



SOCIALIZATION CONSEQUENCES OF PARENTING STYLES: A STUDY OF MIDDLE CLASS INDIAN FAMILIES

Aparna Ray

Research Scholar, Sambalpur University, Burla, Odisha, haresh.mishra@yahoo.com

Abstract

Parenting style has been considered as one of the primary sources of socialization for children. However, researchers have pointed that the impact of parenting is not independent of the socio-cultural context of children. Indian middle class families having shared some sort of socio-cultural uniqueness are the focus of the present study to examine their nature of parenting and its consequences on the socialization of their children. The participants were 480 highschool students including equal number of boys and girls, who were randomly selected from the middle class families of Odisha. They were asked to respond to a standardized parenting style questionnaire relating to their perception of parents' behavior towards them and also to a questionnaire which measures their socialization skills. The results pointed out 27% of parents preferred authoritarian parenting, 22% preferred permissive parenting, 45% preferred authoritative parenting, and only 5% were uninvolved parents. Authoritative and permissive parenting styles were found better in promoting adequate socialization skills except taking of responsibility. Authoritarian and uninvolved parenting were found to be negatively influencing the development of socialization skills. Gender preferences were also found in the parenting of both parents, father being more permissive for girls, and mother being more permissive for boys.

Keywords: parenting, culture, socialization, middleclass



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Introduction

Socialization is an ongoing process of social interaction through which children become functional members of a society. Although socialization goals and parenting practices to accomplish these goals are to some extent universal, those processes are significantly different across various ethnic, social and cultural groups which, in fact, have drawn the attention of many researchers. However, much of the psychological research concerning parents' contribution to their children's socialization is conducted with White middle-class families in United States and other Western societies, and little is known about parenting and socialization approaches in non-Western regions where a majority of the World's population resides. Hence, the present research is an attempt to highlight on the socialization consequences of parenting practices in a traditional, middle class society in the Indian cultural set up.

Parents have the power to shape their children's social development by nurturing their social skills. They provide them with opportunities to develop good social skills that are critical to successful functioning in life. (e.g., Darling et al., 2006; Perlin, 2005; Zahra et al., 2016). Hence, it is no denying of the fact that parent-child relationship and parenting practices are the most concerned issues about socialization of children and adolescents. Numerous studies have reported that parenting is the most significant source of socialization for the children. For example, many studies have observed that authoritative parenting has been associated with optimum social developmental outcomes for children (e.g., Baumrind, 1971; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994); and the positive influences of authoritative parenting in childhood even expand beyond adolescence (e.g., Rothrauff et al., 2009; Stafford, 2015). Some of the studies have even reported that benefits of authoritative parenting transcend the boundaries of culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and household compositions of parents and children (e.g., Gracia et al., 2010; Pinquart et al., 2018). Similarly, studies have also reported about the socialization consequences of authoritarian, permissive, democratic and other forms of parenting. For example, it is extensively reported in the literature that increased authoritarian parenting was associated with problem behavior, delinquent behavior and drug addiction among children (e.g., Cablova, 2015; Harper 2010; Odubote, 2009); and even mother's permissive parenting resulted in the anti-social behavior among their children (Wu,2009). Parenting style is also associated with anxiety, depression and many other mental health consequences among children (Cablova, 2015; Harper, 2010). Above discussions pointed to the fact that socialization of children is a cross-product of parenting style and the cultural context where the family lives. Hence, the present research has formulated the following objectives for its study.

Objectives

- i. To find out the nature of parenting practices in the observed socio-cultural unit that represents a traditional middle class society.
- ii. To find out the differences in the socialization consequences of children due to differences in parenting styles.
- iii. To examine the role of the gender factor in parenting and its consequences on socialization.

Method

The participants in the study were 480 high school students including equal number of boys and girls who completed the translated and adapted Odia version of the of Albama Parenting Questionnaire (Child Form, Mishra, 2016) and the Odia version of the Sahoo's scale for the Measurement of Socialization Constructs (Sahoo, 2007). The child form of the parenting questionnaire consisted of 40 items each to be responded by the participants on a five-point scale from 0 to 4 relating to their perception of parents' behavior towards them. In the scale, 10 items were accorded to each of the parenting style; authoritarian, permissive, authoritative, and uninvolved. Each student was provided with two copies of the form to respond in one for his /her father and in the other for his /her mother. The scale for measurement of socialization constructs consisted of 60 items, 10 items each to measure the child's behavior of self-control, self-esteem, sociability, responsibility, honesty, and pro-social behavior. Each item was responded by the child on a five-point scale ranging from 0 to 4. Both these scales have high degree of confirmed psychometric properties.

