



**Relationship between Parenting Styles and Coping Behaviour among Adolescents of
Chandigarh**

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ABSTRACT

One of the most significant relationships in our lifetime is the one we form with our parents. From a child's perspective, it is like a safe space they can return to whenever needed. A child having a healthy bond with their parents feels motivated to explore the world and demonstrates strong emotional character against challenges. When facing the numerous disappointments of life, how one learns to cope lays the foundation for how far they can go. Coping refers to the behaviours through which we ease self from a stress. The study investigated the relationship between parenting styles coping behaviour among the adolescents of Chandigarh. A sample of 100 school students was administered on the Perceived Parental Style scale (PPSS) and the Brief-COPE Inventory. Major findings showed parenting styles to be a significant predictor of coping behaviours at various levels. Problem-focused coping was found higher in adolescents with authoritative parenting, whereas perceived permissive parenting was positively associated with avoidant coping. Moreover, the use of both problem-focused coping and avoidant coping was evident in students coming from an authoritarian parenting background. Emotion-focused coping had no significant

associations with parenting styles. Also, the study observed no gender differences in parenting styles and coping behaviours. Parental support with necessary control overall contributes to adaptive stress management in adolescents. It instils a stable and progressive individuality within them. Over-pampering and lack of discipline makes them a victim to their life's adversities. Adolescents having a strict punitive upbringing also prefer problem resolution, but lacking the parental empathy can sometimes turn them completely avoidant as well. Considering the adolescent needs and challenges makes it a necessity for people around to actively guiding their adolescent children towards a balance between raging emotions and their complex realities. This points out to the need of filling the increasing gap between traditional opinions of society about what adolescents should do and the new-age adolescents' aspirations for autonomy.

Keywords: *Parenting Styles, Coping, Adolescents, Chandigarh*

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary understanding defines adolescence as 'an age of storm and stress.' Adolescence is a period following the onset of puberty during which a child develops into an adult. A major part of this complex process is an increased sense of attaining freedom.

According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, the population of India between ages 13 to 19 falls under the category of 'adolescents' which is about 243 million, i.e., 21% of the country's total population. It is seen that adolescence is a phase that witnesses depression most frequently (Hammen, 2009). Due to the magnitude of challenges and stress as a result of adolescent maturation, it alarming to note that 20% of the world's adolescents are already undergoing mental health problems and behavioural problems, according to a 2011 report by UNICEF.

Academic Stress & Social Challenges

Academics and social aspect are a primary influence in an adolescent's life. As he enters adolescence he becomes a part of the community he is living in. His social life demands actively coping and adjusting to the issues like, social rejection, bullying, social media influence, poor economic background, lack of sex education, and disturbed family conditions. On the other hand, coping with the academic stress coming from family conditions, career concerns, competition, school discipline, peer pressure, financial problems, etc. Some communities give academic excellence primary importance, which is a concern from the perspective of their psychological well-being (Kahn et al., 2018).

Adolescent stress invariably is capable of resulting in mental health problems like anxiety, depression, academic failure, addictions, substance abuse, antisocial behaviours, and suicidal ideation (Grant et al., 2004).

PARENTING STYLES

Ainsworth and Bowlby (1991) in their Attachment Theory, proposed how a strong bond of trust creates a strong base for the child to which he can return, anytime he feels unsafe. Parenting style is “a constellation of parents’ attitudes and behaviours toward children. It is an emotional climate in which the parents’ behaviours are expressed” (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). A child who cannot experience this bond of trust leaves him with his fears about the undiscovered world and to manage his life experiences on his own. As witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous studies indicated the strong influence of family and parent-child relationships playing a particularly important role in adolescents' adjustment (Morris et al., 2021).

Diana Baumrind (1960), a clinical and developmental psychologist famous for her extensive research on parenting styles, identified three main types of parental attitudes

categorised on the basis of two elements of *Responsiveness* (responding with warmth & sensitivity) vs. *Demandingness* (expectations of order & obedience).

Authoritarian Parenting: This style is described as dictatorial and overbearing. Rules proposed by these parents are strict and expected to be obeyed without question, with no room for interpretation, compromise, or discussion. As a consequence, these children develop a “follower” mentality, have trouble discerning right from wrong for themselves, have low self-esteem, and seek confirmation of their worth throughout life.

Permissive parenting: Permissive parenting is the extreme opposite of the authoritarian style. These parents do not implement rules or structures that might disappoint or upset their children giving in to their wants mostly immediately. Such children end up being entitled or incredibly anxious because there's no one running the ship.

