

# Parenting Style and Its Correlates: Perceived Among School Going Adolescents

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## Abstract

Parents and parenting style have an effect on children's upbringing. Children learn parenting style from their own parents and modifications are adopted by imitating their own parents. Therefore, parenting styles need to be conducive, encouraging, with minimum control over children. With this background, the present study proposes objectives to find out the perceived parenting style among students in the higher secondary school and to examine the relationship between the variables like authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. Parenting style constitutes three main types such as authoritarian, authoritative and permissive style of parenting. But for the present study, the researchers have adopted two types of parenting styles, such as authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. To test the variables, the researcher had selected a school in Kerala, interviewed around 121 respondents studying in high secondary school. The findings showed that there is no significant difference between authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles with the gender. But the mean and standard deviation scores reveal that most of the children felt their parenting style was authoritative rather than authoritarian.

**Keywords:** Parents, Parenting Style, Authoritative, Authoritarian, Encouragement.

## Introduction

Parents hold the responsibility of nurturing, raising and upbringing of children and provide them with protection and care in order to ensure their healthy development (Britannica, 2017). Good parenting will make the children confident and capable. Parents learn the skills of parenting within the first year or two that parents begin to attach to a parenting style that works best for them (Terry, 2004), which also differs from each other. The reasons behind such differences in parenting styles include culture, personality, religion, educational level, family size, parental background, etc. (Mc Tague, 2011). Parenting style refers to a set of parental attitudes and behaviours that are mostly used by the parents to manage the behaviour of their children. It is characterised by patterns like control, responsiveness, punishment, warmth, etc. (Sathya et al. 2019). All parents have their own ways and means of upbringing their own children. But the primary condition of a desirable personality development is a genuine, humane, positive emotional relationship between the parents and the child.

## Parenting style

Parenting style is a constellation of parental behaviours, attitudes displayed during parent child interactions, so that specific parental behaviours are used to socialize their child (Ozen, 2014). Parenting

style also plays a significant role in the development of emotional intelligence of the children (Cameron et al. 2020). On parenting style, extensive research was done by an expert developmental psychologist Diana Blumberg Baumrind. Baumrind made a simple classification of parenting styles to make it more convenient to put ourselves in that classification. Her strong research work had determined that, 'a majority of parents follow one among three parenting styles. The three parenting styles put forward by Baumrind are authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles' (Merlin et al., 2013).

Authoritarian parents are highly controlling in the use of authority and rely on punishment but are not responsive. They value obedience and do not tolerate give and take relationships with their children. Authoritarian parents do not expect their children to express disagreement with their decisions, rules and do expect them to obey without explanation. Authoritative parents are warm and communicate well with their children; they are both demanding and responsive. Parents of this style are able to stay in authority and expect maturity from their children. They respect their children's opinions and independence while also maintaining their own positions. This parenting style permits children enough freedom of expression so that they can develop a sense of independence while knowing the boundaries of rules and obeying them. Both authoritative and authoritarian parents have high expectations from their children but use control in different ways (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Fruht, (2019) characterized authoritative parenting style as high in responsiveness and control. Authoritative parents behave logically and encourage the child's autonomy while also expect 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, higher self-esteem (Pinquart & Gerke, 2019), academic and socio-emotional school readiness in adolescents (Kim et al., 2018). An authoritarian parenting style is characterized as low in responsiveness but high in control. Authoritarian parents believe in following a set of 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 peer relationships, low social competence and low academic achievement (Chen et al., 1997; Darling, 1999). This may lead to the development of feelings of insecurity and low self-confidence (Jadon& Tripathi, 2017; Wild, 2019).

Authoritarian and authoritative styles are the two most common parenting styles. Since these two styles show a high level of control, authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles only differ in the level of support. Other researchers have noted the control exerted by parents' styles (Baumrind, 1991; Berns, 2012). The control of authoritarian parents is very direct and demanding, while the control of authoritative parents is characterised by cooperative and being assertive. Authoritarian parents try to guide children by dominating most of their interactions and enforcing obedience based on the directions provided, meanwhile authoritative parents try to support children to be the one who can reveal the opinions and maintain their personal perspectives (Baumrind, 1978).

Again, parents' behaviour towards children are divided into two dimensions, namely parental demandingness and parental responsiveness (Baumrind, 1991). Parental demand refers to the extent to which parents expect and demand children's maturity and responsibility. Meanwhile, parental responsiveness refers to a parent's general tendency to provide warmth, support, acceptance, and a positive response towards the child's needs (Baumrind, 1989). The combination of high control and low responsiveness makes an authoritarian parenting style, whereas the combination of high control and high responsiveness creates an authoritative parenting style (Febiyanti & Rachmawati, 2020).

