
Parenting Styles and Parent-Adolescent Relationship in the Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to understand the experience of adolescents of the parent-adolescent relationship and how it differed based on different parenting styles employed by the parents in the contemporary Indian context. The study was carried out in two phases. The first phase involved identifying parenting styles associated with higher resilience in adolescents. A sample of 60 school going adolescents in New Delhi was selected. Authoritative and Authoritarian parenting styles are associated with higher resilience and negligent parenting style is associated with lower resilience. In the second phase of the study, one participant from each parenting style were asked to describe the parent-adolescent relationship. The narratives were analysed using the grounded theory method and the parent-adolescent relationship was found to have three central aspects- adolescent's perception of parental behaviours, parental expectation, and communication between parent and adolescent which differed on the basis of different parenting styles.

KEYWORDS: Parenting styles, parent-adolescent relationship, resilience, adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a dynamic concept and involves the intricacies of child rearing behaviours and the emotional climate that the parents provide to their children. It is an important concept of developmental psychology as it plays a vital role in the child's development. Parents, or a primary care-giver, are the first experience of socialization for any individual. The importance of this initial and overarching experiences of an individual with the parents have time and again been highlighted by several researches (eg. Weiten, 2012; Williams, 2012; Haun, Rekers & Tomasello, 2014; Sherwin-White, 2017). The present study attempts to identify the relation between resilience and parenting styles, and understand the underlying nature of the consequences of adoption of any one particular styles, by the parent, on the parent-adolescent relationship in the Indian context.

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles are groups of specific strategies involving attitudes and behaviours which are directly observable, that parents employ in the process of rearing their children. Baumrind (1966) grouped parenting styles into- permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded on Baumrind's typology by introducing two dimensions underlying parental behaviours which are- parental responsiveness and parental control.

Authoritative parenting style is characterized as high in responsiveness and control. Authoritative parents behave logically and encourage the child's autonomy while also expecting discipline. They provide children with clear and defined rules and take consistent disciplinary actions along with imparting support and warmth. It is associated with positive outcomes for the child like better self-image (Fruith, 2019), higher self-esteem (Pinquart & Gerke, 2019), and academic and socio-emotional school readiness in adolescents (Kim et al., 2018).

Authoritarian parenting style is characterized as low in responsiveness but high in control. Authoritarian parents believe in following the set conventions and conforming to the norms of the society. They seldom provide the child with explanations or opportunities for verbal give and take. It is associated with aggression, low quality of peer relationships, low social competence and low academic achievement (Chen et al., 1997; Darling, 1999). This may lead to development of feelings of insecurity and low self-confidence (Tripathi & Jadon, 2017; Wild, 2019).

Indulgent parenting style is characterised by low control and high responsiveness. Indulgent parents are acceptant and affirmative of the child's wishes. The child is given opportunities for self-regulation and not encouraged to follow externally defined conventions. Indulgent parents do not set strict disciplinary standards. Positive outcomes of indulgent parenting include better school performance, higher self-esteem, fewer instances of drug use and personal difficulties in children (Calafat et al., 2014).

Negligent parenting style is characterized as low in responsiveness and control. Negligent parents have an inattentive approach towards parenting show little warmth but express no indications of expectations from the child. They seldom assign tasks and chores to the children and are relatively uninvolved in their children's lives (Odame- Mensah & Gyimah, 2018). This may lead to extreme autonomy for the child (Llorca- Mestre et al., 2017). Adolescents of negligent parents' experience difficulty with self-regulation and show impulsive behaviour (Kopko, 2007).

Resilience

Resilience is an individual's ability to maintain an optimal level of functioning in the face of adversity and conflict and can be understood in terms of how an individual comes back to a normal state of mind after coping from a difficult or threatening situation. It culminates in the ability to have a positive psychological reaction to an experience that may be deemed stressful (Ryff & Singer, 2003; Baumgardner, 2014; Sikand, 2019).

The individual, the family, and the society are domains of an individual's life that promote resilience (Berk, 2017). Individuals located in micro-system of adolescents' social environment (i.e. family and educational institutes) provide opportunities of development of resilience. Parenting style is an important determinant of resilience (Masten & Reed, 2002). Parents reinforce self-regulation, set limits to expression and teach expression of emotions in socially acceptant ways through socialisation. Parental support is important because it is perceived as consistent and unconditional (Pierce et al., 1996; Huver et al., 2010).

