

PERCEIVED PARENTING STYLE AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS

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Abstract

The main objective of the present research was to explore the differences in the perceived parenting styles i.e., authoritarian, authoritative and permissiveness, among delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents. Perceived parenting style is directly related with behavioral problems and delinquency among adolescents. The sample (n=92) of juvenile delinquents (n=46) was taken from Hyderabad jail. A matched random sample of non-delinquents (n=46) was also taken from Hyderabad. The age range of the respondents was 15-19 years. Findings revealed significant differences in the perceived parenting style among delinquents and non-delinquents. Delinquents perceived more authoritarian paternal and permissive maternal parenting style as compared to non-delinquents. Findings have implications for the effective parenting and its influence on reducing delinquency among youngsters.

Keywords: Parenting style, delinquency, authoritarian style, permissive style

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, youth is a significant resource of every nation. Beside all other social issues, juvenile delinquency is an important area to work on and research for the development of a peaceful and civilized society. Large number of empirical researches has been conducted by the psychologists and other social scientists to address the problems of young adolescents and to guide them towards a constructive and creative role for the positive development of theirs as well as of society. Since early eighteenth century, different studies have been conducted to identify the causes and major contributing factors for antisocial behaviour of youngsters which is a major

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threat to the development of a mentally healthy progressive society. Findings of several studies have pointed out different factors which are positively correlated with the delinquency including i.e., parenting style (Alizadeh, Abu Talib, Abdullah, & Mansoor, 2011; Moitra & Mukherji, 2010; Starvinides, 2004; Steinberg, 1996), overprotection (Fletcher, Steinberg, & Williams-Wheeler, 2011), rejection (Babree, 1997, Raffail & Haque, 1999; Rohner, Khalique, & Courniyer, 2010), lack of supervision (Caldwell, Beutler, Ross & Silver, 2005; Waizenhofer, Buchanan, & Newson-Jackson, 2004), broken families (Clinton, 1996; Hilton & Desrochers, 2002), family environment and inconsistency in discipline (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Brown, 1984) etc. According to the findings, male children have more tendencies to get involved in the delinquent activities than females (Bronte, Moore & Carrano, 2006).

Child-rearing style affects the development of the personality and attitudes formation of the child because parenting is the most significant contributing factor in the psychosocial and moral development of children (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Rohner, Khalique, & Courniyer, 2010). Previous studies have indicated clearly that perceived parenting and delinquency are linked. Parenting style means varieties in child-rearing techniques used by parents for their children. It plays an important role in whether young teens develop into a positive, mature, and healthy individuals or would turn towards crime or engage in delinquent activities. According to Baumrind (1971), parenting has two dimensions, responsiveness and demanding and each is based on three parenting styles (a) authoritative style which is based on high responsiveness and high demanding; (b) authoritarian style which shows low responsiveness and high demanding, and (c) permissive style, which is high responsiveness and low demanding. Several studies (Baumrind, 1991; Weiss & Schwarz, 1996) have indicated that authoritative parenting behavior is directly related with children's misbehavior and aggressive symptoms. Findings have indicated that those youngsters and children who perceived their parents as authoritative have more positive psychological well-being, controlled behaviour, and high academic achievement, as compared to those who describe their parents as permissive or neglectful. Among adolescents some rebelliousness is common, however, a few children consistently participate in problematic behavior (Allison & Schultz, 2004) that negatively affects their family, academic, social and personal functioning. Different studies (Brar, 2003; Fletcher, Walls, Cook, Madison & Bridges, 2008; Williams et al., 2009) suggested an indirect relationship of maternal authoritative parenting with the

behaviour problems of children. On the other hand, several researches (Sommer, 2007; Wu, 2009) have pointed out that permissive parenting style of mothers is linked with delinquent behavior among children. Furthermore, Odubote (2008) suggested that delinquency and authoritarian parenting style are positively correlated and authoritative parenting style is positively related with the psychological wellbeing and positive behaviour. Findings of different studies (Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengart & Cauffman, 2006) have indicated that the juvenile offenders mostly describe their parents as indulgent or authoritarian, those who were from authoritarian homes had somewhat better functioning than those from indulgent homes.

