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Parenting styles and moral judgment among adolescents

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to study the parenting styles adopted by parents of adolescents; to study the moral judgment among adolescents; and to study the relationship between the parenting styles and the moral judgment among adolescents. The study was conducted on one hundred adolescents of senior secondary classes of Newai, Tonk (Rajasthan). The tools used were: Parental Authority Questionnaire by J.R. Buri (1991) and Moral Judgment Test by George Lind (1999). Result showed that the correlation values of two parenting styles (permissive and authoritative) are positive though showing weak correlation while for authoritarian parenting style the correlation value is negative though showing a weak correlation.

Keywords: Parenting style, adolescent, moral judgment

Introduction

Family plays an important role in shaping a person's fate or destiny. Parental techniques for children and families training systems are amongst the most fundamental factors for a child's personality formation. These can serve as encouraging factors in their growth process.

Parenting styles are significant factors in human development studies and have been known as important causes of sociability in adolescents. In fact, parents play an essential role in the transition phase of teenage years. In addition; parenting styles are the fundamental prerequisites of health improvement during adolescence which is a period of transition. Parenting styles include methods that parents apply for treating their children, and have profound impact on adolescent's growth, their character, personality and behavioral traits. The parenting styles which parents select in turn is affected by a variety of factors, including both the parent's and children's temperament. Many of these factors arise from surrounding environmental conditions such as socio-economic circumstances and the dominant cultural values.

Fariba Shahhraki Sanavi *et al* (2013) ^[4] suggested a significant relationship between parenting style and some dimensions of quality of life, including physical well-being, psychological well-being, social support and peers, and autonomy. There was also a significant relationship between family communication patterns and parent relation and home life as well as autonomy. Taj and Prabhu (2013) ^[6] revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between moral judgment and family relationship of secondary school students and the study found that there is a significant difference in the moral judgment of boys and girls of secondary school students; it further revealed that aided-unaided secondary school students had higher moral judgment as compared to government-aided school students. Bhardwaj (2012) ^[1] concluded that the authoritative parenting style is most desired behavior practice to discipline adolescents and develop morality. The authoritarian and permissive styles are less than ideal in adolescents. High authoritative parenting style subscale scores have been found to have high level of self-control, since they are found to be high scores on brief self-control scale. High authoritative parenting style subscale scores and high permissive parenting style subscale scores have been found low scores on self-control measures.

Gupta (2010) ^[2] revealed a significant difference in moral judgment ability between two groups with older children scoring higher than younger children, suggested that maturity is necessary condition for development of moral moral judgment ability. Martinez and Garcia (2007) ^[3] explored that authoritative parenting is not associated with optimum self-esteem in Brazil. Christopher (2005) indicated that parental involvement and monitoring are robust

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predictors of adolescent's achievement. Richard (2001) [6] indicated that different parenting styles leads to different levels of moral development. The findings of the study was justice and care vary significantly across parenting styles; girls endorse conventional more than pre-conventional responses to moral dilemmas; boys who perceive their parents as low in warmth and control and the friends of these boys endorse pre-conventional more than conventional responses; girls who perceive their parents as low-with high-controlled befriend girls who are more just than the friends of other girls; girls who perceive their parents as low in warmth and control befriend girls who are more caring than the friends of other girls; parental control rating by children and their friends are positively related. These findings suggest that adolescent friend selection may rely upon the similarity of certain friend characteristics, while upon the complementarity of others.

Adolescents are the future adults. Each parenting style has its own impact on the moral judgment of children. Review of literature shows that individuals' behavioral disorders and deviations mainly originate from their families, and that the majority of adolescents with wrong doing interests come from families suffering from poor parenting styles. Parents with highly disciplined parenting styles and those with uncoordinated relationship with their children or low tendency to accept or involve them in psycho-social activities create an atmosphere vulnerable to perilous or high risk behaviors amongst adolescents. Furthermore, findings show that parenting styles closely correlate with teenager's educational success, optimism, reliance, motivation, behavioral disorders, and level of mal-adaptive behaviors such as addiction to drugs and so on. Parenting styles might help children develop their own moral judgment. The moral development of children has been an area of interest for parents and researchers. In particular, the work of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg has gained widespread attention. Their theories pertaining to children's morality represent what is known as the structural approach, as they say that all children go through an invariant sequence of stages of moral reasoning development. The children are active participants in constructing and understanding of world around them, even where morality is concerned. Thus, need was felt to study the impact of parenting styles on the moral judgment of adolescents and analyze the suitability of various parenting styles in various families and judge which parenting style develops wise moral judgment in children.

Objectives

1. To study the parenting styles adopted by parents of adolescents
2. To study the moral judgment among adolescents
3. To study the relationship between the parenting styles and the moral judgment among adolescents

Methodology

Two schools from Newai, Tonk (Rajasthan) was selected to carry out the present research. One hundred adolescents of senior secondary classes were selected randomly from the two schools. Parental Authority Questionnaire developed by J.R. Buri (1991) [2] and Moral Judgment Test developed by Georg Lind (1999) [3] tools were used for data collection.