Authoritative parenting style is associated with higher resilience in adolescents (Ritter, 2005; Kritzas, 2005; Mathibe, 2015; Firoze & Sathar, 2018; Nesrin & Mathai, 2018). A warm and supportive environment and a focus on child's growth, characteristic of authoritative

parenting, acts as a shield against taxing experiences. Parental acceptance significantly impacts development of resilience (Zakeri, Jowkar & Razmjooe, 2010). Parental support promotes development of resilience as it positively impacts development of adolescents' internal resources (Wong, 2008; Dawson & Pooley, 2013). Through resilience, adolescents focus on the protective resources which helps in overcoming the challenge at hand (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005).

Parent-Adolescent Relationship

Adolescence is a critical stage of development as it involves transition from childhood dependence on parents to adulthood and a desire for independence. The parent-child relationship and the family environment act as primary sources of protection and development (Masten & Palmer, 2019). Intimate relationship with either the parent who is warm, has appropriately high expectations, monitors child's activities, and a safe and ordered home environment promotes resilience in children and provides emotional and material resources for the growing adolescent. When parenting is perceived as positive, adolescents are less likely to indulge in delinquent and risky behaviours (Ungar, 2004; Coley, Morris & Hernandez, 2004; Hove et al., 2009), and have greater well-being (Pearson & Wilkinson, 2013). Negative perception of parent-adolescent relationship is associated with problem behaviours like drug use (Farell & White, 1998), parent-adolescent conflict, and risk for depression (Chai, Kwok & Gu, 2018).

Indian Beliefs of Parenting

In India, family is the central unit of life and plays a major role in socialisation of children. There lays much emphasis on the mother's role when it comes to parenting. In addition to that, the family environment is as important as the mother's role in parenting of the child. While joint families are prevalent in rural areas, urban households have become nuclear which has led to evolution of traditionally authoritarian parenting to more acceptant parenting strategies. Ideas of motherhood and fatherhood have renewed as family structures have undergone changes. The effect of parenting styles is more or less similar across cultures. Authoritative parenting is associated with positive outcomes, authoritarian and negligent parenting is associated with negative outcomes, and indulgent parenting is associated with mixed outcomes for adolescents (Sathiya, Manohari & Vijaya, 2019).

Present Study

Parenting is a dynamic concept and every generation utilises different child rearing techniques. With increasing global interaction and urbanisation, the modern Indian family is faced with the challenge of keeping up with the fast-paced change. Previous research suffers from limitations of either using only descriptive data or using statistical data to draw conclusions about aspects of parenting and its outcomes, and focuses mostly on western family structures. South-Asian perspective and views on parenting have not been widely examined. The present study focuses on the perceptions of adolescents regarding the key dimensions of the parent-adolescent relationships in the Indian context, and the influence of perceived parenting style on a developmental outcome like resilience.

METHOD

Aim

The present study aimed to understand which parenting styles are associated with better developmental outcome, such as resilience in adolescents, and how experiences of adolescents and the parent-adolescent relationship differs based on different parenting styles.

Research Design

The study follows a mixed research design. In the first phase of the study, a quantitative approach is used to determine the relationship between perceived parenting styles and degree of resilience in adolescents. It is hypothesised that there will be a significant difference in the level of resilience in adolescents who perceive their parents to have different parenting styles. This data is analyzed using one-way ANOVA test. In the second phase of the study, a qualitative approach is used in order to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics underlying the parent-adolescent relationship and how it differs based on parenting styles. For the purpose of integrating qualitative method, grounded theory is incorporated as a tool for analysis.

Sample

The participants of the study are higher secondary school children belonging to a study centre in South Delhi. The participants are in the age group of 15-18 years, and belong to different types of families and ethnicities. The sample size is 60 and included adolescents of all genders. For the qualitative study, one participant each from the four groups of parenting styles was chosen for a short interview. The participants interviewed for authoritative, authoritarian, and indulgent parenting styles were female students, while the participant interviewed for negligent parenting style was a male student. Data collected was analysed through Grounded Theory.