Authoritative parenting: Authoritative style is a balance between structure and independence, allowing a child to grow within reasonable boundaries and explore their abilities. These parents are not afraid of maintaining a strict standard to be obeyed while also providing their children with an emotionally caring environment that fosters trust. This style is often described as “tough but fair.”

Parent – Adolescent Relationship Dynamics in India

Parenting style is a psychological construct that defines the common parental attitudes, behaviours, and techniques that parents use for child-rearing. In India, we observe a huge diversity in family structures - nuclear families, extended families, joint families, single-parent families, reconstituted families, many more. Indian parents are very closely associated with their children. Such variations in parenting styles and parent–child relationship dynamics are evergreen research themes in developmental and social psychology.

Lal (2016) identified major stressors among school children to be pressure of materialistic achievements by their parents and families, and competing to perform up to the

expectations of their teachers and family. Less emphasis is made on their aptitude & interests while making career choices. Many students, especially under achievers reported greater feelings of worthlessness, anxiety, guilt, and frustration due to lack of support.

A similar study by Francis et al. (2020) found that psychological well-being was positively associated with authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, and negatively associated with neglectful parenting style. Moreover, adolescents with perceived authoritarian parenting had a decreased autonomy and those with perceived permissive parenting had a diminished personal growth.

Investigation by Mohammadi and Firoozi (2016) also showed authoritative parenting to be associated with not just better problem-solving and expression of thoughts, but also psychological well-being, high levels of self-esteem, and intrinsic motivation to learn among the children. Happiness was higher in children with an authoritative & permissive parenting, but had a significant negative relationship with authoritarian parenting. These children preferred isolation to avoid constant conflict and tension at home.

A cross-cultural review carried out by Sahithya et al. (2019) found that Indians appear to be coming to terms with the globalisation and changing trends in child rearing and parenting. Authoritative parenting style related to better outcomes in both Western countries and India. Although traditional India was predominantly authoritarian in parenting, a gradual shift towards an authoritative parenting style has been observed in recent times.

COPING DURING ADOLESCENCE

A universal human reaction to stress is ‘to cope with it.’ Coping mechanisms enable a person to face a stressful situation and take action toward minimizing it. The American Psychological Association (APA) defined coping as “the use of cognitive and behavioural strategies to manage the demands of a situation when these are appraised as taxing or exceeding one’s resources or to reduce the negative emotions and conflict caused by stress.”

As per the studies at least one in five school-going adolescents in urban areas of the country endures high stress levels in his daily life. This makes it an important variable in the study of adolescent mental health and development.

Lazarus and Folkman's "stress-coping" theory (1984) - Lazarus and Folkman proposed two basic coping types with the help of which one manages the problem situation and alters the emotional responses to it, namely: *Problem-focused* coping, ie, gathering information about the problem, planning, and taking active action to manage it; and *Emotion-focused coping*, ie, releasing pent-up emotions, managing negative emotions, and seeking social support from others. Lazarus and Folkman had an important part in conceptualization of coping behaviour and defining its structure.

Carver and Smith's three coping dimensions (1989) - Based on their studies Carver and Connor-Smith proposed 13 dimensions of coping that people use to cope with stress, depending on personal preferences and/or environmental demands.

1. Five behaviours categorized as sub-dimensions of *problem-focused coping*: active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping, and seeking social support for instrumental reasons.
2. five as sub-dimensions of *emotion-focused coping*: seeking social support for emotional reasons, positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance, venting of emotions, and turning to religion.
3. the remaining three were classified as "*dysfunctional*" strategies: denial, behavioural disengagement, and mental disengagement.

In general, awareness with regard to effective and ineffective coping styles is needed; one style can be effective in certain situations and ineffective in others, while the same style can be positive for one person and negative for another. Nevertheless, research does indicate some coping styles are generally more effective in reducing stress than others.

Kumar and Gupta (2019) in their study concluded that received social support motivates adolescents to face their challenges displaying a problem-solving coping behaviour, whereas a lack of received social support seems to cause a struggle with emotional relief and pushes them more towards emotion-focused coping behaviour. Moreover, girls perceived to receive more social support as compared to boys.

The descriptive cross-sectional study (Mathew et al., 2015) also revealed uncontrollable events like relocation, family problems, sexual events, and accident events caused a higher stress as compared to distressful events like arguments with friends, exams, or low grades. Most used coping strategies were positive reframing, planning, active coping, and instrumental support. Moreover, stress has a significant impact on adolescent mental health in the form of either internalizing problems such as anxiety, withdrawal, and somatic problems or externalizing problems such as rule-breaking and aggressive behaviours.