Results

The scores of the students were found from their responses of perception about each of their parent's behavior with regard to the four parenting styles. The highest score that a student got in a particular parenting style was considered as his / her type of parenting. In this process it was found that 63 boys and 74 girls reported their father's behavior as authoritarian, while 50 boys and 75 girls reported about the authoritarian behavior of their mothers. It is implied that in the examined social set up, parents are more authoritarian for girls than for boys. Similarly, while only 24 fathers are permissive for boys, 57 fathers are permissive for girls. On the other hand, while 90 mothers are permissive for boys, only 44 mothers are permissive for girls. Hence, it implies that while fathers are more permissive for girls, mothers are more permissive for boys. However, authoritative parenting is found to be the most adopted parenting style for both boys and girls as 234 of the 480 fathers 195 of the 480 mothers were found to have adopted authoritative parenting style. On the other hand, the frequency of uninvolved parenting is very low as only 28 fathers and 26 mothers were reported as uninvolved parents. In fact, chi-squares were calculated (Table 1) to examine fathers' parenting differences for boys and girls ($\chi^2=21.74$, $p<.01$); mothers' parenting differences for boys and girls ($\chi^2=26.75$, $p<.01$), parenting differences between father and mother for boys ($\chi^2= 51.65$, $p<.01$) and also for girls ($\chi^2=3.39$, $p>.05$). Three of the four chi-

square values were statistically significant to point out that both fathers and mothers adopt different parenting practices for sons and daughters. Further, between fathers and mothers, parenting differences happen for boys but not for girls. Hence, it may be said that even though socio-cultural system provides some general guidelines for parenting, each parent has an independent approach to his /her parenting style. Therefore, parenting is definitely a crucial and complex issue in the social development of children. It may be concluded from the results of the present study that in the traditional middle class Indian society, authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting are the most followed parenting practices.

The data were also analyzed to examine the consequences of parenting styles on some measures of socialization for boys and girls. One way analysis of variance along with Tukey's HSD tests were calculated for each of the socializing attributes in respect of the four parenting styles for girls (Table 2) and for boys (Table 3) and the graphs relating the means of girls and boys for the different socialization attributes are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively. The main effects of parenting styles on each of the six socialization attributes were found significant for girls to suggest that parenting styles have differential impact on the development of socialization skills of girls. It is observed from the means and Tukey's HSD test that authoritative and permissive parenting have maximum positive consequences in the development of each of the six socialization skills. Those practices have bigger impacts on self-control, sociability, honesty and prosocial behavior compared to self esteem and responsibility. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting has most negative influence on self-esteem and responsibility among girls. It is even observed that non-involved parenting has better socializing consequences than authoritarian parenting. Similarly, for the boys, the main effects of parenting styles for each of the six socializing attributes were significant to suggest that parenting styles have also differing impacts on the socialization of boys. In case of boys also, authoritative and permissive parenting have best positive impact on the development of socialization skills. However, while for girls, self-esteem is not adequately influenced by authoritative and permissive parenting, it is strongly influenced by these parenting styles in case of boys. Further, while in case of girls, uninvolved parenting is found better than authoritarian parenting, it did not happen so for boys. Excepting responsibility, all other socialization skill are negatively influenced by these two parenting styles.

Table 1. Differences in the perceived parenting styles of father and mother in respect of boy and girl child

Parenting Style	Father		Mother	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	N=240	N=240	N=240	N=240
Authoritarian	63	74	50	75
Permissive	24	57	90	44
Authoritative	137	97	93	102
Uninvolved	16	12	07	19
χ^2 -value/ Father / Mother between Boys and girls	21.74**, p<.01		26.75**, p<.01	
χ^2 -value/ Father and Mother between Boys / Girls	51.65**, P<.01		3.39, p>.05	

Table 2. Results of ANOVA and Tukey's HSD on socialization consequences of parenting style on girls (Both father mother combined: N=480)

Socializing attributes	Authoritaria		Permissive		Authoritativ		Uninvolved		F-ratio	
	n (1)		(2)		e (3)		(4)			
	N=149		N=101		N=199		N=31			
	Mea	SD	Mea	SD	Mea	SD	Mea	SD		
	n		n		n		n			
Self Control	20.57	3.66	21.78	3.96	24.66	4.07	22.61	4.49	33.00* *	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2		1vs.3**		1 vs.4		2 vs.3**		2vs.4	
Self-esteem	14.83	3.62	18.09	3.82	19.20	3.69	16.54	3.81	41.29* *	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4		2 vs.3		2vs.4	
Sociability	19.32	3.54	22.54	4.16	20.37	3.65	17.57	3.33	21.34* *	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4		2 vs.3**		2vs.4**	
Responsibility	14.83	3.57	17.91	3.68	19.24	3.98	17.36	3.37	39.72	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4**		2 vs.3**		2vs.4	
Honesty	20.54	3.65	23.61	3.82	22.55	3.68	18.57	3.47	24.48	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4**		2 vs.3		2vs.4**	
Prosocial Behav.	17.56	3.84	21.19	3.97	21.21	4.10	20.59	4.18	27.76	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4**		2 vs.3**		2vs.4	

Table 3. Results of ANOVA and Tukey's HSD on socialization consequences of parenting style on boys (Both father mother combined: N=480)

