

Parenting styles adopted by mothers and behavior problems among pre-school children

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ABSTRACT

Parenting is a composite activity that is the sum of many particular behaviors working together or individually, to finally have an effect on the child's behavior. Parenting styles are defined as set of attitudes; beliefs and goals parents have and put into practice in their daily interactions with their children. Baumrind (1971) has mentioned three types of parenting styles viz., authoritative/democratic, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. The term "behaviour problem" is used to designate a deviation in behavior from the one expected or approved by the society. In the present study an attempt was made to investigate the relation between parenting styles and behavior problems among preschool children. The study sample were mothers of 220 preschool children in Tirupati and Hyderabad towns. Mothers were administered with parenting style Questionnaire and Behavior Problem Checklist. Results revealed that Children differed significantly in mean scores of behavior problems according parenting styles adopted by parents. The mean scores of behavior problems were more for children whose parents were using more authoritarian and more permissive parenting style. The mean scores of behavior problems were comparatively less for those children whose mothers used more authoritative parenting style.

Key Words : Parenting styles, Pre-school children, Child's behavior

INTRODUCTION

Parenting styles are defined as set of attitudes, beliefs and goals parents have and put into practice in their daily interactions with their children. Baumrind (1971) has mentioned three types of parenting styles viz., authoritative/democratic, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. All the children at some time or other present some behavior difficulties for their parents and teachers as part of their normal development. 'Behavior problems' in children cannot be termed as 'disease' but they are the symptoms or the reactions which are caused by emotional disturbance or environmental maladjustment. No single cause can ever produce a behaviour problem. It is a multiplicity of causative factors which is responsible for its manifestation (Marfatia, 1963). The term "behaviour problem" is used to designate a deviation in behaviour from the one expected or approved by the society. This is a behavior, which makes life difficult and unsatisfactory for the child and their parents by affecting the child's efficiency, physical well-being and social adjustment. Some common behavior problems among pre-school children are thumb sucking, nail biting, bed

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wetting, head banging, refusal to eat, attention demanding, fears, hurting other children, destruction etc. Any ignorance on the part of parents may lead to unwanted damaging effects on children's growth and thereafter may create behavior problems in children. Thus, parenting is a composite activity that is the sum of many particular behaviors working together or individually, to finally have an effect on the child's behavior. Specific parenting behaviors, such as physical punishments, may affect children's development and consequently cause behavioral disorders in them. The pattern of parenting style is utilized to get normal variations in parents' endeavor in order to control and socialize their children (Baumrind, 1991). It has been reported that Parental use of aggressive discipline, specifically corporal punishment and psychological aggression, has been shown to increase the risk for a number of problem behaviors in children and adolescents. To assess the relation between Parenting Styles adopted by mothers and behavior problems among pre-school children, the present study was conducted.

METHODOLOGY

Tools:

Parenting Styles Questionnaire was specially developed for present research purpose. The tool consists of two sections. Section I includes General Information, Section II deals with questions related to three types of parenting styles viz., 1. Authoritarian, 2. Authoritative and 3. Permissive. The tool was standardized following techniques for establishing reliability and validity. *Behaviour problems checklist (BPCL)* developed by Anuradha and Bharathi (2000), was adapted for preschool children and was used to assess the behaviour problems among preschool children. The Checklist contains two 50 questions deals with Behaviour Problems in 5 areas namely -Home, Emotional, Health, Social and School areas.

Sample:

The sample of the study constituted mothers of 220 pre-school children (110 boys and 110 girls) who belonged to different types of pre-schools (Laboratory nursery school, Anganwadi center and Private schools) at Tirupati and Hyderabad .