In Pakistan, research on this important topic needs more attention. Previous researches (Bibi, Chaudhry, Awan & Tariq, 2013; Raffail & Haque, 1999; Tariq, 1989; Tariq & Durrani, 1983) have reported that delinquents perceived harsh parenting style more than non-delinquents (Raffail & Haque, 1999). Different studies suggested that authoritative parenting has direct positive association with the academic achievement and psychological wellbeing of the children (Bibi, Chaudhry, Awan, & Tariq, 2013). Authoritative parents are helpful for children to learn to be positive, non-hostile, autonomous and successful in shaping their own lives. They also transmit values about work and teach important lessons in decision making, work habits, conflict resolution, and communication skills, which serve as the basic skills for the future success (Bloir, 1997; Darling, 1999; Kracke, 1997; Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Strage & Brandt, 1999; Way & Rossmann, 1996). Father-son interaction is very important because when fathers have bonding and communication with their sons, the negative effects of authoritarian parenting get reduced (Bronte, Moore & Carrano, 2006).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present study was designed to analyze the differences in the perceived parenting styles among delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents in Hyderabad. It was aimed to explore the differences in the perceived maternal and paternal parenting style among delinquents and non-delinquents. Both parents play important role in the lives of their children. They are the most influential figures for children throughout their lives. It is important to know and understand that how delinquents perceive their parents and in contrast which parenting style is followed by the parents of non-delinquents.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the study are;

- (1) To find out the differences in the perceived parenting style of delinquents and non-delinquents
- (2) Which style of parenting (both mother's and father's) is significantly associated with the delinquent behaviour pattern of adolescents.
- (3) Which style of parenting (both mother's and father's) is significantly associated with the non-delinquent behaviour pattern of adolescents.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Following hypotheses have been developed for the study;

- (1) The delinquent participants would perceive their fathers as more authoritarian than those of the non –delinquents.
- (2) The delinquent participants would perceive their mothers more permissive than those of the non-delinquents.
- (3) There would be significant differences in the perceived authoritative parenting style among delinquent and non-delinquent participants.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The random sample (n=92) comprising of juvenile delinquents (n=46) was taken from Hyderabad jail. A matched random sample of non-delinquents (n=46) was also taken from Hyderabad. The sample was matched on the demographic variables of age, gender, socioeconomic status, education, and both having parents alive. The age range of the participants was 15- 19 years. Most of the participants belonged to the lower middle class (71%) and middle class (29%).

Instruments

Two instruments were administered in the present study.

(a) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)

The Urdu version of PAQ was used to collect the data from the subjects. It was developed by Buri (1991) and translated into Urdu by Babree (1997) at National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad. Both paternal and maternal authority questionnaires (Father PAQ, Mother PAQ) were used to measure the perceived parenting style (authoritarian, authoritative and permissiveness) of the participants. Each questionnaire consists of 30 statements with 5-point Likert-like response category ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Parental authority questionnaire has three subscales authoritarian, authoritative and permissiveness. It is a valid and reliable instrument (Babree, 1997) as the subscales of PAQ have acceptable internal consistency ($r = 0.74-0.87$) and test-retest reliability ($r = 0.77$ to 0.92).

(b) Personal Information Form

Personal information form was also administered to collect the background information from the participants i.e., age, education, social status, having both parents alive, education of parents, nuclear or joint family system etc.

PROCEDURE

Firstly, the permission from the authority of central jail Hyderabad was taken for the data collection of the delinquent participants. In the first sitting, rapport was developed and also they were informed about the study and their misunderstandings about the questionnaire or use of the results of research, if any, were removed. Informed consent was taken from the participants. After that the questionnaires were administered at the central jail, Hyderabad. For the non-delinquent participants, data was collected from the polytechnic institute, Hyderabad. After taking the permission from the administrators, questionnaires were administered in their classes, after developing the rapport and taking informed consent. Same instructions were given to both the groups.

RESULTS

To examine the differences in the perceived parenting style of the juvenile delinquents and non-delinquents t-tests were computed.