Result and Discussion

Results and discussion has been presented under the following heads:

- A. Parenting styles adopted by parents of adolescents
- B. Moral judgment among adolescents
- C. Relationship between Parenting styles and Moral judgment among adolescents

A Parenting styles adopted by parents of adolescents

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents on the Parenting styles adopted by parents

S. No.	Parenting styles	Score range	Percentage
1	High permissiveness	21-34	44
	Low permissiveness	34-47	56
2	High Authoritarian	20-34.5	64
	Low Authoritarian	34.5-49	36
3	High Authoritative	24-37	35
	Low Authoritative	37-50	65

Table 1 clearly shows that although the parents adopt all three types of parenting styles to some extent but particular parenting styles have variant scores. Fifty six percent of respondents accounted low permissive parenting styles and forty four percent respondents accounted high permissive parenting styles were adopted by their parents. Sixty four percent respondents reported that high authoritarian parenting styles and thirty six percent of respondents reported that low authoritarian parenting styles were adopted by their parents. Sixty five percent respondents accounted that low authoritative parenting styles and thirty five percent of respondents accounted that high authoritative parenting styles were adopted by their parents.

The child gets the first idea of right and wrong from his/her parents. Parenting styles might be of three types namely permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. The permissive parents are more responsive than they are demanding. They are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behavior, allow considerable self-regulation and avoid confrontation. Authoritarian parents are highly demanding and directive but not responsive. They are obedience and status oriented and expects their orders to be obeyed without explanation. Authoritative parents are demanding and responsive. They monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible and self-regulated as well as cooperative.

Table 2: Dimension wise mean score and standard deviation of respondents on the parenting styles adopted by parents

S. No.	Parenting Styles	Mean \pm SD	Confidence limit
1.	Permissive	28.49 \pm 2.1	24.38 to 44.32
2	Authoritarian	26.36 \pm 3.2	20.09 to 46.03
3	Authoritative	30.36 \pm 1.8	26.84 to 50.94

From table 2 it can be concluded that for permissive parenting style, scores obtained by 95 percent of respondents lie between 24.38 and 44.38. For authoritarian parenting style, scores obtained by 95 percent of respondents lie between 20.09 and 46.03. For authoritative parenting style, scores obtained by 95 percent of respondents lie between 26.84 and 50.94.

B Moral judgment among adolescents

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents on the basis of moral judgment scores

S. No.	Score range	Interpretation (Moral judgment level)	Percentage
1	1-9	Low	17
2	10-29	Medium	48
3	30-49	High	32
4	Above 50	Very high	3

Table 3 indicates that moral judgment of majority of respondents (48 percent) was medium, followed by high level of moral judgment among 32 percent of respondents. Low level of moral judgment was seen in 17 percent of respondents whereas very high level of moral judgment was seen only among three percent of respondents.

Findings show that scores of moral judgment were well within normal cut off for majority of the adolescents. It could be concluded that conditioned behavior precedes explicit though and social learning that take place in adolescents thoughts and behavior become associated with emotions. This produces socially appropriate behaviors with cognitive influence.

C Relationship between parenting styles and moral judgment among Adolescents

Ho: There exists no significant relationship between parenting styles and moral judgment among adolescents

Table 4: Value of 'r' showing relationship between parenting styles and moral judgment among adolescents

Variables	'r' value	(significance of 'r') t- ratio
Permissive parenting style and moral judgment	0.030	0.296 NS
Authoritarian parenting style and moral judgment	-0.045	-0.445 NS
Authoritative parenting style and moral judgment	0.065	0.643 NS
Overall parenting style and moral judgment	-0.105	0.998 NS

Table 4 shows that 't' values of parenting styles and moral judgment is non-significant, since the calculated value is less than the tabulated value. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. The correlation values of two parenting styles (permissive and authoritative) are positive though showing weak correlation while for authoritarian parenting style the correlation value is negative though showing weak correlation. The positive correlation between permissive parenting style and moral judgment indicates that if the parents become more responsive and lenient, and allow considerable self-regulation and avoid confrontation from their children, the moral judgment in adolescents would increase. The negative correlation between authoritarian parenting style and moral judgment shows that if parents are demanding and directive, but not responsive, and expect their child to be obedient and status oriented, the moral judgment in adolescents would fall. The positive correlation between authoritative parenting style and moral judgment indicates that if parents become both demanding as well as responsive, and monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct and employ disciplinary method which are

supportive rather than punitive, then the moral judgment would also increase in the adolescents.

Suggestions and Implication

Hence, it is suggested that parents must employ a combination of parenting styles, since no particular parenting style has a strong correlation with the moral judgment of adolescents. Yet, authoritative parenting style shows the maximum correlation with the moral judgment of adolescents which includes a combination of both permissive as well as authoritarian parenting style.

The findings from this study aim to contribute to the understanding of moral development in adolescence in the current era, and would consequently raise awareness regarding the period of adolescence as a sensitive one with reference to moral development and the impact of parenting styles on the moral judgment of adolescents.

Conclusion

Majority parents in most cultures adhere to different parenting styles. Parents who emphasize unilateral parenting style, leads to lower levels of moral judgment in adolescents. Parents become both demanding as well as responsive, and monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct and employ disciplinary methods which are supportive rather than punitive, and then the moral judgment would also increase in the adolescents.

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