

IMPACT OF PARENTING STYLES ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Modern society is giving more importance to parenting styles. It represents the different approaches parents use to raise their children. This paper looks into various kinds of parenting styles followed by families. Modern parenting is mixed with various issues. The root cause of majority of the mental health problems arise in adolescence are related to parenting styles. Most parents use a variety of styles depending upon their culture and societal demands. The patterns of parenting styles and their impact on child development are explained in the paper. The impact of social changes on childhood in India derives attention. Parenting style needs change according to the changes taking place in a society. Influence of social class on the selection of parenting style is also discussed in the research.

Keywords: *parenting style, patterns of parenting styles, issues of parenting styles, social class and parenting styles.*

Introduction

Good parenting is parenting that prepares children to meet the demands of the specific culture or subculture in which they live. We can nonetheless draw some conclusions about the ingredients of good parenting that will apply in most settings. We can go far in understanding which parenting styles are effective to prepare the children to meet the society. Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined parenting style as overall climate of parent child interactions. It is an affective context of sorts that sets the tone for the parent's interactions with the child. Parenting style is a determinant factor in child development. It affects psychological and social functioning of the children. Parenting style is largely affected by the influence of one's own parents. Temperament,

educational achievement, culture, socioeconomic status and the influence of their spouse affects parenting style as well. Temperament of the parent and the child affects style of parenting, and the mother and father may differ in style as well (Belsky, 2005). Therefore the article deals with different parenting styles that parents use for raising their children.

Patterns of parenting styles

We can understand the effectiveness of parenting style by considering two dimension of parenting, as depicted in Figure 1.

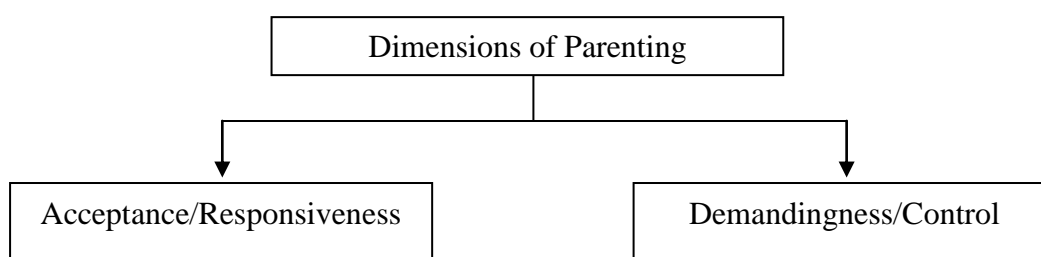


Figure 1. Dimensions of Parenting (Sigelman, 1999)

Parental acceptance / responsiveness (also referred to as parental warmth or supportiveness) refers to “the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children’s special needs and demands” (Baumrind, 1991). Parental demandingness (also referred to as behavioural control) refers to “the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys” (Baumrind,1991).

By crossing these two dimensions, four basic patterns of parenting styles should be considered (see Table 1).

Table 1. Patterns of parenting styles (Ballantine, 2001)

Authoritarian Parenting	Authoritative parenting	Permissive parenting	Uninvolved parenting
High demandingness/ control and low acceptance/ responsiveness. Engagement is strictly adult-centred. These parents often fear losing control over children, and they discourage open communication.	Moderate demanding/ control, and acceptance/ responsiveness. Open communication, trust and acceptance and encouragement of psychological autonomy are typical to this pattern.	High acceptance/ responsiveness, but non-demanding. These parents lack parental control.	Neither responsive nor demanding. These parents often fail to monitor or supervise the child’s behaviour. They are uninvolved.

The authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles were originally identified

and defined by Baumrind (1967, 1991) in a pioneering longitudinal study. Baumrind (1967) found that preschool children raised by authoritative parents were the best adjusted. They were cheerful, socially responsible, self reliant, achievement oriented and cooperative with adults and peers. Children of authoritarian parents tended to be moody and seemingly unhappy, easily annoyed, relatively aimless, and not very pleasant to be around. Children of permissive parents were often impulsive and aggressive, especially if they were boys. They tended to be bossy and self centred, rebellious, lacking in self control, rather aimless and quite low in independence and achievement.