Socializing attributes	Authoritarian (1) N=113		Permissive (2) N=114		Authoritative (3) N=230		Uninvolved (4) N=23		F-ratio	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Self Control	19.46	3.21	23.28	3.57	23.17	3.25	16.84	4.17	54.19*	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4**		2 vs.3		2vs.4**	
Self-esteem	18.46	3.11	21.69	4.45	23.61	4.22	17.63	2.31	43.76*	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4		2 vs.3**		2vs.4**	
Sociability	14.17	4.12	18.25	3.83	17.22	3.34	16.86	3.37	14.15*	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4*		2 vs.3		2vs.4	
Responsibility	12.26	2.94	14.44	3.38	17.13	3.17	16.44	4.15	61.95*	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3**		1 vs.4**		2 vs.3**		2vs.4**	
Honesty	18.76	3.57	16.44	4.32	19.86	3.39	15.38	2.97	28.38*	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3		1 vs.4**		2 vs.3**		2vs.4	
Prosocial Behav.	20.36	5.19	23.22	4.17	20.97	3.16	21.88	4.93	11.13*	
Tukey's HSD test	1vs.2**		1vs.3		1 vs.4		2 vs.3**		2vs.4	

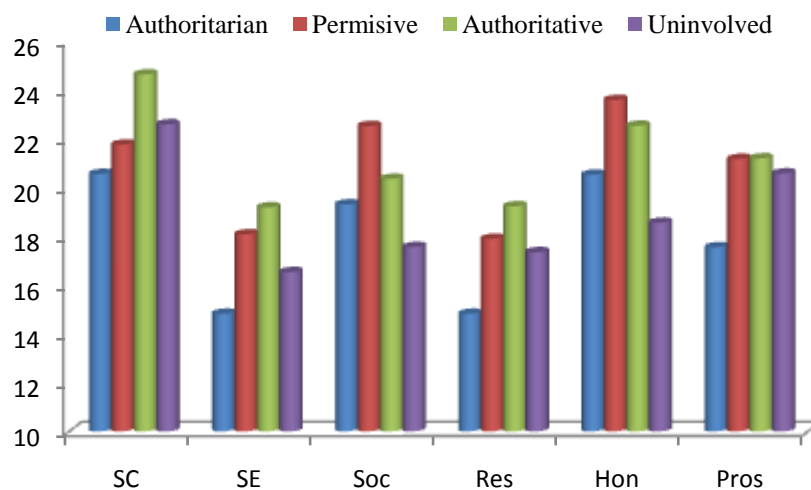


Figure 1. Socialization skills of girls under the four parenting styles

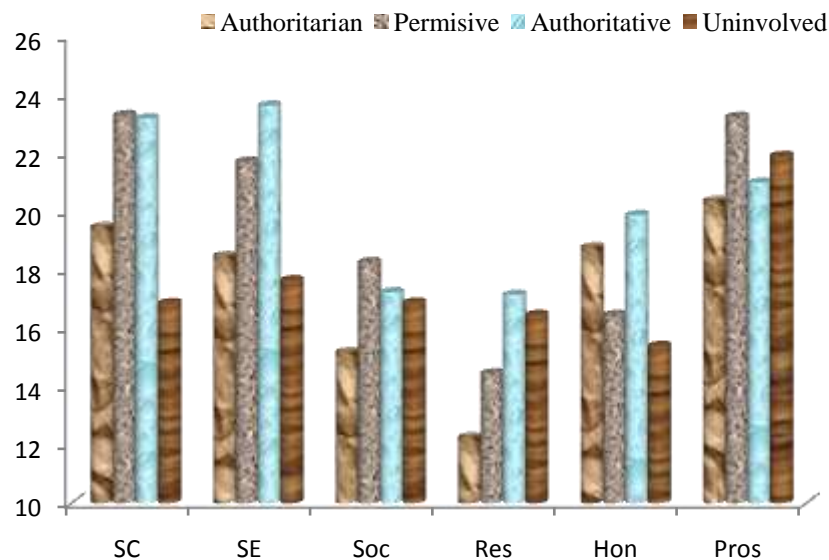


Figure 2. Socialization skills of boys under the four parenting styles

Discussion

The results of the study pointed out that middle class parents in the semiurban and rural Indian society are good in their parenting practices as most of them adopt to authoritative or permissive parenting style. However, some of them also use authoritarian and uninvolved parenting which largely results in poor socialization skills among the children and adolescents. However, it is also found from the results that sociability and taking responsibility have not adequately developed among children under any of the four parenting styles which may be due to some other cultural factors not addressed in the periphery of the present research. Further research may be undertaken to address this issue. The study also reported some short of gender disparity in parenting which should further be examined to provide better understanding and awareness of the phenomenon. Finally, the findings of the study have both theoretical and practical implications as it highlights the facts about Indian middle class families which constitute a very large part of the Indian population.

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