



Perception of Adolescent Males and Females to Their Maternal and Paternal Parenting Styles: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The family environment is the most important social context for modelling behaviour and the study of parenting styles is relevant for comprehending the socialization process and the developmental outcome of adolescents. The current study aims to examine whether maternal and paternal parenting styles vary based on the gender of adolescents. The study also determines the most conventional parenting style employed by mothers and fathers while rearing their adolescents. A descriptive research design was followed to study the objectives. The sample was collected using a convenient sampling method, consisting of 120 students, of which 60 were males, and 60 were female participants studying in class 9th and 10th schools of Aligarh. To achieve the objectives of the study, the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991) was used. The result showed that the authoritative parenting style of mothers and fathers was the most prevalent style perceived by adolescents, followed by permissive and authoritarian parenting styles. The result also found no significant gender difference in adolescents in the three parenting styles. It can be concluded that the parents need to adopt an authoritative parenting style, which is the most effective one and results in several favourable developmental outcomes for adolescents. Moreover, the result also signifies that parents are adopting similar parenting styles regardless of their adolescents' gender.

Keywords: maternal parenting style, paternal parenting style, adolescents, gender

Introduction

Adolescence is a phase of transformation that is characterized by a variety of developmental, social, behavioural, biological, and academic issues. Adolescents go through substantial changes in this period that affect how they perform in the social, cognitive, and physical domains (Tanti et al., 2010). The impact of parenting style on adolescents' development has been the main subject of research on parenting during adolescence (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parenting style is a critical aspect of development during this transitional stage, which is influenced by a number of factors (Baumrind, 1991). The idea of parenting style

is understood as an attribute of a parent that alters the efficacy of family socialization processes and children's receptivity to such practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Baumrind (1967) reported three prevalent parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. These parenting styles represent parental behaviours, practices, and values, the specific balance of responsiveness and demandingness, resulting in diverse outcomes for children. Authoritarian parents are overly controlling and low on warmth. They try to shape, regulate, and assess the child's behaviour and attitudes in light of set guidelines. They demand obedience and, if not followed, believe in giving severe punishments. These parents do not allow for two-way communication. Children of authoritarian parents exhibit maladaptive behaviour and are distrustful, discontented, and withdrawn (Baumrind, 1967). Authoritative parents emphasize high on being warmth while also being controlling. They exhibit independence, self-control, and discipline concerning their children. The way that discipline is implemented is one of the most evident attributes. Using both force and reason by authoritative parents (Baumrind, 1967, 1991) enables children to recognize their mistakes and change their behavior. Setting clear rules and giving the child considerable independence while still adhering to discipline are steps in this parenting strategy. Social responsibility, independence, self-confidence, improved self-esteem, and adaptive behavior result from being raised by authoritarian parents (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg et al., 1992). Permissive parents exhibit less control and more warmth. They appear to be more accepting of their children's requests and acts, and they apply less discipline. This kind of parenting lacks discipline for children and instead shows parents as more accommodating and indulgent of their children's wants and needs without establishing clear boundaries. High self-esteem is one of the outcomes for children, but they are also at risk of taking alcohol and drugs and frequently engage in problematic conduct (Scaramella & Leve, 2004; Weis, 2002). Permissive parenting results in children who lack self-control, are egotistical and demanding, and struggle to build connections (Baumrind, 1997).

One of the most compelling findings in the literature is that children and adolescents who have grown up in authoritative families are more psychosocially capable, more academically successful, and less likely to experience internalizing and externalizing problems than their peers who have grown up in authoritarian and permissive families (Baumrind, 1991). A wide range of favorable adolescent outcomes have been reliably linked to authoritative parenting, including increased competence, autonomy, and self-esteem (Baumrind, 1989, 1991b; Buri, 1989; Steinberg et al., 1989; Steinberg et al., 1991), better academic performance (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg et al., 1992), and less deviance (Baumrind, 1991b).