Data collection:

Multi stage stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. In the first stage 10 Government schools (Anganwadi centers -9 and Laboratory nursery school-1) and 10 Private schools were selected randomly from each town giving importance to different directions of the town/ city. In the next stage, children in the age group of 4+ years and 5+ years in three types of schools were selected using stratified random sampling technique. Thus, 110 boys and 110 girls were identified from different settings of 40 schools. The home addresses of these children were collected from school records. The investigator personally visited homes and established good rapport with the mothers of the sample children. Mothers were administrated with Parenting Styles Questionnaire. Mothers were asked to rate the behavior problems of sample children by using BPCL. The data was scored and suitable statistical analyses were performed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the Parenting Styles Questionnaire was scored. The mean scores obtained for three types of parenting styles adopted by mothers viz., authoritarian, authoritative and

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permissive were 46.77 ($SD=14.590$), 55.04 ($SD=12.743$) and 32.61 ($SD=7.624$), respectively. Based on mean $\pm 1SD$ the sample mothers were classified into three categories in each type of parenting style as less, moderate and more. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to assess whether children differed significantly in mean behavior problems depending on the category of each type of parenting style. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 : Mean scores of different group of parenting styles adopted by mothers and behavior problems among children

Sr. No.	Types of parenting styles	Behavior problems among children		f-value
		Mean	SD	
Authoritarian				
1.	Less authoritarian (n=105)	89.52	15.790	23.671**
2.	Moderate authoritarian (n=59)	99.75	11.805	P<0.001
3.	More authoritarian (n=56)	104.73	13.157	
	Total	96.14	15.561	
Authoritative				
1.	Less authoritative (n=22)	98.14	17.203	4.750*
2.	Moderate authoritative (n=134)	98.18	16.218	P<0.05
3.	More authoritative (n=64)	91.17	12.350	
	Total	96.14	15.561	
Permissive				
1.	less permissive (n=127)	98.87	13.356	8.332**
2.	Moderate permissive (n=80)	90.76	18.174	P<0.001
3.	More permissive (n=13)	102.46	7.535	
	Total	96.14	15.561	

It is known from Table 1 that children differed significantly in mean scores of behavior problems when observed across different groups of parenting styles. The f- values were highly significant for authoritarian ($f= 23.671$; $P<0.001$) and permissive ($f = 8.322$; $P<0.001$) parenting styles. With regard to authoritative parenting styles the f value was 4.750 which was significant at 0.05 level. When mean scores of behavior problems were observed among authoritarian type of parenting styles, the mean scores increased as the category ranged from less authoritarian parenting style to more. These findings are in line with the findings of Berg (2011) and Brar (2003), who also reported that parents using authoritarian parenting style have children with more behavior problems. Thus, when parents were more authoritarian the behavior problems among children also seemed to be more.

In authoritative parenting, parents permit their children considerable freedom, but are careful to provide reasons for the restriction they impose and ensure that children will follow those laid down procedures. The mean scores of behavior problems across different groups of authoritative parenting styles were observed; comparatively the scores were less for those children whose mothers used more authoritative parenting style. These findings are in line with the reported studies which showed that children who had authoritative parenting showed less emotional and behavioral problems (Dwairy *et al.*, 2006, Shahla *et al.*, 2011 and Rossman and Rea, 2005).

When permissive parenting styles was considered the mean score of behavior problems were more when the mothers used more permissive parenting style. Studies have shown that permissive parenting style has positive correlations with anti-social behavior (Beron and Rosen, 2009 and

Knutson *et al.*, 2004). In present study also it was found that the mean score of behavior problems were more when the parents exercised more authoritarian (mean 104.73, SD= 13.157) and more permissive (102.46, SD= 7.535) parenting styles.