Table-1: Descriptive statistics and t-value of the scores of juvenile delinquent and non-delinquents on subscales of father PAQ

Father PAQ	Delinquents (n=46)		Non-delinquents (n=46)		t-value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Authoritative	30.53	7.06	39.18	9.15	2.96*
Authoritarian	42.61	6.53	33.01	7.89	3.78 **
Permissive	31.92	6.11	30.51	10.22	1.03 ^{NS}

df=90, p * < .05, ** < .01

Table-1 is presenting the results of the scores of delinquents and non-delinquents on the different subscales of Father PAQ. Findings revealed significant mean differences ($t=3.78$) between the scores of delinquents ($X=42.61$) and non-delinquents ($X=31.01$) on the authoritarian subscale of paternal authority questionnaire. Delinquent respondents perceived more authoritarian style of fathers as compared to the non-delinquents. Significant mean differences ($t=2.96$) was found on the authoritative subscale of PAQ between the scores of delinquents ($X=31.53$) and non-delinquents ($X=39.18$). Mean value of the non-delinquents is indicating their more perceived authoritative paternal parenting than the delinquents.

Table-2 is presenting the results of the scores of delinquents and non-delinquents on the different subscales of Mother PAQ.

Table-2: Means, standard deviations, and t-value for the scores of juvenile delinquent and non-delinquents on the subscales of Mother PAQ

Mother PAQ (n=46)	Delinquents (n=46)		Non-delinquents		t-value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Authoritative	30.53	8.13	32.76	9.24	1.08 ^{NS}
Authoritarian	31.98	6.20	29.33	9.56	1.14 ^{NS}
Permissive	42.16	7.15	31.78	8.63	4.35**

df=90, p * < .05, ** < .01

Results have shown the significant differences ($t=4.35$, $p < .01$) between the scores of delinquents ($X=42.16$) and non-delinquents ($X=31.78$) on the submissive subscale of maternal PAQ, and the mean values are revealing that delinquent respondents have perceived more submissive maternal style than the non-delinquents.

DISCUSSION

Findings of the present research have indicated that authoritarian style of fathers and permissive rearing style of mothers are significantly related with the problem of delinquent behaviour. These results are in line with the findings of previous studies (Mohitra & Mukherjee, 2010; Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengard & Cauffman, 2006; Hoeve et al., 2009; Hoeve et al., 2007). Father has a significant role in the emotional and social development of the child and paternal authoritarian style makes them unable to balance the claims of external conformity. Maternal permissiveness or uninvolved rearing style is equally damaging as father authoritarian style, because it is significantly associated with increased aggression. Adjustment in the social life is very important for every individual but youngsters seek more social acceptance from peers. Children who are reared up with permissiveness get influenced more by the negative peer group because of the lack of supervision. Parental supervision is important for children to learn and to follow the social-moral norms. For male children lack of interaction or bonding with fathers as well as insufficient maternal supervision makes them vulnerable to get attached with others who may not be positive role models. Consequently, the chances to get involved in the antisocial activities increase. Authoritative parenting and parental monitoring is significantly better style of child-rearing. The open discussion and free conversation with the children about their daily activities and friends are important strategies. Children's free communication about their every activity related or about friends is an important aspect which helps parents to keep their children away from antisocial activities. Child-rearing in our society is generally considered as only mothers' responsibility, but it is important to realize that fathers are equally important. Father-son interaction, parental involvement and supervision lead the children towards independence, positive self-concept and mature decision making, thus, they get adjusted with the external social pressure more successfully and confidently.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the present study, it is recommended that;

- (1) For the awareness of parents, print and electronic media should be used effectively for social messages about parenting skills and effects of different parenting styles on children.
- (2) Seminars for the awareness of teachers and parents should be arranged in educational institutions.
- (3) Teachers in schools should be trained to understand and pay attention to the problems of children and not only guide them but also inform their parents about their behaviour problems if any.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings of the study suggested that a large scale study including some other variables like family environment, and education of parents, religiosity and social class etc. should be conducted to understand the problems of juvenile delinquency comprehensively in our society.

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