

Original Research Article

Parenting styles and social-emotional development of preschool children

Pooja A. Sukumaran¹, Bhavani B. Balakrishna^{2*}

¹Department of Child Health Nursing, The Oxford College of Nursing, Hongasandra, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

²Department of Child Health Nursing, Sri Shankara College of Nursing, Shankarapuram, Basavanagudi, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

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*Correspondence:

Dr. Bhavani B. Balakrishna,

E-mail: bhavanibb@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: A preschool aged child's social emotional development can be influenced in many ways; one of which being the early style the parent uses to raise them. Identifying social emotional development in pre-schoolers by behaviours related, but not limited to: play, self-esteem, tantrums, interaction with people, disposition, transitions, are used to assess the child's social emotional development. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between social emotional development of preschool children and parenting styles.

Methods: A non-experimental survey design was adopted for the study. 200 parents having preschool children were selected by purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a 5-point rating scale for identifying the parenting style. A 3-point rating scale was used to assess the social emotional development of preschool children.

Results: Majority (88.5%) of the parents used authoritative parenting style, 8.5% used authoritarian parenting style and 3% used permissive parenting style. Majority of the children had near optimum social emotional development. The present study revealed that the correlation value between Social emotional development of preschool children and authoritative parenting style ($r=0.286$, $p\leq 0.001$) and authoritarian parenting style ($r=0.452$, $p\leq 0.001$) were highly significant at 0.001 level. There was no significant correlation between permissive parenting style and social emotional development of preschool children ($r=0.052$, $p=0.461$).

Conclusions: The overall finding of the study showed that parenting style influenced the social and emotional development of preschool children. In this study majority of children had near optimum social and emotional development.

Keywords: Parenting style, Social-emotional development, Preschool children

INTRODUCTION

The children between the age group of 3 years to approximately 6 years of age are known as pre-schoolers. The combined biologic, psychosocial, cognitive, spiritual and social achievements during the preschool period, prepare the pre-schoolers for their most significant change in lifestyle i.e. entrance into school. Their control of bodily functions, experience of brief and prolonged periods of separation, ability to interact cooperatively with other children and adult, use of language for mental

stabilization and increased attention span and memory ready them for the next period i.e. the school years. Successful achievement of previous level of growth and development is essential for pre-schoolers to refine many of the tasks that were mastered during the toddler years.¹

The word "parenting" is derived from the Latin verb "parere", a word defined as "to bring forth or produce". The role parents play in child development is commonly referred to as socialization. Socialization can be defined as "the process whereby an individual is taught the skills,

behaviour patterns, values and motivation needed for competent functioning in the culture in which the child is growing up".²

Parenting or child rearing is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the aspects of raising a child aside from the biological relationship. The style of parenting has a direct impact on the behaviour of the children, their psycho-social development, their interaction with others, perception of themselves, academic achievement and others.³

Parental control refers to the degree to which parents manage their children's behaviour from being very controlling to setting few rules and demands. Parental warmth refers to the degree to which parents are accepting and responsive of their children's behaviour as opposed to being unresponsive and rejecting. When the two aspects of parenting behaviour are combined in different ways, three primary parenting styles emerges namely authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style and permissive parenting style.⁴

Authoritarian parenting style is characterized as the parents who lay down rigid and strict rules. There is power assertion of the parents. The children may be subjected to physical punishment if rules are not obeyed. There is little emotion of comfort and affection. Permissive/over-indulgent parenting style is characterized as the absence of structure. There are no set rules or guidelines for the children. There is less communication between the parents and the children. It is inconsistent and undemanding. In authoritative parenting style, there is presence of strict rules and expectations but at the same time enough freedom is also given to the children. There is open communication between parents and children.⁴

The social emotional development is important for the growth and development of a child. There is a correlation between positive parenting and appropriate social emotional development. The importance of social emotional development is often times overlooked because of the emphasis placed on academic preparedness and achievement in young children. Research has been building to suggest that there is a strong link between young children's socio-emotional competence and their chances of early school success.⁵

The social emotional development of a preschool aged child influences many attributes of a young child's life, and parenting plays a role in how each child acquires developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of family, especially parents, in the development of a child's wellbeing and sense of happiness. Also, positive parenting styles are believed to produce positive qualities in children, such as higher levels of self-esteem, responsibility, motivation for goal achievement and

friendliness. The study can help provide a perspective in understanding the need for a more positive involvement of both the parents in parenting tasks and its influence on child's outcomes.⁶

Objectives of the study were to assess the parenting style among the parents of preschool children; also to assess the social-emotional development of preschool children, find the correlation between parenting style and social-emotional development of preschool children and to determine the association between parenting style and selected demographic variables of parents.