**Research Methods:**

The objectives of the study are to find out the perceived parenting style among the high school students, and to examine the relationship between the variables such as authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. The researcher had interacted with school students studying at 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> standard at MGM Higher Secondary School, Thiruvalla, Pathnamthitta district of Kerala. The total strength of the students in the school for the academic year 2022-23 is 877. Among them, the researcher could interview only 121 students based on their availability and convenience. The instrument used for the data collection was an interview schedule, which consists of two main parts. The first part measured demographic variables of the respondents, while the second part comprises (10) +(13) items on Authoritarian and Authoritative respectively, which were structured to elicit information on the perceived parenting style among the higher secondary school students. A five-point scale rating strongly agree (SA) +5, Agree (A) +4, Neutral (N) +3, Disagree (DA) +2, Strongly disagree (SDA) +1 point was adopted to determine the respondent’s response to the statement in the schedule. Reverse scores were also adopted for negative statements in the schedule. The Cronbach alpha coefficients were: Authoritative (.859), Authoritarian (.733). Since the data was in normality curve, parametric tests such as Karl Pearson’s Correlation, ANOVA has been adopted.

**Results**

**Description of the sample**

Participants were mostly female (62.8%), with a mean age of 14.79. Of all participants, 71.9% were studying in 10<sup>th</sup> std. Among the participants, the students from Christian religion (49.6) were more compared to Hindu and Muslim religion, hailing from nuclear families (63.6%) and rural areas that is, (58.7%).

**Table 1: Cross tabulation between demographic details and Parenting style**

| Demographic details       |              | Authoritative |     | Authoritarian |     |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|
|                           |              | Mean          | SD  | Mean          | SD  |
| <b>Age<br/>(In years)</b> | 12           | 4.40          | .67 | 3.78          | .22 |
|                           | 13           | 4.20          | .56 | 3.70          | .42 |
|                           | 14           | 4.32          | .38 | 3.74          | .35 |
|                           | 15           | 4.04          | .59 | 3.45          | .48 |
|                           | 16           | 4.08          | .64 | 3.53          | .51 |
| <b>Religion</b>           | Hindu        | 4.07          | .59 | 3.60          | .48 |
|                           | Christian    | 4.10          | .61 | 3.54          | .47 |
|                           | Muslim       | 4.05          | .47 | 3.65          | .19 |
| <b>Type of family</b>     | Extended     | 4.20          | .29 | 3.58          | .37 |
|                           | Joint family | 4.10          | .64 | 3.54          | .46 |
|                           | Nuclear      | 4.06          | .60 | 3.58          | .49 |
| <b>Area of living</b>     | Rural        | 4.19          | .54 | 3.62          | .44 |
|                           | Urban        | 3.93          | .63 | 3.50          | .50 |
| <b>Gender</b>             | Male         | 4.09          | .58 | 3.55          | .50 |
|                           | Female       | 4.08          | .60 | 3.58          | .45 |

In Table 1, the cross tabulation between independent and dependent variables is shown. Among the age groups, the young students aged 12years felt their parents are authoritative, rather than authoritarian, compared to other age groups. In our study, we felt that authoritative parenting style is more common in Indian families such statement is supported in another study by Mandal et al., (2020) viewed that authoritative parenting is more commonly practiced in today’s Indian family. Among the religions, children who belong to the Christian religion felt more authoritative and less authoritarian, whereas students from extended families felt their parents are more authoritative than authoritarian, where in children from rural areas felt their parents are authoritative compared to students from urban areas. Gender wise distribution also depicts that, male respondents felt more of an authoritative parenting style than authoritarian parents.

**Table 2: Correlation Co-efficient between dependent variables**

| Correlation Co-efficient between parenting styles            |               |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|
|  | Authoritarian | Authoritative |
| <b>Encouragement</b>   | .927**        | .661**        |
| <b>Resilience</b>  | .931**        | .756**        |
| <b>Expectation</b>   | .453**        | .798**        |
| <b>Responsiveness</b>  | .806**        | .947**        |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |               |               |

The correlation coefficient scores between encouragement and authoritarian are .927 with the significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the result shows that there is a very high positive and strong correlation between the parental encouragement and authoritarian parenting style. It implies that though their parents are authoritarian, but the encouragement had never shrewd away. Similarly, relation between encouragement and authoritative parenting style score is .661 which shows high positive correlation between the variables, attributed that children felt their parents are authoritative, which means they are encouraging, discussing the problems and finds out solutions to the problems.