Instruments

The *Scale of Parenting Style* by Gafoor and Kurukkan (2014), and *Resilience Scale* by Wagnild and Young (1993) were employed to identify the parenting styles and level of resilience respectively. The former scale measures perceived parenting styles of higher secondary school students. There are 38 items which measure parental responsiveness and parental control. The criterion validity coefficient of the scale is 0.80 for responsiveness and 0.76 for control subscales. The reliability of the scale was established by test-retest method after an interval of one week. The test-retest coefficient of reliability of responsiveness variable in the scale is 0.81 and for control it is 0.83. The later scale, that is, *Resilience Scale*, is a self-report questionnaire that identifies the degree of resilience in an individual with 25 items. Wagnild and young (1993) reported reliability coefficient of .91 for the scale indicating that the resilience scale is reliable. Oladipo and Idemudia (2015) reported that the scale is a valid measure of resilience to be used in scientific settings.

A semi structured interview was conducted to understand the adolescents' perspectives. Interview took place at a comfortable setting and mostly open ended questions were asked. The following questions were predominantly asked, following up with request to clarify or give their reasoning for their response-

- Do your parents have expectations when it comes to your grades or marks?
- How do they react or respond when your performance in academics may not be at par with their expectations?
- Do you think your parents let you make independent decisions?
- Do you have strict curfews and do you perceive these as restrictions?
- Do you think your parents are mostly available for you?
- Do you think they value your opinions and choices?
- How do they respond when your actions are contradictory of their wishes?

Procedure

The study took place in two phases. First phase followed a quantitative approach. A study centre in New Delhi was chosen to select the sample for the study. The researcher visited the study centre to have face-to-face meetings with the teachers. The purpose and the process were explained to the teachers who helped with the data collection. The participants were explained the process and given consent forms to fill. For data collection, participants assembled in their classes and each student was given the two questionnaires. Participants completed the questionnaires and handed them after completion. They were informed of confidentiality of the data. The scores obtained on the resilience and parenting scales were analysed using one-way ANOVA test.

Second phase followed a qualitative approach. Semi structured interview was utilised to gather data. One participant each from the four groups of parenting styles was selected for an interview. The interview involved open ended questions. Data collected from these interviews was analysed using the grounded theory method. A semi-structured interview was used which allows interviewees to answer preset open questions which were supplemented by follow-up questions and probes. The interview was then transcribed and analysed following Grounded Theory. The idea behind using Grounded Theory was to development a theory which consists of categories which are related to each other (Ruppel & Mey, 2017). The subjective data were analysed using comparisons to conceptualize and form an understanding of the data (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018).

RESULTS

Parenting Styles and Degree of Resilience in Adolescents

One-Way ANOVA Test Result

Table 1. Result for one way ANOVA test between the perceived parenting styles- Indulgent, Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Negligent on resilience in adolescents

Resilience	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F value
Between groups	4170.317	3	1390.106	4.407*
Within groups	17663.333	56	315.417	
Total	21833.650	59		

*significant at 0.05 level

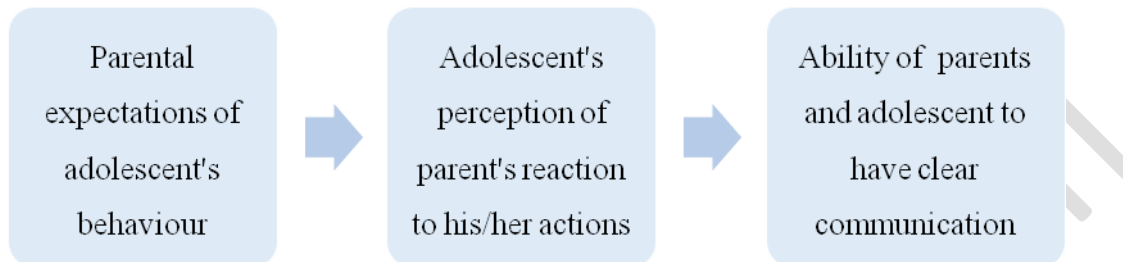
Table 1 shows that significant difference exists in the degree of resilience in adolescents on the basis of different parenting styles. Post- hoc analysis indicated that higher resilience is

associated with authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles, and lower resilience is associated with negligent parenting style.