METHODS

A non-experimental descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was done from 05 January 2017 to 23 February 2017. The setting of the study was urban community area, Bommanahalli, Karnataka, India. The sample size for the present study consisted of 200 parents of preschool children. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the subjects.

Inclusion criteria were: parents who have preschool children; parents of preschool children willing to participate in the study; parents of preschool children available at the time of data collection; and parents of preschool children able to read English or Kannada.

Parents of preschool children with sensory disorder were excluded from the study.

Study tools included a demographic variables performa. It was a structured self-administered questionnaire with items on demographic variables such as age, gender, education of mother, education of father religion, occupation of mother, occupation of father, monthly family income, number of children and gender of children. Tool 2 was a parenting style rating scale. It is a 5-point rating scale with 30 items to identify parenting style. This tool was originally developed by Robinson et al in 1995 and consisted of 62 items. This scale was available for use without any copyright issue. The original scale was modified for the convenience of the Indian parents as the study was done in United States. For the present study modified tool was used. The tool has items in the form of statement to which parents has to rate how often he/she engages in different parenting practices. The items are categorized under 3 domains. Domain 1 consisted of 13 items on authoritative parenting style, domain 2 consisted of 13 items on authoritarian parenting style and domain 3 consisted of 4 items on permissive parenting style. The score ranged from 1-5 from "never" to "always" on a 5-point scale. Tool 3 was a social-emotional development scale. It is a 3-point rating scale with 22 items for assessing the social-emotional development of preschool children. There are 2 domains. Domain one has 12 items on social development and domain two has 10 items on emotional development of preschool children. The score ranged from 1-3 for each

statement. The total score was categorized arbitrarily as optimum development: 1-22, near optimum development: 23-45, below optimum development: 46-66. Content validity of tool was done by 10 experts in the field of child health nursing. The reliability of the tool was computed and the obtained score was 0.79.

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance from institution ethical review board was taken. A formal official written permission was obtained from the district health office, Bengaluru. Written consent was taken from the parents.

Statistical analysis

Frequency, mean, percentage and standard deviation was used to compute the demographic variables of parents. Pearson correlation was done to find out the correlation between parenting style and social emotional development of preschool children. Chi square test was used to find out the association between parenting style with selected demographic variables. Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 was used for analysis.

RESULTS

In the present study most (45%) of the parents belonged to the age group of 26-30 years, 39% of parents belonged to age group of 31-35 years, most (58%) of the parent were male and 42% were female. Majority (73%) of the parents were Hindus, 77.5% of mothers were home maker, 38% of mothers had higher secondary education, 33% of mothers had degree and above education, (48%) of fathers had degree and above education, 43% of fathers were private employees, majority (75%) of parents had two children (Table 1).

In the current study majority (88.5%) of the parents of preschool children used authoritative parenting style, 8.5% used authoritarian parenting style and 3% used permissive parenting style (Figure 1).

Majority (92.7%) of the children had near optimum, 7.3% of the children had below optimum and none had optimum social emotional development (Figure 2).

The correlation value between authoritative parenting style ($r=0.286$, $p\leq 0.001$) as well as authoritarian parenting style ($r=0.452$, $p\leq 0.001$) and social emotional development of preschool children was highly significant but there was no significant correlation between permissive parenting style and social development of preschool children (Table 2).