Purpose

The purpose is to study the relationship between parenting styles and coping behaviour in adolescent students of Chandigarh.

Hypotheses

- There is a significant relationship between parenting styles and coping among adolescent students.
- There is a significant difference between the male and female adolescents with regard to parenting styles and coping.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

For the present study a sample of 100 students (50 males, 50 females) was randomly selected from 9th and 10th standard of a private school located in Chandigarh.

Measures

Perceived Parenting Style Scale, by Manikandan and Divya (2013): scale consists of 30 items measuring adolescents perception about their parents' attitudes based on three types of styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (each carrying 10 items). Participants rate themselves on a five-point Likert scale - Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1. Highest score indicates how one perceives their parenting. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the three dimensions is: Authoritative Parenting: 0.79, Authoritarian Parenting: 0.81 and Permissive Parenting: 0.86 (Manikandan & Divya, 2013).

The Brief-COPE Inventory, by Carver (1997): The inventory has 28-items to measure one's coping with a stressful life event, on 14 different behavioural styles categorized into three main types: problem-focused, emotion-focused, & avoidant coping. Responses are marked on a four-point Likert scale as: 1 (I haven't been doing this at all), 2 (A little bit), 3 (A medium amount), and 4 (I've been doing this a lot). An average score (sum of item scores divided by number of items). Highest score shows maximum involvement with the particular coping style. The Cronbach's alpha for the inventory lies between 0.60 and 0.89, indicating a good consistency among the items (Carver, 1997).

Procedure

The data for the study was collected through Google forms. An online-version of the measures was prepared, along with eligibility criteria and consent for participation, and then circulated among the 9th and 10th graders of a Private school in Chandigarh. The participants were thanked for their responses. Responses were collected on an excel sheet, scored as per the manual and analysis was carried out.

RESULTS

The obtained results have been tabulated as follow:

Table 5.1: *Descriptive Statistics for resilience, parenting styles and coping*

	Gender	N	Mean	
Authoritative Parenting Style	Female	100	32.05	7.69
	Male	100	29.52	6.39
Authoritarian Parenting Style	Female	100	30.38	7.46
	Male	100	27.60	6.67
Permissive Parenting Style	Female	100	27.80	7.47
	Male	100	26.40	7.58
Problem Focused Coping	Female	100	2.61	0.40
	Male	100	2.52	0.36
Emotion Focused Coping	Female	100	2.39	0.38
	Male	100	2.51	0.42
Avoidant Coping	Female	100	2.28	0.37
	Male	100	2.32	0.48

Table 5.2: *Percentage of students in various variables*

Variable	Dimensions	% of Students
Parenting Style	Authoritative	32%
	Authoritarian	35%
	Permissive	33%
Coping	Problem-focused	50%
	Emotion-focused	28%
	Avoidant	22%

Table 5.3: *Correlations between parenting styles, coping, & resilience*

	Authoritative Parenting	Authoritarian Parenting	Permissive Parenting	Problem focused coping	Emotion focused coping	Avoidant coping
Authoritative Parenting	---					
Authoritarian Parenting	0.353***	---				
Permissive Parenting	0.169	0.606***	---			
Problem focused coping	0.396***	0.327**	0.075	---		

Emotion focused coping	0.139	0.035	0.098	0.224*	---	
Avoidant coping	-0.019	0.323**	0.540***	0.057	0.333**	---

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 5.4: Shows *t*-test for parenting styles, coping, & resilience across gender

	t-value	df	p-value
Authoritative Style	1.603	78.0	0.113
Authoritarian Style	1.749	78.0	0.084
Permissive Style	0.830	78.0	0.409
Problem-focused Coping	1.014	78.0	0.314
Emotion-focused Coping	-1.327	78.0	0.188
Avoidant Coping	-0.398	78.0	0.691

Discussion of Results

The proposed study was carried out to investigate the relationship between parenting styles, coping and resiliency, and to assess the gender differences in a sample of 100 adolescent students. Table 5.1 shows the means and standard deviation for parenting styles, coping styles, and resilience for the research sample.

Table 5.2 shows the percentage of adolescent students in parenting styles and coping in the sample. Maximum percentage of students, i.e., 35% reported to have an authoritarian parenting. Remaining 33% had a permissive parenting and 32% an authoritative parenting. Furthermore, problem-focused coping (50%) and emotion-focused coping (28%) were the

most adopted coping strategies among the students. Only 22% chose avoidant coping during the face of stress.