Parent-Adolescent Relationship

Three core aspects of parent-adolescent relationship are found, and these differed on the basis of four parenting styles. Figure 1 shows the three aspects of parent-adolescent relationship.

Figure 1. Aspects of parent-adolescent relationship



The parents have expectations from children. Parental expectations help nurture the adolescent's sense of self-esteem but unrealistically high or low expectations can have a negative effect on the adolescent's personality and self-worth. Parental expectations translate to parental behaviour and these behaviours cater to the needs of the developing adolescent. The adolescent's perception of parental response to her/ his needs, demands, and actions form the adolescent's understanding of how available, acceptant, and autonomy granting parents are. It gives the adolescent an idea of what is positively and negatively viewed by the parents. Quality of communication between the parent and adolescent forms the basis and the nature of the parent-adolescent relationship. This two-way communication places equal importance to the adolescent's and parents' expression of emotions and sharing of feelings.

Table 2. Aspects of the parent-adolescent relationship for different parenting styles.

Parenting style	Aspects of parent-adolescent relationship	Exemplar quote
Authoritative	The parental expectations are rational and explained.	"expectations are only those that I set up for myself...expectations do not have any negative connotations"
	The adolescent feels supported and independent.	"I have proved that I am worth this...I am capable...decisions are the ones that are better and they have seen that I am capable of making independent decisions ... respect my opinions and choices"
	The adolescent can freely and openly communicate with the parents	"I am comfortable in sharing my feelings with them because they are always there...I don't have to plead to them or ask for their attention"
Authoritarian	The parents are autonomy granting but have set limits keeping in mind	"do not express clear expectations in academics...I

	the societal standards.	should get good marks...they ask for a respectable percentage...they do (let me make independent decisions)”
	The adolescent is unable to express herself full and feels judged for her actions.	“I used to feel restricted... I’ve gotten used to it...“I do things that are very stupid...they become very disappointed with me”
	The adolescent is emotionally distant from one of her parents and has difficulty in opening up.	“I don’t really like to share feelings and be open with people”
Indulgent	The parent subtly communicates expectations and they are autonomy granting.	“...do have certain expectations but they are not very strict...it’s my independent decision”
	The adolescent self- regulates, sets her own goals, works at her own pace, and feels supported.	“they are very motivating and supportive... it’s not the end of the world”
	Parent- adolescent communication is warm and open.	“They are always there to talk. I am comfortable in sharing my feelings with them. They are always there to guide me and listen to me and also give suggestions. They are always there when I need them”
Negligent	The parental expectations are not defined and explained to the adolescent	“They never scold...I don’t have any curfews...they generally do buy what I tell them”
	The parents seem distant and emotionally unavailable to the adolescent.	“I only share things that are academics related but I don’t feel comfortable in sharing my feelings with them”
	The adolescent does not feel comfortable in sharing emotions with others.	“I don’t think they will understand me...I don’t think they ever listen to me”.

Table 2 shows how adolescents perceive parental behaviours and expectations associated with the parenting styles employed by their parents.

Authoritative Parenting Style

Authoritative parents set academic and social expectations which are perceived as rational and reasonable by the adolescent. These expectations are not explicitly communicated but subtly projected by behaviour. The parents provide the adolescent appropriate resources and support. The adolescent feels confident to make her own decisions. They express disappointment with adolescent’s behaviours when necessary, but in a subtle way that does

not qualify for a disagreement within the family. There is easy and open communication between parents and adolescent.

Authoritarian Parenting Style

Authoritarian parents explicitly communicate strict limits to the adolescent's behaviour but the adolescent has gotten used to these. The expectations are perceived as rigid by the adolescent and are perceived positively. Expectations are set, keeping in mind the societal standards. In some situations, the adolescent feels uncomfortable and judged for her actions. Authoritarian parents communicate expectations but do not provide the child with rational explanations for these. The adolescent is hesitant in sharing her feeling with the parents.