Several researches have been conducted related to parenting styles and their impact on the developmental outcome of adolescents. The present study focuses on differences in the use of the three parenting styles of mothers and fathers based on the gender of adolescents. In the meta-analysis, Lytton and Romney (1991) determined that boys suffered from more physical punishment than girls. Fathers differentiated between boys and girls more than mothers, but the difference was significant only for restrictiveness. Russell et al. (1998) investigated gender variations in parenting styles in preschool children and found disparities in maternal and paternal parenting styles. The researchers revealed that mothers were more likely to employ an

authoritative approach, while fathers were more likely to use an authoritarian style. When parenting boys, the authoritarian style was more likely to be employed, whereas when parenting girls, the authoritative approach was more likely to be employed. Similarly, Matejevic et al. (2014), while exploring parenting style, found that authoritarian parenting style was the dominant attribute of fathers, whereas authoritative parenting style was the main characteristic of mothers.

Conrade and Ho (2001) identified significant disparities of the three parenting styles regarding the extent to which parents distinguished between their daughters and sons. The male respondents regarded fathers as more likely to utilize an authoritarian style. The female respondents perceived their mothers to be more likely to utilize an authoritative approach, whereas male respondents perceived mothers to be more permissive. In the 2009, Stephens reported that parents, particularly fathers, show authoritarian and overprotective behaviour in girls compared to boys. McKee et al. (2007) noted that in comparison to girls, boys were subjected to more verbal and physical punishment.

While examining the parenting styles and exploring the gender differences in the aspects related to the authoritative parenting style, Hein (1994) observed that the authoritative parenting style prevailed among students. Shalini and Acharya (2013) revealed that fathers were perceived as authoritative by both boys and girls, rather than authoritarian or permissive, indicating that fathers were approachable and provided warmth. Moreover, fathers were perceived as more authoritative for girls than boys. In the study of Theresya et al. (2018), most adolescents perceive their parents as using an authoritative parenting style followed by authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. In the same year, Firoze and Sathar (2018) indicated a significant difference between boys and girls on the dimensions of parental responsiveness and parental control. The result revealed that parents were highly controlling and responsive towards girls compared to boys. Later, Al-Elaimat et al. (2020) studied a sample of kindergarten children to investigate the relation of parenting style with emotional intelligence. They found democratic parenting style was the prevalent parenting style, followed by permissive and authoritarian. They also reported that due to the gender of children, no significant difference was found in the three parenting styles.

Significance of the study

Adolescents observe and internalize their parents' behaviour and use it to direct their own behaviour during socialization process. Parents adopt different styles to raise their adolescents, which impacts the psychological development of adolescents in several ways. The study determines the most common parenting style among mothers and fathers. The study also highlights the difference in parenting strategies mothers and fathers employ depending on the gender of their adolescents. The findings will contribute to the literature and add knowledge about common and the most prevalent parenting styles used by mothers and fathers. The study will also give important insight into whether parents differentiate between their daughters and sons while raising them and how parenting styles have changed. Moreover, psychologists, counsellors, and educators help parents recognize adopting the most effective parenting style.

Objectives

The study aims to determine whether permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative maternal and paternal parenting styles vary based on the gender of adolescents. The study also finds the most common parenting style used by mothers and fathers.

Hypotheses

1. There will be significant differences in each maternal parenting style among male and female adolescents.
2. There will be significant differences in each paternal parenting style among male and female adolescents.

Method

Sample

A quantitative research approach was followed to carry out the study. The sample was collected using a convenient sampling method. The study consisted of 120 students, which included 60 male students and 60 female students studying at different schools in Aligarh. They were between the age group of 14-17 years.

Measure

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)

Buri (1991) developed the questionnaire for measuring Baumrind's (1971) parenting styles. It has two forms with similar items, measuring the mother's parenting styles and the father's parenting style. Each form consists of 30 items with three subscales: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting style, and each consists of 10 items. Items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Subscale score range from 10 to 50. The Cronbach alpha for each subscale was: .75 for the permissive mother, .85 for the authoritarian mother, .82 for the authoritative mother, .74 for the permissive father, .87 for the authoritarian father, .85 for the authoritative father.

