

**Research Paper :**

## **Determinants of adolescent's perception of parental disciplinary practices in different income groups**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The paper presents the results of an extensive study with 270 adolescents on their perceptions of their parents' disciplinary practices. The study looked at three key dimensions of fathers' and mothers' parenting practices: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. The findings revealed that high and middle income group parents were perceived as more authoritarian by sons as compared to daughters of respective income groups. Whereas, a reverse situation was seen for permissive parenting style category as parents were perceived as more permissive by daughters than sons. Correlation analysis indicated that perceived authoritarian parenting had negative significant relationships with different variables like, academic performance, education of mother and father and family income for both girls and boys.

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**Key words :** Adolescence, Perception, Authoritative, Authoritarian and permissive

Adolescence is recognized as a period of crucial development due to many stresses and strains which are experienced by the adolescents themselves as well as their parents. It is the time during which boys and girls move from childhood to adulthood physically, emotionally, mentally and socially. As the children reach adolescence, parents suddenly discover that children no longer view their parents as source of knowledge and neither listen to them. On the other hand, as the child reaches adolescence, he aspires to make his own decisions and experience, freedom of action.

A strong relationship of adolescents and parents greatly depends upon adolescent's perception of their parent's manner of handling them. Although adolescent's perception may be more important predictor of adolescent outcomes than are parent's reports, surprisingly little research has compared parents and adolescent's perception of parent's parenting styles. Measures of parents disciplinary style obtained from parents are biased by many factors, among them their desire to portray themselves in the most favourable light. Children are more candid. Furthermore, regardless of how a parent actually treats a child, it is the child's perception and the nature of interaction which is most important. Therefore, adolescent's perception as a measure of parental disciplinary practices was selected in order to obtain more

valid information by having parenting style practices classified into three categories following Baumrind's (1973) criteria: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive.

A strong relationship of adolescents and parents greatly depends upon adolescent's perception of their parent's manner of handling them. If they perceived parental disciplinary methods in a positive way, their relationship will be healthier and stronger. On the other hand, if it is perceived negatively, the relationship is more likely to be strained. Good parent-child relationship is possible, not only when children are perceived as good or are good from the perspective of children, but also when parenting practices are good from the perspective of children (Balda and Duhan, 2001). The present research was, therefore planned to study the adolescent's perception of parental disciplinary practices in different income groups and relationship of selected independent variables with perceived parental disciplinary practices.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Sample:**

The sample comprised of 270 adolescents in the age group 14-15 years equally representing the three income groups *i.e.* high, middle and low from schools of Hisar city. In each income group 90 adolescents equally representing both the sexes were selected randomly

(45 girls and 45 boys).

### Procedure of data collection:

The data regarding adolescent's perception of parental disciplinary style were assessed with the help of Self-structured Inventory. The disciplinary strategies are embedded within the styles of parenting described by Baumrind (1977). Baumrind identified three patterns of parental disciplinary style: Authoritative, Authoritarian and Permissive. It consists of 36 statements related to parental disciplinary styles. The responses were recorded on three point scale. The data were also recorded on factors such as sex and academic performance of adolescent, education of parents and family income.

### Statistical analysis:

To analyze the data statistically, correlation test was employed.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents distribution of parents in parenting practices as perceived by adolescents on the basis of income groups and sex of the adolescents. A perusal of the table reveals that high and middle income group parents were perceived as more authoritarian by sons as compared to daughters of respective income groups. Whereas, a reverse situation was seen for permissive parenting style category as parents were perceived as more permissive by daughters than sons. On the other hand, low income group parents were perceived as more authoritarian by girls (40.00%) against 26.26 per cent in case of boys.

For authoritative parenting style, more than fifty per

cent of parents were perceived as authoritative by both girls (64.44%) and boys (60.00%) of high income group whereas, in case of middle and low income groups, this percentage was less than fifty per cent.

From the results, it implies that in lower class, the status of girls is still inferior to boys and parents have a negative attitude towards them. They are reared as liability in the family and face more authoritarian nature of parents than boys. Belesky *et al.* (1984) indicated that social class differences affect parental control practices. Middle class parents tend to use reasoning with their adolescent children. They generally adopt a democratic and equalitarian style. Lower class parents use strict control out of the belief that they are responsible for controlling the behaviour of their teenager children. Balda and Duhan (2001) examined family status as independent variable and maternal and paternal control (firm, harsh, lax) as the dependent variables. Significant differences were observed for perceived paternal firm control and maternal firm control. Upper middle class fathers and mothers were perceived as more firm in control than lower middle class fathers and mothers.