Subsequent research has shown that the worst developmental outcomes were associated with a neglectful, uninvolved style of parenting. Children of neglectful parents are notable for behavioural problems such as aggression and frequent temper tantrums as early as age three. They have a tendency to become hostile and antisocial in adolescents (Sigelman, 1999).

Children of permissive parents were very immature. They had difficulty controlling their impulses and were disobedient and rebellious when asked to do something that conflicted with their momentary desires. They were also overly demanding and dependent on adults, and they showed less persistence on tasks at preschool than children whose parents exerted more control. The link between permissive parenting and dependent, non-achieving behaviour was especially strong for boys (Berk, 1998).

As children move into school, peer and community contexts, the parent-child relationship change. Recent changes in the family – such as high rates of divorce, maternal employment – can have positive as well as negative effects on children. In middle childhood, the amount of time children spend with parents declines dramatically. The child's growing independence means that parents must deal with new issues like misuse of the facilities like internet access, mobile phones, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, problems between peer groups, emotional problems, all forms of child abuse and exploitations, lack of social responsibility, etc. The common thinking is that authoritative pattern of parenting style is best for child development. But it may vary according to culture and societal changes (Myers-Walls et al., 2006).

From one point of view there are many parenting styles as there are parents. One helpful grouping is provided in E. E. LeMasters' listing of five parenting styles (see Table 2): the martyr, the pal, the police officer, the teacher-counsellor, and the athletic coach (Lamanna and Riedmann, 1988). Individual parents probably combine elements of two or more of these styles in their own personal parenting styles.

Table 2. LeMasters’ Listing of parenting styles (Lamanna and Riedmann, 1988)

The Martyr	The Police Officer	The Pal	The Teacher Counsellor	The Athletic Coach
Parents will do anything for their child. They always do what the children want them to do.	Parents make sure the child obeys all the rules at all times, and they punish their children for even minor offences.	They are friends to their children. They adopt a laissez-faire discipline policy, and allow their children setting their own goals, rules and limits, with little or no guidance from parents.	This model conceptualises the parents as almost omnipotent in guiding children’s development. If they do the right things at the right time, their children will more than likely be happy, intelligent and successful.	The coach (parent) is expected to have sufficient ability and knowledge of the game (life) and to be prepared and confident to lead players (children) to do their best and it is hoped, to succeed.

Each of these parenting styles has its own advantages and disadvantages. The parent as martyr face some problems like, the goals the martyring parents set are impossible to carry out and the parent always feel guilty. The parent as pal style points out that there are some relationship risks. If things do not go well, parents may want to retract to a more formal, authoritarian style of parenting. But once they have established a buddy relationship, it is difficult to regain authority. Children are more likely to be influenced by their parents’ knowledge and expertise or wish to identify with parent’s values than by the parents authority. The key is respect and a close relationship; habitual punishment and the policing of adolescents are far less effective modes of socialization. The style of parent as teacher counsellor put the needs of the child above the parent’s needs. It may be difficult for most parents to always be there to stimulate the children. Children also have inherited intellectual capacities and needs. Instead of this parenting style an interactive perspective regards the influence between parent and child as mutual and reciprocal. The athletic coach style recognizes that parents, like coaches have their own personalities and needs. Once individual become parents, they remain in this role the rest of their lives. As we explore parenting over the course of life, we will apply principles and suggestions from the interactive and athletic coach perspectives on parenting.

Merits and demerits of parenting styles

What kind of parenting style help children become happy about themselves and friendly with others? How these parenting styles affect children in their later life. The outcomes of any given parenting style on any given child depends on many factors that interact with each other, including the child’s age, sex, and temperament.; the parents’ personality characteristics, personal history,

economic circumstances, and the like; the needs of all the family members; and the values of the culture. The following generalizations are drawn from the study conducted by Baumrind (1967).

Authoritarian parenting styles generally lead to children who are obedient and proficient, but they rank lower in happiness, social competence and self-esteem. They lack social competence as the parent generally predicts what the child should do instead of allowing the child to choose by him or herself. The children also rarely take initiatives. They are socially withdrawn and look to others to decide what's right. These children tend to be low in self confidence and lack social and academic competence. These children lack spontaneity and curiosity. These children were often characterized by lacking spontaneity and intellectual curiosity (Cole et al., 2005).

