

Authoritative Parenting Index and Well Being: A Study of High School Adolescents

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Abstract: The present research studies the beliefs about aggression and non violence in high school adolescents and their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour and overall well being. It is vital in today's parlance, as it is believed that violence, aggression and the severe erosion of pacifism leads to conflict, hostility, disharmony and individual ineffectiveness, which further leaves a negative impact on the society. The study was conducted on 225 high school adolescents selected through purposive sampling technique. The psychological tools used were Beliefs about Aggression and Alternatives, Authoritative Parenting Index and Adolescent Well Being Scale. The results indicated that authoritative parenting is positively correlated to beliefs about aggression in adolescents and negatively to beliefs about non violence. Furthermore, high scores on beliefs about non violence is associated with greater wellbeing and high scores on beliefs about aggression is associated with possibilities of depression. Regression analysis showed that the data fit of the variance is high. It can be concluded that non violence upgrades, enhances and deepens the human spirit for positive societal development and harmony. It also clearly attests to the importance and significance of parents in children's lives and their holistic developmental process.

Keywords: Authoritative Parenting, Well Being, Adolescents, Aggression, Non Violence

1. Introduction

An immensely large body of literature within psychology and social science disciplines clearly attests to the importance and significance of parents in children's lives and their development [1].

As a social framework, family incorporates a group of individuals who live together by marriage, procreation and raising children. This social system and its association has played an indispensable role in creation and socialization of humanity in history. Family, undoubtedly, is the most essential organization which paves the way for human beings to develop physically, mentally and socially [2].

The results of the studies directed on behavioural disorders involved that they are primarily the outcome of parent's communicational approach rather than genetic or biological factors. Analysts have inferred that there is relationship between parent's misconduct and children's behavioural disorder. This correlation is significant and reveals that

family's, particularly the parental behaviour plays a vital role in the emergence of behavioural disorders in childhood and adulthood [3]. One of the most robust approaches in the growth of children's personal, social and developmental achievements is parenting style. It is the combination of parental control with parental responsiveness.

The authoritative parenting style is represented by high levels of control and maturity demands, which is dependable on the context of nurturance and open communication. Discipline usually involves the use of reason and power, but not to the extent that the child's autonomy is severely restricted. The authoritarian parent endeavours to shape, control, and assess the behaviour and attitudes of the child in accordance to their set standard of conduct, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority [4].

The parents value obedience as a virtue and favours corrective, compelling measures to curb self-will at points where the child's actions or beliefs conflict with what they think is right conduct. They believe in keeping the child in his

place, in limiting his autonomy, and in assigning household obligations in order to inculcate respect for work. They regard the preservation of order and traditional structure as an exceptionally esteemed end in itself. They do not encourage verbal give or take, as they believe that the child ought to acknowledge his pledge for what is correct [4-6].

Aggression and non violence in adolescents are the results of troubled families and outcomes of parent's unhealthy and undesirable behaviour towards their children [7]. Generally, there are stress stimuli like father's addiction, physical or verbal abuse, unhealthy relationships, wrongful conduct towards children and so on [8].

The studies conducted at National Institute of Mental Health in the United States indicated that children who suffered neglect, endured disregard or were physically abused by their parents, displayed high probability of aggressive and violent behaviour [9]. The results specify statistically that the relationship between parenting style and adolescent's behavioural problems is significant [6, 10].

2. Review of Literature

Early research on parenting impacts and effects underscored the role of parents as models for their children. They played as disciplinarians, instructors and teachers in shaping their children's development. Researchers made clear attempts to comprehend parenting behaviours and their links to various aspects of child development. While there is no one definitive and conclusive theory of parenting and how it shapes children's development, clear affiliations have been found between specific parenting strategies and styles, and various child outcomes [11].

Two aspects of parenting have emerged from the research as being especially significant. These have been variously described as parental responsiveness and parental control/demandingness [12-14].

2.1. Parental Responsiveness

It refers to the degree of support, warmth and fondness that parents show towards their children. Responsive parents praise, laud, empower and encourage their children, while less accepting and unresponsive parents are quick to reprimand, rebuff or disregard their children and are less emotionally accessible to them [15]. It is argued that parental warmth, affectability and sensitivity to children's needs is the most influential dimension of parenting during infancy, laying the groundwork for a healthy development. Warm and responsive parenting has reliably been associated with positive developmental outcomes, such as secure emotional attachments, good peer relations, high self-esteem, regard and a strong sense of morality [16-18].

