communication skill (r-0.64*), social skill (r-0.58*) and motor skills (r-0.44*). Social skills were significantly correlated with communication skill (r-0.68*), daily living skills (r-0.58*) and motor skills (r-0.36*). Motor skills were significantly correlated with communication skill (r-

Table 3. Inter-correlation among different domains of adaptive behaviour

Adaptive behaviour	Area	Communication skill domain	Daily living skill domain	Social skill domain	Motor skill domain
Communication skill	Rural	-	0.63*	0.73*	0.41*
	Urban	-	0.54*	0.65*	0.70*
	Total	-	0.64*	0.68*	0.60*
Daily living skill domain	Rural	0.63*	-	0.67*	0.10
	Urban	0.54*	-	0.55*	0.53*
	Total	0.64*	-	0.58*	0.44*
Social skill domain	Rural	0.73*	0.67*	-	0.29*
	Urban	0.65*	0.55*	-	0.39*
	Total	0.68*	0.58*	-	0.36*
Motor skill domain	Rural	0.41*	0.10	0.29*	-
	Urban	0.70*	0.55*	0.60*	-
	Total	0.60*	0.44*	0.36*	-

*Significant at 5% level of significance

0.60*), daily living skills (r=0.44*) and social skills (r=0.36*).

This indicated that the children having high score for one domain also had high score for another domains. It was also observed that if child had better communication skills and daily living skills, and also performs social skills perfectly. This revealed that children those had good motor skills also had better social skills through play and other activities so it can be concluded that all domains of social abilities were inter-correlated with each other and there was a strong and positive relationship between all of them as reported by Malhi *et al.* (2007) and Sharma *et al.* (2006).

Authoritative parenting style was positively and significantly correlated with adaptive behaviour of children but authoritarian parenting style was negatively correlated with children's adaptive behaviour. Palmer (2009) found that authoritative parenting was positively correlated with children's

adjustment, and authoritarian parenting was negatively correlated with children's adjustment. Children whose parents are authoritative, rate themselves more socially and instrumentally competent than those whose parents are non-authoritative Miller *et al.* (1993). Bradley and Corwyn (2008) found that authoritarian parents may practice harsh parenting which can lead to antisocial behaviors especially children of difficult temperaments. Sim (2003) expounded the importance and role of regard for parents for psychosocial competence as indicated by self-esteem and susceptibility to antisocial peer pressure. Results showed that regard for parents was positively related to psychosocial competence, being positively associated with self-esteem and negatively associated with antisocial susceptibility. Wolfradt *et al.* (2003) centered that teens with authoritarian parents were more likely to suffer from trait anxiety and they were also more likely to experience depersonalization--the

feeling of watching oneself act without being in control of one's actions. Aunola and Nurmi (2005) voiced that a high level of psychological control exercised by mothers combined with high affection predicted increases in the levels of both internal and external problem behaviour among children. Behavioural control exercised by mothers decreased children's external problem behaviour but only when combined with a low level of psychological control.

Jackson *et al.* (2005) elucidated that student who perceived authoritative parents showed higher self-esteem, lower depression and better adjustment. Steinberg *et al.* (2006) affirmed that children with permissive parents showed high self-reliance, focused on their friends and are active in social activities, but they also showed higher levels of substance abuse and school problems at the same time. Weigel *et al.* (2006) stated that early parenting and children's relational and problem behaviour in children analysis revealed significant association between children's use of both relational and physical aggression and parent's report of their own and their partner's parenting style, psychological control behaviours and indicators of the attachment relationship. Carlo *et al.* (2007) uttered that relations among parenting styles, parental practices and pro-social behaviors in adolescents and viewed pro-social behaviors as a function of the specific parenting practice and the specific pro-social behavior.

Dhanda and Singh (2008) reported that an investigation was undertaken with view to assess the social skill development of preschoolers. A total of 50 children in age 3-5 years were selected from rural area of district Hisar and found that boys were better in social skill than the girls due to comparatively better interactions of parents or caregivers towards boys. Harrison *et al.* (2008) confirmed that adolescents raised in authoritative households consistently demonstrate higher protective and fewer risk behaviors than adolescents from non-authoritative

families. There is also considerable evidence to show that parenting styles and behaviors related to warmth, communication and disciplinary practices predict important mediators, including academic achievement and psychosocial adjustment. Careful examination of parenting style patterns in diverse populations, particularly with respect to physical activity and unintentional injury, will be a critical next step in the development of efficacious, culturally tailored adolescent health promotion interventions. Odubote (2008) extracted that authoritarian parenting style is highly correlated with delinquency behavior, adding that the authoritative parenting style has been associated with positive outcomes. In contrast permissive and authoritarian parenting style has been associated with delinquency. Soh-Leong Lim (2008) evaluated that mother-child acculturation gaps in relationship to youth distress and the possible mediating role of parent-child conflict and parenting. These results suggest that interventions developed to reduce parent-child conflict and increase parental bonding (increase parental warmth and decrease parental overprotection) may be valuable for Chinese American adolescents, regardless of acculturation gap status.

In case of permissive parenting style, maternal parenting was negatively correlated with children's behaviour but, paternal parenting was positively correlated with adaptive behaviour. Steinberg *et al.* (2006) stated that adolescents with permissive parents showed high self-reliance, focused on their friends and were active in social activities, but they also showed higher levels of substance abuse and school problems at the same time. Talib and Mohamad (2011) indicates that mothers and fathers authoritative style have positive effects on children's behaviour. In contrast, the permissive and authoritarian styles have negative effects on children's behaviour.

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