Indulgent Parenting Style

Indulgent parents are autonomy granting. They do have certain expectations from the child, but they subtly express those expectations rather than being direct. They are warm and have struck a balance between the adolescent and the parent, and there is equality in communication. The parents are encouraging and the adolescent feels supported. They are responsive to the child's needs but have not been consistent in enforcing boundaries. Indulgent parents use transparency in communication and establish democracy in the household.

Negligent Parenting Style

Negligent parents do have some expectations and demands, but they are largely emotionally unavailable to the adolescent. The parents' responds to the child's demands is not neglectful but it does not generate feelings of acceptance in the child. Emotional detachment is a central theme. Negligent parents communicate their expectations, but they are not strict in their implementation. They do not scold the child and do not specify curfews; in spite of the physical, or emotional freedom provided by the parents, the child finds it difficult to open up to the parents.

DISCUSSION

Authoritative Parenting Style and Resilience

Authoritative parenting style is associated with high parental responsiveness and control. There is a greater level of emotional adjustment in adolescents of authoritative parents and an ability to better deal with challenges in the environment (Ferguson & Zimmerman, 2015). This is amplified by the involvement of parents in the adolescents' activities, and imparting clear standards for them (Darling, 1999). Warm and supportive parenting strategies supports development of resilience in adolescents (Darling, 1999; Zakeri et al., 2010; Nesrin & Mathai, 2018). They combine reasoned control with support and concern, whilst setting firm limits and encouraging verbal exchange between the parent and child (Shucksmith et al., 1995). These behaviours lead to development of resilience in adolescents.

Authoritarian Parenting Style and Resilience

Authoritarian parenting is characterised with low warmth and high control which leads to high expectations, and less feedback and nurturance on the parents' part. Higher resilience in adolescents who have grown up in authoritarian households is believed to have its genesis in the adolescent's experience of a higher degree of control and directive behaviour in their

lives. This leads to greater resilience when coping with stressful environmental conditions. Authoritarian parenting style also leads to development of better emotion-focused coping strategies in adolescents (Kristaz & Grobler, 2009).

The Indian Context

As India has a collectivistic culture, authoritarian parenting is normative and is not viewed in a negative light (Nesrin & Mathai, 2018). Authoritarian parenting in a collectivistic culture does not suggest a lesser parental concern towards the children. It does not indicate harmful parenting practices to the extent to which it is perceived harmful in individualistic cultures. This sheds light to how parental control is perceived as normative and as a positive aspect of parenting in some cultures, and it has less detrimental effect on the child's development as it is not considered as rejecting or unaffectionate. The Indian beliefs on parenting puts emphasis on the parents' role in the behavioural regulation of the child; which is associated with high parental control. The child's behaviour needs to be person and context sensitive, and the parental beliefs on autonomy are also situation specific (Tuli, 2012). Authoritarian parenting style has different cultural meanings for Asians and leads to better social adjustment (Ang & Goh, 2006).

Aspects of Parent- Adolescent Relationship

The adolescents' narratives of the parent-adolescent relationship were analysed and three important aspects of the relationship were identified.

Parental Expectations for the Adolescents' Behaviour

The parents communicate the expectations and limits, within which the adolescent expresses him/her-self through actions and thoughts. Providing adolescents with consistent limits helps them to feel safe and secure, and teaches them self-control techniques and taking responsibility for their behaviour by allowing the experience of consequences of their choices and decisions. Expectations of authoritative and indulgent parents were perceived as rational. Parental expectations are associated with positive developmental outcomes in adolescents (Bodovski, 2012; Ma, Siu & Tse, 2018). Indulgent parents do not reinforce strict rules in the household which may deprive the adolescents and parents the opportunities to debate and negotiate appropriate boundaries, which in turn can lead the adolescent to question legitimacy of parental authority (Bi et al., 2018). Authoritarian parents consider societal standards when setting expectations but were perceived positively by the adolescent. Authoritarian control can be perceived positively if it is considered as legitimate by the child (Smetana, 2017). Negligent parents are unclear and have ambiguous expectations for the adolescent.