The result of relationship between resilience and authoritarian is .931, this result reveals that there is a strong high positive relationship between the variables. The analysis reveals that even though their parents are authoritarian, they tend to teach their children to be resilient. Further resilience and authoritative were compared, and the score are .756, which depicts that there is a high positive relationship between these two variables.

The result of the correlation of coefficient for expectation and authoritarian score is .453, reveals that there is a positive relationship between the variables. This shows that, among the strict parenting styles, expectations from the children seems to be high. That means higher the strictness, higher will the expectation. Further scores between expectation and authoritative is .798 which is much higher than authoritarian parenting style.

The result for responsiveness and authoritarian reveals that there is a high strong positive relationship between the variables (.806), whereas responsiveness and authoritative show that there is again a very high and strong relationship between the variables (.947). The analysis attributed that parents who are liberal as well as strict tend to be demanding towards their children.

**Table 3: Test of Significance between Gender and Parenting style**

|                      |                       | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| <b>Authoritative</b> | <b>Between Groups</b> | .955           | 1   | .955        | 2.719 | .102 |
|                      | <b>Within Groups</b>  | 41.784         | 119 | .351        |       |      |
|                      | <b>Total</b>          | 42.739         | 120 |             |       |      |
| <b>Authoritarian</b> | <b>Between Groups</b> | .034           | 1   | .034        | .152  | .697 |
|                      | <b>Within Groups</b>  | 26.819         | 119 | .225        |       |      |
|                      | <b>Total</b>          | 26.853         | 120 |             |       |      |

Significant level: .05% level

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference between gender and parenting styles.

In the table 3 test of significance between gender and dependent variables were tested. The F value for Authoritative parenting style is found to be 2.719 with significance level of .102 as well authoritarian parenting style is .152 with significance level at .697 which is more than table value. This result shows that there is an insignificant difference between parenting styles and gender. In other words, the null hypothesis is accepted, that is, there are no significant differences between gender and parenting styles.

### Discussion

Mean and Standard deviations are calculated between independent variables such as age, religion, gender, type of family and area of living and dependent variables like authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. In our study, most of the children perceive their parents as authoritative. Among the age group, it is the youngest children, that is, 12years felt their parents are authoritative, and it can be attributed that younger the age, higher the feeling of loving parents, more encouraging, discuss the problems with their children, guiding them towards dealing with their problems. This result also corroborates with the study done by Mensah & Kuranchie, (2013) that 68.7% children perceive their parents to be authoritative. These parents who are described as having behaviours such as encouraging children to talk about their problems, guiding them by reasoning, giving praise when kids behave well and the likes. Ferguson & Zimmerman, (2015) were of the opinion that the 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 the ability to better deal with challenges in the environment. ‘Warm and supportive parenting strategies supports the development of resilience in adolescents’ (Darling, 1999; Zakeri et al., 2010; Nesrin, 2018). They combine reasoned control with support and concern, whilst setting firm limits and encourage verbal exchange between the parent and child (Shucksmith et al., 1995). These behaviours lead to the development of resilience in adolescents.

In our study, we have correlated the scores between dependent variables i.e., Authoritarian and Authoritative. The scores for authoritative parenting style ranged between .947 to .453. Between the variables, there found consistency of scores which lies between positive correlation to high positive correlation. Overall, which could be attributed that, school children have rated their parenting style as of more encouraging, resilient parenting under authoritative parenting style, whereas authoritarian scores ranged between .806 and .453 for responsiveness and expectation respectively which in turn connotes that there is strictness, punitive and children were penalized for their behaviour. Student respondents felt such type as authoritarian parenting style because they felt that ‘this type of parents tries to institute respect for authority, respect for work and preservation of order and traditional structure. Verbal gives

and take is not encouraged, and the parent's word should be accepted as right, willy-nilly. Parents characterised as authoritarian exhibit highly directive behaviours, high levels of restriction and rejection behaviours and power asserting behaviours on children' (Turner, et al., 2009). These parents are highly demanding.

## Conclusion

The study unveiled that the majority of the children felt authoritative parenting style than authoritarian parenting style, which is a sign of positive that depicts the warmth and caring behaviour of their parents at home. The parental caring style has to be revamped according to the trend. Parents need to change their caring style according to the children's needs, but that does not mean a complete changeover, but to some extent. Wherever control is required, it must be exhibited with enough patience. Parents need to treat their children rationally and enable them to cope themselves by imbuing in them positive personalities to become good-parents as well as good citizens of this country.

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