

Parenting Styles and Children's Behaviors Difficulties

Ali Fadhil Obaid¹, Ali Ibrahim Rashid², Nuhad Mohammed Kassim³

¹ Assistant. Lect., Pediatric Health Nursing, College of Nursing, University of Babylon, ² M.B.Ch.B _ F.I.C.M.S (Pediatrics), ³ Assistant. Prof., Pediatric Health Nursing, College of Nursing, University of Babylon

Abstract

The descriptive-correlation study design used to investigate the relation between parenting styles and children's behavior difficulties by using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire, and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to achieve study objectives. An online questionnaire applied as a method of data collecting on 101 parents (majority of them mothers) and their 4-11 years old children, 58 of them were males and 43 were females. The finding of the current study reveals that the authoritative parenting style was used more than other styles and correlated significantly with good child behaviors while the authoritarian and permissive style used less and correlated negatively with child's behaviors. In conclusion, when parents use an authoritative or democratic style enhances children's positive behaviors more than other styles.

Keywords: Parenting styles, behavior's problems, and behavior's difficulties

Introduction

Parenting style characterizes as emotional relationship and the quality of parent-child interaction, and this interaction has great importance in the learning, development process, and behaviors of a child⁽¹⁾.

Diana Baumrind at the end of the 20th century categorized parents based on two dimensions; responsiveness and demandingness, and describe three different kinds of parenting styles: (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive). **Authoritative** parents have a high level of responsiveness and demandingness to their children but being firm in setting rules and limits. They direct their children's behaviors and attitudes by emphasizing the reason for rules and by negative reinforcement⁽²⁾.

Authoritarian parents have low responsiveness and high demandingness for absolute obedience. They try to control their children's behaviors and attitudes through unquestioned mandates. They establish rules and regulations or standards of conduct that they expect to be followed rigidly and unquestioningly⁽³⁾.

The permissive parenting style is characterized by high responsiveness and low demandingness. They use

little or no control over their children's actions. They avoid imposing their standards of conduct and allow their children to regulate their activity as much as possible. These parents consider themselves to be resources for the children, not role models.

Many previous studies show that the children's behaviors earned in the early years shape their personality structure, attitudes, beliefs, and value judgments of individuals. Children acquired most of these behaviors from their parents, which consider the first teacher⁽⁴⁾.

The interaction between parents and children have a great effect on their social development and behaviors, and across the years and these interactions diminished because of many factors; one of them was the occupied parents with digital devices or technologies^(5,6).

Parents may use one or more than one style or may change the parenting style as the child grow up. In other words, if the parents fall in choosing the proper parenting style or use inappropriate behaviors when dealing with their children this can affect children's socialization. Therefore, knowing a child's behaviors, characteristics, and temperament by their parents help them to use or adjust the appropriate parenting style⁽⁷⁾.

The present study aimed to investigate child behavior difficulties and to find out the association between parenting style and children’s behavior difficulties.

Method

Design & Setting of the study: a descriptive correlational study design was used in this study throughout the period 1st of February 2020 to the 3rd of May 2020.

At the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19 in Iraq, the government take many restrictive measures to decrease the spread of contagion one of them was a curfew; during the period of quarantine, the family members stay at home and avoid crowding to protect themselves from getting a disease (infection). Therefore the researchers used an online questionnaire as a method for data collection in this circumstance; the online questionnaire was answered in March of 2020 by 101 parents of children age (4-11 years old) live in the Babylon governorate. The questionnaire composed of three parts;

1. Demographical characteristics of parents and their children 4-11 years olds (child age, child gender, parent (father or mother), parents’ educational attainment, parents’ occupation, family income, and numbers of family members.

2. The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ)⁽⁸⁾. was used to identify the preferable parenting style by Babylonian’s parents and its extracted from⁽⁹⁾. PSDQ consisting of 30 items (13 for authoritative style, 13 for authoritarian style, and 4 items for permissive style), each item rated on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 3 (*always*). All three categories of parenting style demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha was reported 0.77 for authoritative, 0.78 for authoritarian, and 0.72 for permissive).

3. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)⁽¹⁰⁾. SDQ is a 25-items parent or teacher-form measure of children’s behaviors from 4-17 years old. This form is a 3-level Likert scale, scored as (0 = doesn’t apply, 1 = apply sometimes and 2 = certainly apply). Some items were reversed for the statistical purpose. The rate of the scale was based on the mean of items’ scores to (0 - 0.66) very poor behaviors, (0.67 - 1.33) poor behaviors, and (1.34 - 2) good behaviors. Good reliability and validity of the SDQ have been reported in a previous study⁽¹¹⁾.

Statistical Analysis: Data was analyzed by using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) version 20 to find out the associations between parenting styles and child behavior difficulties by use personal correlational coefficient and use the descriptive statistic for demographical variables and to identify the preferable parenting style.

Results

Table (1) Characteristics of Children and Their Respondent’s Parents (N = 101)

Children’ Characteristics		F	%
Age Group	Preschool	57	56.5
	School Age	44	43.5
Gender	Male	58	57.4
	Female	43	42.6

Cont... Table (1) Characteristics of Children and Their Respondent's Parents (N = 101)

Child order	1st	36	35.6
	2nd	14	13.9
	3rd	19	18.8
	4th	11	10.9
	5th	9	8.9
	> 5th	12	11.9
Characteristics of the respondent		F	%
Parents	Father	15	14.9
	Mother	86	85.1
Educational attainment	Read and write	4	3.9
	Primary	31	30.7
	secondary	31	30.7
	Diploma and above	35	34.7
Occupation	Working	34	33.7
	Not working	67	66.3
Family income	Un-Sufficient	3	3
	Sufficient to some extent	81	80.2
	Sufficient and more	17	16.8

Table (1) show that the total children were 101 divided into 56.5% preschoolers and 43.5% school-age children; regarding their gender more than half was male and the 1st order was the higher percent 35.6% in the family. The majority of the participant from parents

were mothers, in addition to their educational attainment was diploma and above, two-thirds of them were not working and most of them say that their income was sufficient to some extent.

