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To compare parenting styles of the mothers and the fathers of early adolescents

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to compare parenting styles of the mothers and the fathers of early adolescents. The study was conducted in the municipal limits of Udaipur city. The total sample comprised of 120 mothers and 120 fathers of early adolescents belonging to middle income group. Parenting style questionnaire, developed by Robinson, C. *et al.* (1995) was modified and used for data collection. The results revealed that majority of parents followed authoritative and permissive style of parenting.

Keywords: mother, father, parenting style, adolescence

Introduction

Parents and children share a wonderful relationship and unconditional love. The loving relationship has witnessed a sea change in the most recent couple of years. The so called 'generation gap' is progressively decreasing and parents these days are best amigos to their kids. Parents and children both need to be more open in their conversation and this creates a loving and caring surroundings so that the children might grow up to become better individuals. Adopting this outlook would not only make life easier, but will also reduce the communication gap amongst parents and children. Parents are the best counselors to children as they are experienced. They need to deal with children can share their feelings and experiences with them without any hesitation. Parents are the ones, who can detect the emotions of a child really well and enable him grow as a better person. The parents now days have become friendlier with their children and this methodology has bridged the gap and has remarked the parent children bond further. It is a well-accepted fact that parents are the first teachers and home is the first school of a child.

Parenting is a complicated endeavor which requires a wide range of aptitudes that work in tandem to influence a child's behavior. Parents can mould the child according to their wish and intentions. Parents know their children more intimately than any other person and good parents provide knowledge and insight for what they consider will lead to the child's well-being. They know their adolescent child's needs and interests so they should provide authentic knowledge to their children. Baumrind (2005) ^[1] avers that parenting styles can be understood or divided based on these two domains, and carried out factor analyses of parents' behavior to support his argument. Responsiveness can be understood to be the degree to which parents may encourage individuality and self-assertion in their children, as well as the parents' affection for the child.

The period of adolescence is tough for the child as well as the parents; hence, a deep insight into the qualities that make sound parenting is essential. As stated earlier, conflicts about authority and individual freedom escalate during adolescence. While these conflicts may be resolved even before they arise in some cases, generally, they arise and can cause a fair amount of distress to both parties (the parents and the children). The problem is made worse when parents compare their present experiences with the adolescent child with the past, when the child was far more amenable, and family unity could be taken for granted. Parents may often find their children acting hostile, quite unlike their behavior as younger children. Adolescents, on their part, may find their parents to be unduly harsh, insensitive, controlling, and irrational. These perspectives feed into each other, and result in increasing friction on both sides. It is, therefore, not surprising that many parents and adolescents report a decrease in

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mutual closeness during this time.

Zaman *et al* (2014) [6] state that since parents are, in a majority of cases, the primary (both in terms of importance and in terms of time) figures that exert authority in their child (ren)'s life (lives), their behavior and their assertion of authority over the child has great effect on the ways in which the child sets boundaries and understand them, and how she/he reacts to other authority figures such as extended family and school teachers. Therefore, the parents' understanding of authority and their parenting style impact the child very deeply. Tied to the notion of authority is also the idea of collaboration, such as the parents asking the child (or children) for their opinions, making decisions together, and asking rather than dictating. Such a relationship helps the child to develop an independent personality and self-confidence. The model is then also replicated in all the other relationships the child eventually establishes in the social sphere, such as at school or at the playground, and within extended family.

Parenting styles should change as the child grows and develops, and parents need to reassess their positions of authority as the child turns towards adolescence. Since adolescents are particularly sensitive towards feelings of self-worth, authority, and independence, the parents' behavior can cause more anxiety if parents are not conscious of this change. Parents must perforce be able to understand the need to change their position of power (vis-à-vis the child) in their adolescent child's life and to give the child space for decision making, and making her/him feel like a contributing adult, while also supporting the child because the child is not really an adult. It must also be kept in mind that the parents' desire for perfect behavior from the child often leads to the misuse of authority.

Objective of the Study

To compare the parenting styles of mothers and fathers of early adolescents

Methodology

The present study was conducted in the municipal limits of Udaipur city. The total sample of the present study consisted of 120 mothers and 120 fathers of early adolescents belonging to middle income group. Parenting style questionnaire developed by Robinson *C et al.*, (1995) [5] was modified by the researcher to make it suitable and was used for data collection. Investigator contacted parents of early adolescents from age 11-13 years. Paired t-test and average mean was calculated to depict the parenting styles which mothers and fathers were following i.e. authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved.

Results and Discussion

Aim of this examination is to compare the styles of parenting of mothers and fathers of young adolescents. The comparison has been made on the following bases of parenting styles of mother and fathers:

- Authoritative parenting style
- Authoritarian parenting style
- Permissive parenting style
- Uninvolved parenting style

This comparison will help us to understand which parenting style is followed by the parents for the upbringing of their adolescent. Table 1 highlights the comparative analysis of

parenting styles of mothers and fathers.

Table 1: Comparison of parenting styles of mothers and fathers

S.No	Parenting Styles of mothers and fathers	Paired t-test
1.	Authoritative	0.007*
2.	Authoritarian	0.002*
3.	Permissive	0.006*
4.	Uninvolved	0.004*

*Significant at 5% level of significance

It is clearly depicted from the table 4.2 that paired t-test value indicates difference at 5 per cent level of significance amongst all the parenting styles i.e. authoritative ($t=0.007$), authoritarian ($t=0.002$), permissive ($t=0.006$) and uninvolved ($t=0.004$). The result of the present study indicates that difference was observed in the style of parenting of mothers and fathers, though the difference was significant only at 5% level of significance.