There was a significant association between parenting style and variables such as religion ($\chi^2=43.66$, $p\leq 0.001$), education of mother ($\chi^2=17.08$, $p\leq 0.05$), occupation of mother ($\chi^2=13.99$, $p\leq 0.05$), occupation of father

($\chi^2=22.34$, $p=0.01$) and gender of children ($\chi^2=13.25$, $p=0.01$). There was no significant association between parenting style and variables such as age in years, gender, education of father, monthly family income and number of children.

Table 1: Demographic variables of parents (n=200).

Variables	N	%
Age in years		
20-25	5	2.5
26-30	90	45
31-35	78	39
36 and above	27	13.5
Gender		
Male	116	58
Female	84	42
Religion		
Hindu	147	73
Christian	17	8.5
Muslim	37	18.5
Education of mother		
No formal education	6	3
Primary school	28	14
Higher secondary	76	38
PUC	24	12
Degree and above	66	33
Education of father		
No formal education	2	1
Primary school	6	3
Higher secondary	18	9
PUC	78	39
Degree and above	96	48
Occupation of mother		
Government employee	9	4.5
Private employee	34	17
Daily wage	2	1
Home maker	155	77.5
Occupation of the father		
Government employee	10	5
Private employee	86	43
Daily wage	34	17
Home maker	70	35
Monthly family income		
Less than Rs. 10000	37	18.5
Rs 10001-20000	44	22
Rs. 20001-30000	53	26.5
Above Rs. 30000	66	33
Number of children		
One	45	22.5
Two	150	75
Three or more	5	2.5
Gender of children		
Male	47	23.5
Female	30	15
Both	123	61.5

Table 2: Correlation between parenting style and social emotional development of preschool children (n=200).

Variables	Mean	SD	R	P
Authoritative parenting style	53.18	7.46	0.286	<0.001**
Social emotional development	33.92	6.69		
Authoritarian parenting style	29.43	10.09	0.452	<0.001**
Social emotional development	33.92	6.69		
Permissive parenting style	6.49	2.33	0.052	0.464
Social emotional development	33.92	6.69		

**Correlation is significant at 0.001 level.

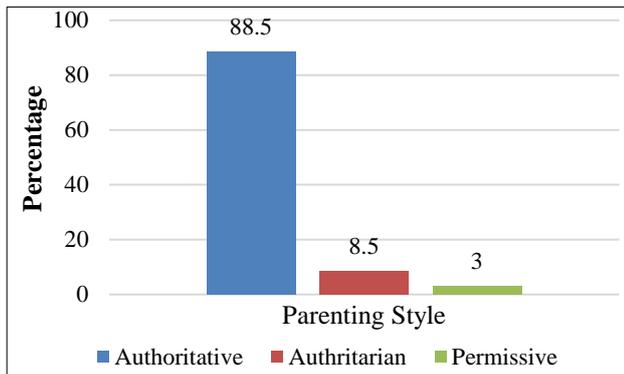


Figure 1: Distribution of parents as per parenting style.

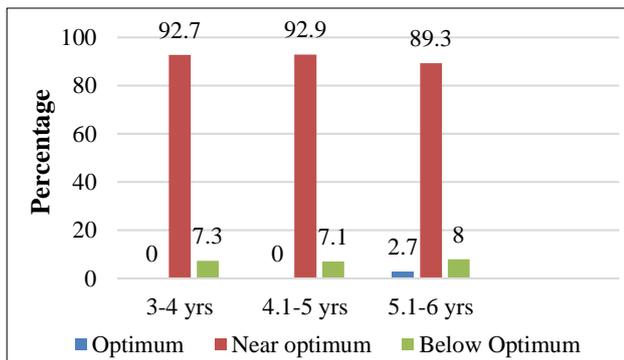


Figure 2: Percentage of preschool children as per social and emotional development.

DISCUSSION

Parenting style refers to the way in which parents choose to raise their children. There are three types of parenting style-authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Out of these three, parenting style, authoritative style is considered to be best. Children raised by authoritative parents are the best adjusted. They are cheerful, socially responsible, self-reliant, achievement oriented and cooperative with adults and peers. While not every parent fall into one category, these parenting styles generally correspond with the type of discipline a parent chooses to use with his or her child or children.