Sangwan (2002) studied the perceived parental attitude of adolescents. Results revealed that mean value of parental acceptance and concentration was found to be higher than standard in both sexes, but in parental avoidance mean values were less than standard values. Adolescent's perception regarding mother attitude pattern was better than that of the father. Fatima (2008) investigated the similarities and differences between perceived parenting styles (as measured through Child PARQ/Control) of adolescent boys and girls in the two cultural groups: namely, Turkish and Pakistani. On the

**Table 1 : Distribution of parents in parenting practices on the basis of income groups and sex of the adolescents**

Perception of parenting style	High income group (n=90)		Middle income group (n=90)		Low income group (n=90)	
	Boys(45)	Girls(45)	Boys(45)	Girls(45)	Boys(45)	Girls(45)
1. Authoritarian	12 (26.67)	8 (17.78)	17 (37.78)	11 (24.44)	12 (26.65)	18 (40.0)
2. Authoritative	27 (60.00)	29 (64.44)	19 (42.22)	20 (90.00)	22 (45.89)	19 (42.2)
3. Permissive	6 (13.33)	8 (17.78)	9 (20.00)	14 (31.11)	11 (24.44)	8 (17.2)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

**Table 2: Relationship between perceived parental disciplinary practices and independent variables**

Variables	Girls (n=135)			Boys (n=135)		
	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive
Academic performance	-0.21*	0.31**	-0.12	-0.23*	0.21*	-0.19*
Education of mother	-0.23*	0.15	0.08	-0.03	0.04	-0.08
Education of father	-0.30**	0.24	-0.05	0.10	0.00	-0.12
Family income	-0.45**	0.33**	-0.01	-0.25*	0.31**	-0.13

\* and \*\* indicate significant of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

basis of cross-cultural comparison of results, the Turkish adolescents were found to have overall perceptions of greater warmth from their parents as compared to their Pakistani counterparts. On the control scale the Turkish adolescents were found to have perceptions of lesser parental control as compared to Pakistani respondents.

Results suggested that techniques to modify mass behaviours need to be used in changing the attitudes and practices in the public to treat boys and girls equally.

Table 2 shows correlation between perceived parental disciplinary practices and independent variables of girls and boys. From the data, it was revealed that perceived authoritarian parenting had negative significant relationships with different variables like, academic performance, education of mother and father and family income for both girls and boys. Further, in case of female adolescents, academic performance and education of mother and father and family income were found to be negatively significantly correlated with authoritarian parenting style ( $r=-0.21$ ,  $p<0.05$  and  $r=-0.23$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $r=-0.30$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $r=0.45$ ,  $p<0.01$ , respectively). This means lower the education of parents, more is the authoritarian parental practices and poor academic performance of children. Parental authoritative as perceived by girls was found to be positively significantly correlated with academic performance of adolescents and family income, respectively ( $r=0.31$ ,  $p<0.01$  and  $r=0.33$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) which means that parents who followed authoritative parenting practices tended to have adolescent scoring good academic performance in schools. Lakshmi and Arora (2006) investigated the perceived parental behaviour and its relationship with academic school success and academic competence. Results of the study revealed that parental acceptance and encouragement scores were positively related with academic school success and academic competence scores. However, parental control (psychological and behavioral) showed negative relationship with academic success and competence. Parents who were perceived as being more acceptant and using less restrictive and hostile psychological control, tended to have adolescents with higher academic success and competence. Spera (2006) reported that adolescents' perceptions of parental educational goals and values were related positively and significantly to their reports of parental school involvement and parental monitoring. In turn, adolescents' perceptions of parental involvement in schoolwork were related positively and significantly to their interest in school, internal academic self-regulation, and goal pursuit. Parental styles moderated the relationship between parental practices and student grades, with parental involvement and monitoring most effective under

child-centered parenting styles.

In case of male adolescents perceived authoritarian parenting was negatively significantly correlated with academic performance and family income, respectively ( $r=-0.23$ ,  $p<0.05$  and  $r=-0.25$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Parental authoritative as perceived by boys was found to be positively significantly correlated with academic performance of adolescents and family income, respectively ( $r=0.21$ ,  $p<0.05$  and  $r=0.31$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Parental permissiveness as perceived by boys was found to be negatively significantly correlated ( $r=-0.19$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) with academic performance of adolescents. The results are in line with study carried out by Kelley *et al.* (1993).

### Conclusion:

It may be concluded that high income group parents were perceived as more authoritative than middle and low income group parents. Academic performance, education of parents and family income appeared to have a significant impact on perceived parental disciplinary practices.

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