Authoritative parenting styles tend to result in children who are happy, capable and successful. Authoritative parenting without physical punishment produces the most positive results and the fewest problems for children in today's world. Children who have been raised in authoritative homes score higher on a variety of measures of competence, social development, self-perceptions, and mental health than those raised in authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful homes. This is true not only in childhood, but also during adolescence, as evidenced by higher academic achievement and psychosocial development, and fewer behavioural problems (Ballantine, 2001).

Permissive parenting often results in children who rank low in happiness and self-regulation. These children are more likely to experience problems with authority and tend to perform poorly in school. Permissive style of child rearing is nurturant and accepting, but it avoids making demands or imposing controls of any kind. Permissive parents allow children to make many of their own decisions at an age when they are not yet capable of doing so. They can eat meals and go to bed when they feel like it and watch as much television as they want. They do not have to learn good manners or do any household chores. Although some permissive parents truly believe that this style of child rearing is best, many others lack confidence in their ability to influence their child's behaviour and are disorganized and ineffective in running their households (Berk, 1998). Children with permissive parents tend to have high self-esteem and good social skills but are more prone to problem behaviour. Accepting responsibility is difficult for many of them.

Uninvolved parenting styles rank lowest across all life domains. These children tend to lack self-control, have low self-esteem and are less competent than their peers.

Children develop best when they have love and limits. If they are indulged or neglected and given little guidance, they won't learn self control and may become quite selfish, unruly and

lacking in direction. And if they receive too much guidance, as the children of authoritarian parents do, they will have few opportunities to learn self-reliance and may lack confidence in their own decision-making abilities. In today's complex world, men and women are not ascertained about how to rear children as they were in previous generations. Clarifying parenting values and implementing them in warm, supportive and appropriately demanding ways are crucial for the welfare of the next generation and society.

Issues in parenting style

The incompatibility of the parenting role with the working role is but one source of frustration for fathers and mothers trying to raise their children. At least five reasons of frustration, which is associated to parenting, might be identified (Lamanna and Riedmann, 1988):

- 1) Parenting today requires one to learn attitudes and techniques that are different from those of one's parents.
- 2) Parents today rear their children in a pluralist society, characterized by diverse and conflicting values; Parents are only one of several influences on children. Others are schools, peers, television, movies, music, books and travel.
- 3) Parents feel anxious and guilty about their performance.
- 4) Changing goal from one best technique to another.
- 5) Society does not offer parents much psychological or social support.

Social class and parenting styles. The ideas that parents have about parenting and the ways in which parents perform their parenting functions differ across socioeconomic strata. Parents from different socioeconomic strata rear their children differently, partly in response to the different circumstances in which they live as well as ways of interacting with the world, including their children. Socioeconomic status (SES) remains a topic of great interest to those who study children's development. This interest derives from a belief that high SES families afford their children an array of services, goods, parental actions, and social connections that potentially redound to the benefit of children and a concern that many low SES children lack access to those same resources and experiences, thus putting them at risk for developmental problems (Bradley and Corwyn, 2002).

Parenting styles are shaped in part by socioeconomic factors. Middle class and lower class parents often pursue different goals and emphasize different values in raising their children. Compared to middle and upper class parents, lower and working class parents tend to (1) stress

obedience and respect for authority; (2) be more restrictive and authoritarian more frequently using power assertive discipline; (3) reason with their children less frequently, and (4) show less warmth and affection. Why might these differences in parenting behaviour exist? Most explanations centre on the stresses associated with low income living and their effects on parenting.

One explanation for the link between economic factors and parenting styles focuses on the skills needed by workers in different occupations. Parents from lower socioeconomic groups may quite sensibly emphasize obedience to authority figures because their job demands it. Middle and upper class parents may reason with their children and stress individual initiative, curiosity and creativity more because these are the attributes that count for business executives, professionals, and other white collar workers. Both middle- and lower- income parents have devised styles of parenting that are well adapted to the distinctive demands of their socio-cultural setting.