Table (2) preferable parenting style

Parenting style	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Authoritative	1.46	3	2.48	0.266
Authoritarian	1.31	2.77	1.97	0.310
Permissive	1.25	2.75	1.85	0.357

Descriptive statistics used in this table to identify the preferable parenting style of Babylon’s parents. Authoritative parent style was more preferred by parents according to the finding.

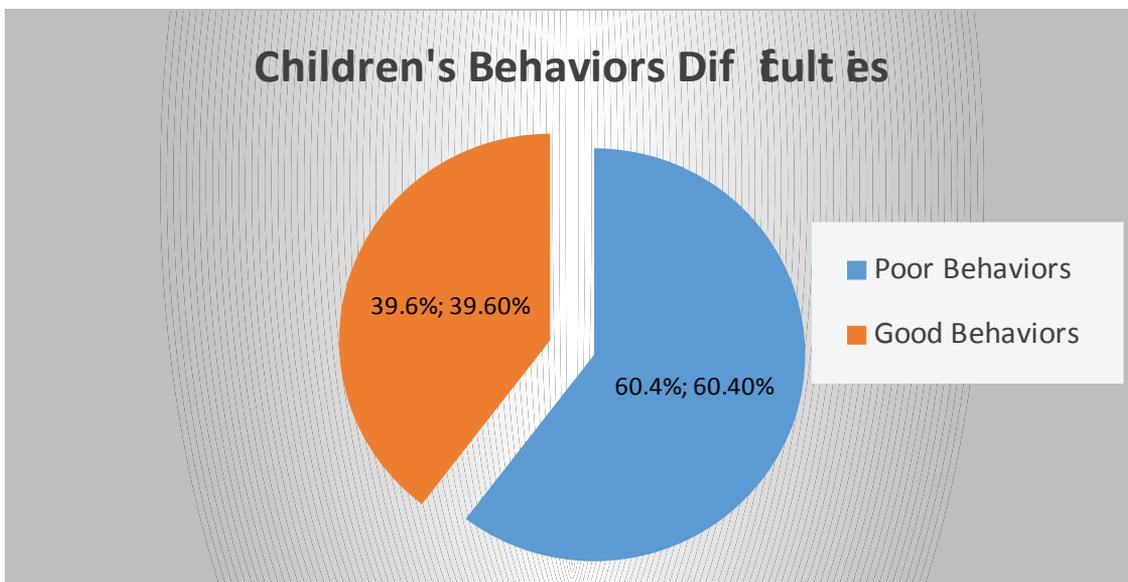


Figure 1 Children behaviors difficulties

Table (3) correlation between parenting style and child behaviors

		Authoritative	Authoritarian	Permissive
Children’s Behaviors	Pearson Correlation	.369**	-.336-**	-.165-*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.0001	.0002	.0497
	N	101	101	101

*. Significant at (P<0.05), **. Significant at (P<0.01)

Bivariate (Pearson) correlates analysis was used to identify the association between a child’s behavior difficulties and type of parenting style. The finding showing a positive- significant correlation between children’s behaviors and the authoritative parenting style, which means when the parents use this style their

child behaves in a good way. On the contrary, the other parenting style (authoritarian and permissive) showing a significant negative correlation with children’s behaviors. This means when these styles are always used by a parent the child exhibits poor or difficult behaviors.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to find-out the association between experienced parenting styles and behavior difficulties in preschool and school-age children in the Babylon governorate. The current findings revealed that the Authoritative parenting style was preferred or used more than others. The authoritative or democratic parenting style was most commonly used by Babylonian's parents and that may due to their benefit in improving the parent-child relationship and enhancing good communication and interaction between them, besides aiding in the proliferation of child's creativity⁽¹⁾. as well as raising social responsibility and a sense of self-esteem of the child as the previous study has shown⁽¹²⁾. Moreover, The result of the current study goes in line with the Jordanian study conducted by and Lo et al.,⁽³⁾ study.

The results in Table (3) showed a positive-significant correlation between children's behaviors and authoritative parenting style while, the others parenting style (authoritarian and permissive) showing a significant negative correlation with children's behaviors. This was parallel with⁽¹⁴⁾ study and similar to the⁽¹⁵⁾ study, which mentions that the family whose use authoritative style; their children demonstrate a lower level of problematic behavior, greater academic competence, and a higher level of psychosocial development than children who come from authoritarian, permissive and neglecting families. **Furthermore**, a parent that practicing authoritarian style was significantly associated with child abuse, and that lead to increase stress and affect negatively on family climate^(16,17). In contrast with the parent who used authoritative style was associated with a lower risk of all types of child maltreatment (physical abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect)⁽³⁾. In conclusion, the Babylonian parents practicing authoritative style more than other styles, and when they use the authoritative or democratic style enhance their children's positive behaviors more than other styles.

Summary:

This study showed that the authoritative parenting style was used more than authoritarian and permissive styles by Babylonian parents and there is a significant correlation between authoritative parenting style and good child behaviors, while there is a significant

correlation between authoritarian and permissive styles and negative child's behaviors. This means when the parent uses authoritarian and permissive style the children exhibit behavior difficulties more than those children of a parent that use authoritative style.

Ethical Clearance:: The Research Ethical Committee at scientific research by ethical approval of both environmental and health and higher education and scientific research ministries in Iraq

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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