In the present study, most (88.5%) of the parents used authoritative parenting style, 8.5% used authoritarian parenting style and 3% used permissive parenting style. The age of parents, gender, education of father, monthly family income and number of children were not related to the type of parenting style. The findings of our study are consistent to that of Joseph et al wherein 73% of the parents were using the authoritative approach.⁷ Contrary to our study findings, Khojasteh et al in Iran showed that 82% parents used permissive parenting style and only 6% parents used authoritative style.⁸

There was an association between parenting style and variables such as religion, education and occupation of mother, occupation of father and gender of children. As per study by Halpenny et al parents of young children (0-4 years) engaged less frequently in authoritative parenting behaviours than parents of older teenagers (15-17 years).⁹

In the present study, more than 90% of the preschool children had near optimum social emotional development, none had optimum social emotional development. The present study is supported by study conducted by Berg et al on the effects of parenting styles on a preschool aged child’s social emotional development. The results indicated that those parents using authoritative parenting practices had children who scored highest on the social emotional development screening tool.¹⁰ This study is also supported by another study conducted by Suat on effects of the parenting styles on social skills of children aged 5-6.¹¹ Result of the study revealed that the authoritative parental styles affect the social skills of the child positively and significantly, whereas the permissive parental styles affect negatively and significantly. Even though the over protective and authoritarian parental styles affect in a negative manner, no significant difference was found.

The social emotional development has a critical role in improving children's academic performance and lifelong learning. Children who are aware of their emotions and have good planning skills by the time they enter school also have a lower risk for problems of aggression and anxiety disorders. Many parents are unaware of the implications of certain parenting styles on the development of their children. When children have a lack

of social skills and behaviour regulation, academic and peer success can be difficult.

The present study revealed that the correlation value between social and emotional development of preschool children and authoritative parenting style ($r=0.286$, $p\leq 0.001$) and authoritarian parenting style ($r=0.452$, $p\leq 0.001$) were highly significant at 0.001 level. There was no significant correlation between permissive parenting style and social development of preschool children ($r=0.052$, $p=0.461$). The finding of the present study is consistent with the findings of Yagmurlu et al.¹² Maternal socialization and child temperament as predictors of emotion regulation in Turkish pre-schoolers indicated that there was a significant correlation between authoritative and internalizing ($r=-0.32$, $p<0.001$) externalizing ($r=0.26$, $p<0.001$) symptoms. Authoritative parenting style with high responsiveness and high demanding in parenting behaviour had shown to be directly related to less children's internalizing and externalizing symptoms.

A study by Khojasteh et al in Iran showed no relation between social developments of children with permissive or authoritative parenting style, where as a significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and children's social development was observed.⁸

Faraz et al found a significant relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and social development and the permissive and authoritative parenting styles had no impact on the social development of children.¹³

Parents with authoritative parenting style are able to balance high demands with emotional responsiveness and respect for their child's autonomy. Both authoritarian and authoritative parents have high expectations of their children and use control, but the strict parents expect the child to unquestioningly accept parental judgments and allow the child little freedom of expression.

In our study there was a significant association between parenting style and variables such as religion, education of mother, occupation of mother, occupation of father and gender of children. Our study finding with regard to gender of child and parenting style is in contrast to the finding of study on parenting styles among Arab immigrant parents as a function of parent and child gender. The most frequent parenting style reported by Arab fathers and mothers was authoritative followed by authoritarian and permissive. Mothers reported higher ratings on authoritarian parenting style than fathers. There were no statistically significant differences in parenting style based upon the child's gender.¹⁴

Limitations

The study was limited to the parents of preschool children in a selected area. Only assessment of social and

emotional development was taken up and it was a short term study.

CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to assess the effect of parenting style on social emotional development of preschool children among parents in selected areas of Bengaluru. The overall finding of the study showed that there was significant correlation between authoritative and authoritarian parenting style with the social emotional development of preschool children. There was no correlation between permissive parenting styles with social emotional development of the preschool children. Findings also suggested near optimum development of children. Raising awareness of the various parenting styles for parents may indirectly contribute to enhancing children's optimum social and emotional development.

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