Procedure: The data was collected from the adolescent group studying in schools in Aligarh. The researcher first approached the principal of the schools to get permission. After obtaining permission, the researcher went to the class, built rapport with the students, and then gave a brief explanation about the aim of the study. The participants were assured that their information would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. After obtaining consent from the participants, questionnaires were distributed to the students, and 15 minutes were given to complete the questionnaire, i.e., the Parental Authority Questionnaire along with a biographical data sheet.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analysed using SPSS Version-25 (Statistical Package for Social Science). Mean and Standard Deviation were computed to determine the most common parenting style and to test the hypotheses Independent Samples t-test was also used.

Result

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Maternal Parenting Styles of Adolescents

Maternal parenting styles	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Permissive	31.50	5.05
Authoritarian	30.86	6.55
Authoritative	37.62	5.69

Table 1 represents that the authoritative parenting style of mothers was the most prevalent style among adolescents ($M=37.62$), followed by permissive ($M=31.50$) and authoritarian ($M=30.86$).

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation of Paternal Parenting Styles of Adolescents

Paternal parenting styles	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Permissive	30.27	5.33
Authoritarian	27.79	6.07
Authoritative	35.92	6.40

Table 2 represents that the authoritative parenting style of fathers was the most accepted style among adolescents ($M=35.92$), followed by permissive ($M=30.27$) and authoritarian ($M=27.79$).

Table 3*Independent sample t-test of maternal parenting styles based on the gender of adolescents*

	Participants	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Maternal Parenting styles					
Permissive	Male	31.25	5.17	-.55	.57
	Female	31.76	4.96		
Authoritarian	Male	31.21	6.30	.58	.56
	Female	30.51	6.82		
Authoritative	Male	37.31	5.71	.60	.54
	Female	37.93	5.52		

Table 3. An Independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of males and females on each maternal parenting style. The result showed no statistically significant difference between males and females on each maternal parenting style at .05 significance level. The t value observed for permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative maternal parenting styles were -.55, .58, and .60, respectively. Hence, the hypothesis which states that there will be significant differences in each maternal parenting style among male and female adolescents was rejected.

Table 4*Independent sample t-test of paternal parenting styles based on the gender of adolescents.*

	Participants	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Paternal Parenting styles					
Permissive	Male	30.30	5.92	.05	.95
	Female	30.25	4.72		
Authoritarian	Male	29.96	5.76	.31	.75
	Female	29.61	6.42		
Authoritative	Male	36.00	6.74	.12	.89
	Female	35.85	6.10		

Table 4. shows an independent sample t-test to compare the mean scores of males and females on each paternal parenting style. The result showed no statistically significant difference between males and females on each paternal parenting style at .05 significance level. The t values observed for permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative paternal parenting styles were .05, .31, and .12, respectively. Hence, the hypothesis which states that there will be significant differences in each paternal parenting style among male and female adolescents was rejected.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed authoritative parenting style was the most common among mothers and fathers, followed by permissive and authoritarian parenting styles. The result is in line with the study of Al-Elaimat et al. (2020). Hein (1994) and Theresya et al. (2018) also found authoritative parenting the most commonly used parenting style perceived by adolescents. Moreover, the result also showed that no significant gender difference was found among adolescents in perceiving the three parenting styles used by mothers and fathers. It can be inferred that parents did not differentiate between raising their daughters and sons. Mothers and fathers adopted similar styles regardless of the gender of adolescents. The result is in line with the study of Al-Elaimat et al. (2020), in which they studied kindergarten children. However, the result was found contrary to Russell et al. (1998), Conrade and Ho (2001), McKee et al. (2007), and Stephens (2009)

Conclusion

The study highlights the authoritative parenting style as the most prevalent among mothers and fathers. It indicates that both parents used the most effective approach to raise their children, which has many favourable developmental outcomes. However, the authoritarian parenting style was least perceived by adolescents. It can be concluded that parents have become more aware of the effectiveness of the authoritative parenting style and the detrimental effects of the authoritarian parenting style. Furthermore, the result also revealed that the mothers' and fathers' parenting styles with adolescents of both genders do not differ. It can be concluded that mothers and fathers similarly treat their daughters and sons. It can be inferred from the findings that parents have started to recognize the importance and potential of daughters and sons similarly.

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