The way that a parent treats their child will affect the child for the rest of his or her life. Different styles of parenting and their varied punishments can influence the child physically (obesity) and mentally (psychological disorders). Mirzayee *et al* (2009) [4] suggested that parents be classified into two distinct groups: high support and little love, based on instrument ratings. Parents in Rasht city displayed less warmth and rejected their children. By providing an excess of support to their children, they hindered the development of their independence. This might be a result of not being aware of the correct style of parental conduct with kids who are in their different stages of development. This might unfortunately lead to irrevocable consequences for their adult life, which in its turn suggests the necessity of training the parents, before their children are born.

Studies have proved that children brought up in an authoritative style of parenting tend to be self-driven, are confident and have high motivation levels. This style of parenting is often seen among the middle class wherein parents want their kids to become independent at an early age and to contribute as much as possible in household affairs. Such parents through their guidance encourage independent decision-making, and foster autonomy and responsibility. This might be because well-educated parents adopt better disciplining techniques on their children, to be clear in thoughts, which will enable them to express their feelings without being aggressive or abusive.

McKinney and Renk (2008) [3] found that an authoritative style of fathering was usually present when the mothers also had an authoritative style, but that this was not sufficient for the fathers to take on an authoritative style. In some cases there was permissive fathering along with authoritative mothering. Thus, their study was not able to speak about the impact that authoritative fathering had in the presence of a non-authoritative mother. It is possible that both the parents end up adopting a similar style of parenting (authoritarian congruent) but that some dads take on a more permissive stance in the presence of an overbearing authoritarian maternal style.

Overall Parenting Styles

Figure 1 shows the results of the parenting styles followed by fathers and mothers of early adolescents. The classification is based on the four parenting styles.

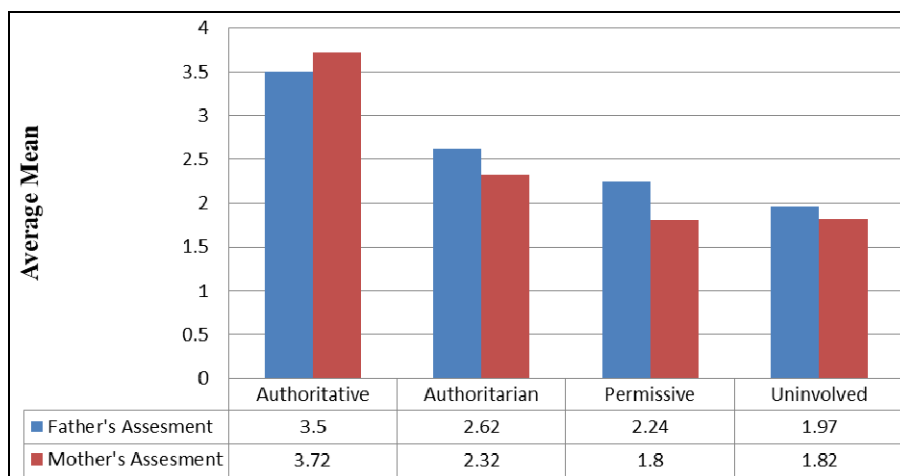


Fig 1: Overall parenting styles

Figure: 1 depict the various parenting style and assessment of mothers and fathers. The y-axis depicts the parenting styles and x axis depicts the average mean of father's and mother's assessment. Majority of mothers followed authoritative parenting style whereas majority of the fathers followed authoritarian style of parenting. With respect to uninvolved and permissive parenting style, fathers followed more of these parenting styles compared to mothers. Those with an authoritarian parenting style tended to be emotionally detached and strict; while parents with a permissive or uninvolved style tended to establish fewer restrictions and limits. Finally those with an authoritative style of parenting tended to enforce a moderate amount of discipline gave clear and unambiguous directions and in general displayed more flexibility and warmth. In the Indian context, mothers are more likely to spend more time with their children than the fathers are. Mothers are also typically considered by the family to be more responsible for the child's well-being and development, though this trend is slowly changing.

Parents with a permissive style were not very involved with the activities of their child. The excess freedom given to their children confused them and they often ended up with a rejecting and cold behavior towards their father. This may be occasioned by the decreased interaction with their father who would often be away from home and hence not directly concerned with the activities of the child while growing up. As the children feel lonely and need to make their own decisions they do not develop a habit of sharing their feelings with their father and so they displayed avoidant style.

Children who grow up in a household where both the parents follow a different parenting style show beneficial development provided the parents agree on a set of rules and plan of discipline that they both enforce regardless of their chosen style of parenting. It otherwise leads to conflicts and impairs their development. (Kopko, 2007) [2].

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that different parenting styles are followed by mothers and fathers of early adolescents. The results indicate that both father and mother follow different types of parenting styles for childrearing or for early adolescents. The current research indicates that hypothesis is accepted. The findings were mothers followed authoritative parenting style and fathers followed authoritarian parenting style. It's because mothers tend to spend more quality time with their children than fathers. Even sometimes differences of opinion tend to have different parenting styles which

parents follow.

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