The data was further analyzed using ANOVA by considering the sample mothers who were classified as more authoritarian, more authoritative and more permissive and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 : Parenting styles and mean scores of behavior problems among children

Sr. No.	Parenting styles of higher end group	Behavior problems among children		f- Value
		Mean	SD	
1.	More authoritarian style (n=56)	104.7321	13.15708	18.966**
2.	More authoritative style (n=64)	91.1719	12.35012	P<0.001
3.	More permissive style (n=13)	102.4615	7.53454	
	Total (N=133)	97.9850	13.92403	

It is divulges from Table 2 and Fig. 1, that the mean scores of the sample children differed significantly depending on the parenting styles adopted by mothers. The f value was significant ($f=18.966$; $P<0.001$). It is known from the table that the mean behavior problem scores were more for children when the mothers were more authoritarian (mean 104.732, SD= 13.157) and more permissive (mean 102.461, SD= 7.534). Comparatively the mean behavior problem score were less for the children whose mothers were authoritative. Several empirical studies have shown that authoritative parenting style was associated with less behaviour problems among children (Palmer, 2009, Wargo, 2007, Harper, 2010 and Berg, 2011). Marian (2011) in a study on relationship between parenting style and behavior problems also reported that authoritative parenting style was directly related to

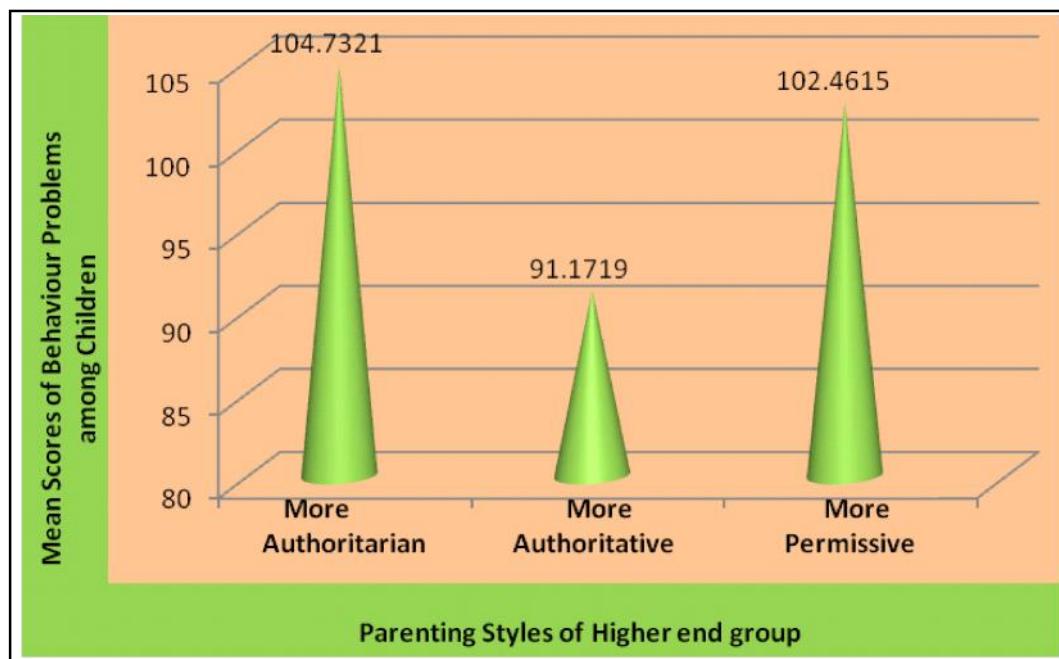


Fig. 1 : Mean scores of parenting styles adopted by mothers and behavior problems among Children

less children's internalizing and externalizing symptoms.

Based on the above findings following conclusions can be made.

Conclusion:

- * Children differed significantly in mean scores of behavior problems according different parenting styles exercised by parents.
- * The mean scores of behavior problems were more for parents who were using more authoritarian and more permissive parenting style.
- * The mean scores of behavior problems were comparatively less for those children whose mothers used more authoritative parenting style.

Implications :

This study can be helpful to parents to know about the children's behaviour problems. This research will be useful to teachers to know about common behaviour problems of young children. The results help to educate young mothers regarding impact of parenting styles on behaviour of pre school children through lectures in PTA meetings

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