Changing Parenting Styles. Historically child rearing had a strong parental orientation. That is parents tended to rear their children according to their own needs and values. But over time, a transition from the parental to the child orientation has been made (Bell, 1971). The study of human development has been guided through most of its history by a simple parent effects model in which it is assumed that influences in the family run by one way: from parent to child. But recent research also proved that a child's behaviour influences the style of parenting his or her parents use. A *child effects model* of family influence highlights instances in which children influence their parents rather than vice versa. Child's antisocial behaviour elicit coercive and ineffective parenting style from parents at the same time that ineffective parenting style elicit antisocial behaviour from the child, it becomes hard to say who is more influential. This scenario is best developed by a *transactional model* of family influence. In which parent and child influence one another reciprocally (Sigelman, 1999).

Like fashions seem to go in cycles. Yesterday's parents feeling their own parents were too strict, turned to self-demand schedules, child-centred homes, progressive education and more indulgent concepts of child rearing. Now some parents are worried that today's children are too spoiled so are reacting to what they feel has been over permissiveness. It is evident that parenting styles change from one generation to the next and that, parents often have to sort out conflicting advice (Rice, 1979). A set of studies have clearly demonstrated that early child care-giving patterns vary within India according to family size, class / caste, rural- urban, and even regional differences (Sharma, 2003).

A study on parenting styles in India. The study was conducted using a sample consisting of 72 families (father and mother of preschool and preadolescent children) ranging in age from 20 to 45 years. Subjects were selected from 12 divisions of Cochin city, located in the state of Kerala, India. Data were collected using a socio demographic information sheet and Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire developed by Robinson et al. (2001). The socio demographic information sheet was used to collect the social and demographic information of the parents like age, gender, family type and size, education and occupation of parents, monthly income of the family and duration of their marital life. The parenting style and dimensions questionnaire helps to find out the parenting styles adopted in these families. It was found that seventy three percent of the parents are using the authoritative approach irrespective of their social class. Findings in this study indicate that sex of parent and child and socioeconomic status were not related to the choice of parenting style. A positive correlation has been found of parenting style with education of the parents. Sixty five percent of the parents who are professionals would like to use permissive parenting style for their children. Duration of marital life was found to be significantly correlated to choice of parenting styles in both age groups that is preschool and preadolescent children. The current study used a standardized parenting style measure to determine parenting style. This study contributes to the understanding of the parenting styles used in Kerala.

Conclusions

Society often assumed that parenting came naturally and parents just knew what to do when it came to discipline, nurturing, toilet training, esteem building and so forth. This perception is slowly changing. Today's parents are quicker to acknowledge that they don't always have the answers or that they may not want to raise their children as they were raised. Societal changes have made it more difficult to rely on parenting techniques from the past. The pace of social change is increasing as India opens up to western influences. The rapid pace at which these changes occur, leave children facing issues their parents never dreamed of. The root cause of most of the mental health problems of children and adolescents are related with parenting styles adopted in their families. So the parents should be more aware of the different parenting styles and their impacts on child development. Despite of the high importance of this issue, research on parenting in India is sparse (Sharma, 2003). The impact on social change on childhood and parenting styles needs to be further examined. Nowadays the parenting styles are different from those early existed ones. At early times the lower and working class parents tend to stress obedience and respect for authority,

be more restrictive and authoritarian, more frequently using power assertive discipline and show less warmth and affection. Meanwhile the upper and middle class followed the authoritative or permissive parenting styles. However, the modern families are giving more freedom and relaxed discipline practices to their children irrespective of their income. Parenting style overlap depending upon a number of factors, such as the number of children, the unique personalities of the parents and child, parents' attitudes and the structure of the family (Schwartz and Scott, 1994). The parenting style needs change according to the societal changes. Awareness regarding parenting style is very important in modern parenting. Even most of the functions of families have been taken over by other societal institutions; parents remain the major socializers of their children. Thus their style of parenting has important consequences for society.

Parenting style is an important factor in child development. Socio-emotional development of the child is influenced by the type of parenting style used in families. Parents, teachers and the mental health professionals must give more importance to the parenting styles and the society has to sort out steps to aware the parents regarding its importance.

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