

Parenting Styles and Socio-Emotional Behaviour of Children Aged 6-12 Years in Andhra Pradesh: A Correlational Study

Pendam Vasu

MSc Psychology, Centre for Distance and Online Education, Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru, India

Email: pvasu9966[at]gmail.com

Abstract: *The relationship between parenting behaviour and children's socio-emotional functioning is well documented in Western samples, yet evidence from primary-school-age children in Andhra Pradesh, India, is limited. This cross-sectional correlational study examined whether parent-reported authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting were related to children's total difficulties and prosocial behaviour. Fifty parents of children aged 6–12 years completed an online 25-item researcher-developed questionnaire. Most parents (86%) reported predominantly authoritative behaviour. Authoritative parenting was unrelated to prosocial behaviour ($r = .06$) and difficulties ($r = -.03$), and authoritarian parenting was unrelated to difficulties ($r = .13$), so the main hypotheses were not supported. Authoritarian parenting was negatively correlated with prosocial behaviour ($r = -.37$, $p = .009$), and children from joint families scored higher on prosocial behaviour than children from nuclear families ($d = 0.70$). Scale reliability was low ($\alpha = -.21$ to $.28$), so the findings are tentative. Validated tools and larger samples are needed.*

Keywords: parenting styles, prosocial behaviour, child behaviour, Andhra Pradesh

1. Introduction

Children learn much about emotion and cooperation at home. Parents' explanations, discipline, and responses to distress shape how children regulate feelings and treat others [1]. Baumrind described authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive patterns of parental authority [2, 3], and meta-analytic evidence links harsh, controlling styles with more behaviour problems [4]. These patterns cannot be assumed to hold unchanged in India, where child-rearing stresses obedience and family interdependence, and strictness may carry different meanings [5, 6]. In Andhra Pradesh, urban families are moving from joint to nuclear households while competition for professional courses begins early. Local evidence on primary-school-age children is limited, which motivated this study.

2. Literature Review

Authoritative parenting has been associated with better outcomes in every cultural group studied, whereas associations for authoritarian parenting depend on cultural context [7]. A review focused on India reached a similar view [6]. Physical punishment is consistently related to more aggression and poorer mental health [8], and among Indian adolescents' parental pressure for academic results has been linked to anxiety [9]. Most such work concerns adolescents, and few studies measure both difficulties and prosocial behaviour in parents of primary-school children in Andhra Pradesh.

3. Objectives and Hypotheses

The objectives were to identify the dominant parenting style reported by parents, to describe children's difficulties and prosocial behaviour, and to examine their relationships. **H1:** authoritative parenting is positively related to prosocial behaviour and negatively related to total difficulties. **H2:**

authoritarian parenting is positively related to total difficulties. **H3 (exploratory):** scores differ by child gender, age, family structure, income, parental education, and school type.

4. Methodology

4.1 Design and participants

A cross-sectional correlational design was used. Fifty parents of children aged 6–12 years living in Andhra Pradesh took part. Participants were recruited through an online link circulated among parents (non-probability sample). Children's ages were 6–7 years (30%), 8–9 years (12%), 10–11 years (20%), and 12 years (38%); 58% were boys. Of the families, 54% were joint, 38% nuclear, and 8% single-parent or other.

4.2 Instrument

A 25-item questionnaire developed by the researcher was administered through Google Forms. Six items collected demographic details. Nine items (three per style) asked how often the parent behaved in authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive ways (Never to Always, scored 1–4), based on Baumrind's typology [3]. Ten items modelled on the domains of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire [10] described the child (Not True to Certainly True, scored 1–4), forming seven-item total difficulties score and a three-item prosocial score. The questionnaire is not a standardised version of any published scale.

4.3 Procedure and analysis

The form opened with an information and consent page, participation was voluntary, and no names or contact details were collected. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to completing the survey. Participant

anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. Reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, normality with the Shapiro–Wilk test, and relationships with Pearson and Spearman correlations and multiple regression. Group differences were tested with Welch's t-test and the Kruskal–Wallis test (significance level .05, two-tailed).

4. Results

Table 1 shows that the authoritative scale had the highest mean (8.46 of 12) and that all scales had poor reliability. Four of the five scores departed from normality, so Spearman correlations were examined alongside Pearson correlations. The dominant style was authoritative for 43 parents (86%), permissive for five (10%), authoritarian for one, and tied for one.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics, normality, and reliability (N = 50)

Scale	Items	M	SD	Shapiro–Wilk W (p)	α
Authoritative	3	8.46	1.47	.896 (<.001)	0.11
Authoritarian	3	5.56	0.93	.897 (<.001)	-.21
Permissive	3	5.44	1.54	.944 (.019)	0.24
Total difficulties	7	12.56	2.47	.970 (.233)	0.2
Prosocial	3	8.68	1.43	.885 (<.001)	0.28

Possible ranges: 3–12 (parenting scales, prosocial); 7–28 (difficulties).