Table 5.3 shows the correlation matrix between respective variables. For the current sample values showed a significant positive correlation between avoidant coping and permissive parenting ($r = 0.540$, $p < 0.001$). This shows that adolescents, who are raised in extreme pampering and lenience during tough situations, rather disengage from stressor and turn away elsewhere to avoid feelings of stress (Jain & Lokesh, 2023; Thakre & Shet, 2022). Problem-focused coping on the other hand had a significant positive relation with authoritative parenting ($r = 0.396$, $p < 0.001$). Parental involvement and acceptance makes adolescents adaptive to face their challenges head-on and focus on working out the problems as they come along (Joshi & Surira, 2022; Thakre & Shet, 2020; Gonzales & Wolchik, 2019; Morris & Harrist, 2018; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2015; Taylor & Conger, 2013; Seeley, 2009). A significant positive relationship of authoritarian parenting was also found with problem-focused coping ($r = 0.327$, $p < 0.01$) and avoidant coping ($r = 0.323$, $p < 0.01$). This shows that adolescents coming from dictatorial homes also address the stressor and actively work to resolve the situation. The harsh parental climate in some way makes the child tough-minded urging them to view life more practically (Mandara & Murray, 2019; Calzada & Eyberg, 2018; Chen & Wang, 2015). However, some of them may find it hard to cope without parental guidance and support, and rather resort to simply ignore or distract the self from stress (Majeed & Joshi, 2024; Khosravi et al., 2023; Rupesh et al., 2020). The study also found a significant positive relationship of emotion-focused coping with avoidant coping ($r = 0.333$, $p < 0.01$) and problem-focused coping ($r = 0.224$, $p < 0.05$) suggesting that adolescents involves in both the styles may sometimes turn to means of emotional elevation to regulate stress (Gross & Jazaieri, 2018; Taylor & Conger, 2013; Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2015).

Table 5.3 shows a significant relationship between various dimensions of parenting styles and coping. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is partially accepted in this study.

Table 5.4 provides t-test to explore the gender differences in the three dimensions of parenting style and three dimensions of coping. The p-value for the obtained t-value was found to be higher than 0.05 in all the variables, which indicates that values are not significant. This suggests that in our study sample, the overall perception in parenting styles does not significantly differ among males and females (Ali et al., 2024; Lee & Lee, 2020; Simons & Conger, 2018). The same was observed in terms of coping attitudes which also were not motivated by gender (Joshi & Surira, 2022; Graves, et al., 2021; Seeley, 2009). Table 5.4 shows no significant gender differences in parenting styles and coping. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

CONCLUSION

The present investigation aimed to study the relationship between parenting styles, coping, and resiliency; and assess the gender differences among the randomly selected sample of 100 school students of Chandigarh. The results show presence of all three styles of parenting alike, among the adolescents of Chandigarh, with authoritarian parenting slightly more prevalent. Current trends in coping are more adaptive in nature. Majority of the adolescents in the sample are active problem-solvers or involved in emotional ways of relieving distress. Research findings also support parenting styles as a significant predictor of coping at various levels.

Parents are determined to provide every comfort to their child that is feasible for them. However, absolute comfort and lack of corrective punishment makes children incapable of judging between the right and wrong, further degrading child's ability to effectively deal with challenges. It makes them a victim of their life situations. On the other

hand, adolescents coming from a parenting that imposes strict behavioural standards on to their children never find the acceptance that they seek. They are work hard to prove themselves capable to their family and may appear tough-minded, which might also exhaust them to turn avoidant at times. A parenting environment combining care and nurturance with behavioural discipline is an ideal ground to raise an emotionally strong child. It instils qualities of psychological strength, grit, and a practical approach to problem-solving which is predictive of positive outcomes. Furthermore, no particular parenting or style of coping is specific to gender.

Active efforts are needed by the institution, government, NGOs, for planning and management of resources & manpower to improve community knowledge about risks and hazards associating adolescence, empower gender equality, and deliver efficient guidance through a structured process.

Research gaps & suggestions for further study

The study only included students who live with their immediate family or single parent. Students raised by caregivers/guardian were not included in the study. Also, the study was limited to Private school in Chandigarh, which limits our data on adolescents from government schools, or other sections of society. To fill these gaps, a similar study can be conducted on students coming from various cultures, type of family, or socio-economic status, to assess the influence of more such factors on adolescent development. Coping behaviours should be studied in relation to personality, self-esteem, or locus of control. Future research may incorporate qualitative analysis of the sample to gain a deeper understanding on various factors revolving around the variables.

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