Adolescent's Perception of Parental Behaviours

The parent's reactions to adolescents' behaviour form the adolescents' understanding of how available, acceptant and autonomy granting his parents are. Authoritative parenting is the most beneficial to adolescents, with regard to fostering healthy development of autonomy (Baumrind, 1991). Emotional availability and parental support are associated with high self-esteem in adolescents (Whitebeck et al., 1991; Babore et al., 2016). Adolescents who experience higher emotional attachment from their parents demonstrate higher emotional control challenging situations. Negative appraisal of the adolescents' behaviour by parents, associated with authoritarian parenting can result in low levels of self-esteem in the child (Pierce & Wardle, 1993). Indulgent parents give the adolescents opportunities for self-

regulation which is the ability to intentionally control behaviour to achieve specific goals helps children concentrate in school and behave appropriately in social situations (Liu et al., 2018). Emotional detachment, associated with negligent parents leads to negative perceptions of parental acceptance and low self- perceived lovability (Ryan & Lynch, 1989).

The Indian belief of providing independence to the child seem to be strongest for authoritative and indulgent parenting styles. In the aspect of autonomy granting, indulgent parenting is the closest to authoritative parenting, and just as protective against risky behaviour (Tuli & Choudhary, 2008; Calafet et al., 2014).

Communication

Relationships between parents and their children are greatly improved when there is effective communication taking place (Zolten & Long, 2006). The quality of communication between authoritative parents and the adolescent is good which leads to adolescent-parent cohesion and lower conflict, and greater disclosure of information to parents (Sorkhabi & Middaugh, 2014; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Authoritarian parents' use of coercive assertion can be arbitrary, dominating, and status oriented and take the form of verbal hostility, harsh discipline, and psychological control which reduces quality of communication. Indulgent parents tend to use transparency and equality in how they communicated, which is perceived positively by the adolescent. Negligent parents were perceived as emotionally unavailable which lead to poor communication between parents and the adolescent. Healthy parent-adolescent communication acts as a protective factor for adolescents at risk of mental health problems, while negative parent-adolescent relationship acts as a risk factor (Ochoa, Lopez & Emler, 2007).

Implications of Adolescence as a Developmental Stage

During adolescence, parents show differential degrees of control on different aspects of the adolescent's life to allow adolescent identity formation, and prevent delinquency and problematic behaviours (Fagan, 2013). Parent-adolescent relationships tend to become more egalitarian during adolescence, and parents perceived by adolescents as powerful are now viewed as supportive, as the relationship becomes more symmetrical (Meeus, 2016). As the parent-adolescent relationship moves towards equality as the adolescent is provided more autonomy which leads to formation of individual identity.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

The data was based on self-reports of the adolescents, and examined only the adolescents' perspectives. The parenting style of the parents were studied, and not of the father and mother as individuals. It would have helped in examining the differences in parenting strategies adopted by the mothers and the fathers. The sample studied consisted of only school going adolescents who were enrolled in an after-school study program. The generalizability of the results is limited by the small sample size for the quantitative study. Another limitation is that the interviews were conducted on only one participant for each parenting style, and the queries did not focus on parent-adolescent conflicts which are frequent and worthy of being examined as an aspect of the parent-adolescent relationship.

A future direction would be individually examining the mothers' and fathers' parenting styles, and examining if there exist differences in the parenting strategies adopted by them,

and if these differences influence adolescent development. Discrepancies in the parents' and adolescents' perception of the parent-adolescent relationship can also be a point of examination. Future studies can longitudinally explore the parent-adolescent relationship in different developmental stages, and include study of developmental constructs like self-esteem, empathy, self-regulation, awareness, and their relationship with parenting styles and the parent-adolescent relationship in the Indian context.

CONCLUSION

The present study analysed adolescents' perspectives of the parent-adolescent relationship. Parenting styles perceived as authoritative and authoritarian are associated with higher degree of resilience, while negligent parenting style is associated with lower degree of resilience in adolescents. Three main aspects of the parent-adolescent relationship are- parental expectations of adolescent behaviour, adolescent's perception of parental responses, and the quality of communication. Results from this study can be helpful in developing interventions aimed at fostering resilience in adolescents by encouraging families to adopt parenting strategies that are supportive and warm.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interests.

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