As Table 2 shows, authoritative parenting was unrelated to prosocial behaviour or total difficulties, and authoritarian parenting was unrelated to difficulties, so H1 and H2 were not supported. One significant result emerged: authoritarian parenting was negatively related to prosocial behaviour ($r = -.37$, 95% CI $[-.59, -.10]$, $p = .009$; Spearman $\rho = -.33$, $p = .020$; Figure 1). This lies just above the Bonferroni-adjusted level of .008 for six tests and was not hypothesised. In a regression of prosocial behaviour on the three styles, the model explained 13.8% of variance but was not significant overall, $F(3, 46) = 2.44$, $p = .076$.

Table 2: Correlations between parenting scores and child outcomes (N = 50)

Variable pair	r	95% CI	p	ρ
Authoritative $\times$ Difficulties	-.03	$[-.31, .25]$	0.82	-.08
Authoritative $\times$ Prosocial	0.06	$[-.22, .33]$	0.672	0.13
Authoritarian $\times$ Difficulties	0.13	$[-.16, .39]$	0.378	0.13
Authoritarian $\times$ Prosocial	-.37	$[-.59, -.10]$	0.009	-.33
Permissive $\times$ Difficulties	-.01	$[-.29, .27]$	0.932	-.04
Permissive $\times$ Prosocial	0.02	$[-.26, .30]$	0.897	-.03

Pearson r with 95% CI; ρ = Spearman; df = 48.

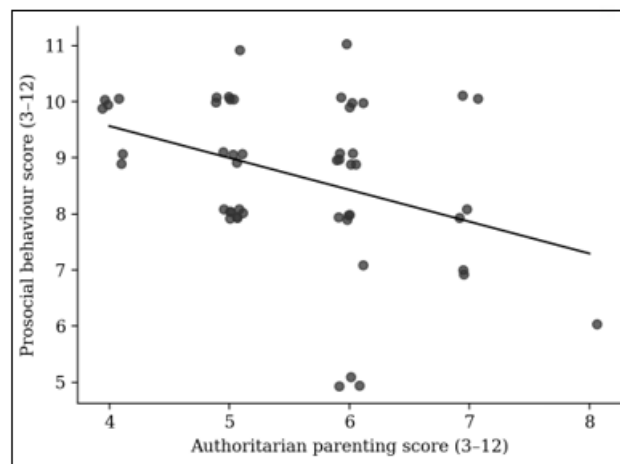


Figure 1: Authoritarian parenting and prosocial behaviour scores

For H3, no differences were found by child gender, age group, income, parental education, or school type (all $p > .05$). Children in joint families ($M = 9.04$, $SD = 1.43$, $n = 27$) scored higher on prosocial behaviour than children in nuclear families ($M = 8.05$, $SD = 1.35$, $n = 19$), $t(40.2) = 2.38$, $p = .022$, $d = 0.70$; the Mann–Whitney test agreed ($p = .010$). This was one of 25 comparisons and is exploratory.

5. Discussion

The main hypotheses were not supported. This differs from meta-analytic findings [4] but is unsurprising given the small sample and weakly reliable three-item scales, since measurement error pulls correlations towards zero; the null results are therefore not evidence that parenting is unrelated to child outcomes. The negative link between authoritarian parenting and prosocial behaviour matches theory, as punitive responses to emotion are related to weaker regulation [11, 8]. It is cross-sectional and parent-reported, however, so parents of less cooperative children may simply respond more sternly. Higher prosocial scores in joint families are consistent with the idea that extended households give children daily practice in sharing, and the large share of parents describing themselves as authoritative may partly reflect socially desirable responding.

6. Limitations and Conclusion

The sample was small, non-random, and mostly middle-income and privately educated. The questionnaire was researcher-developed and unvalidated, with alpha values below .30. One parent reported both parenting and child behaviour, the design cannot show causal direction, and many tests were run on a small sample. In this sample, authoritative parenting was common but unrelated to children's outcomes, whereas authoritarian parenting showed a tentative association with lower prosocial behaviour. Schools and counsellors could encourage parents to explain rules and use discussion instead of punishment. Future work should use validated Telugu versions of established scales, larger random samples, and more than one informant.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent: Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Conflict

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