2.2. Parental Control

It refers to the demands that parents place upon their children to develop into mature and responsible individuals. It includes the rules and limits that parents set and enforce for

their children. The relationship between parental control (also known as parental demandingness) and developmental outcomes is less straightforward than parental responsiveness. While controlling and demanding parents place limits on their children's freedom/flexibility and monitor their behaviour, less controlling parents are less restrictive and grant children considerable freedom, independence and autonomy [16, 19].

In recent years, increasing research attention has been focused on this 'control dimension' of parenting behaviour, arising from research findings that low levels of parental monitoring and high levels of permissiveness are associated with high levels of problem behaviour [20-22].

Parenting styles are efficient in diminishing high-risk behaviors of adolescents. A plethora of researches have shown that authoritative parenting along with high levels of parental control, low support and acceptance (low warmth and lack of clarity of communication), are not well associated with positive developmental outcomes [9, 23, 24]. Thus, the context within which parents accomplish suitable regulation and control appears of being a vital component in mediating the viability of parental control.

The results of studies suggest that parents, who invest more time and energy in supervising their children, have kids less inclined toward risky, hazardous and poor behaviors [7, 9, 25]. Researchers have concluded that parents, who apply hostile approaches to resolve their conflicts, have children with more symptoms of antisocial behaviour [26]. Further studies have uncovered that separation from parents and poor communication with children lead to depression and aggressive behaviour in them [27].

Hence, the current study measures the adolescent's beliefs about the use of aggression and endorsement of nonviolent responses to hypothetical situations, the perceptions of their parent's level of demanding and responsive behaviors and how the above are responsible for estimating the possibilities of depression in adolescents.

3. Method

The aim of the present research is to study the beliefs about aggression and non violence of 225 high school adolescents from Delhi NCR. Their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour and overall well being is also recorded.

3.1. Objectives

1. To study the relationship between the adolescent's beliefs about aggression and their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.
2. To study the relationship between the adolescent's beliefs about non violence and their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.
3. To study the relationship between the adolescent's wellbeing and their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.

3.2. Hypotheses

H1: Adolescent's beliefs about aggression will have a significant relationship with their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.

H2: Adolescent's beliefs about non violence will have a significant relationship with their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.

H3: Adolescent's wellbeing will have a significant correlation with their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.

3.3. Sample

The sample consisted of 225 high school adolescents from Delhi NCR, India in the age range of 15 to 16 years hailing from middle class socio economic strata. The sampling measure used was Purposive Sampling.

3.4. Tools Used

3.4.1. Beliefs About Aggression and Alternatives [28]

This 12-item scale measures the student beliefs about the use of aggression and endorsement of non-violent responses to hypothetical situations. There are two subscales namely, Beliefs about Aggression and Use of Nonviolent Strategies. Each consists of six items. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on a 4 point likert scale, with 4 being strongly agree and 1 being as strongly disagree. The overall internal consistency of the scale is 0.72. The scoring and interpretation is as per the manual.

3.4.2. Authoritative Parenting Index [29]

This tool measures children's perception of their parents' authoritative behaviour on two dimensions: responsiveness

and demandingness. Items measuring indicators of parental warmth, acceptance, involvement, and intrusiveness comprise the responsive dimension. The demanding dimension includes items measuring indicators of parental supervision, assertive control, monitoring, and permissiveness. The respondents were asked 16 statements as to how their mother's are on a 4 point likert scale. The Internal consistency for responsiveness is 0.85 and for demandingness is 0.71 to 0.77. The scoring and interpretation is as per the manual.

3.4.3. Adolescent Well Being Scale [30]

This scale has 18 statements, each relating to different aspects of an adolescent's life, and their feelings about them. Each item has three responses and the adolescent has to indicate the extent to which the statement applies to him/her i.e. never, sometimes or most of the time. The manual is the basis for scoring and interpretation. A score of 13 or more is stated to be indicative of probable depressive disorder. On the other hand a low score is indicative of good well being.

4. Results

The following Figure 1 shows the demographic profile (age, gender and family type) of the respondents:

Graph (A) shows the age of the respondents, wherein 29.33% (66 adolescents) are 15 years and the remaining 70.67% (159 adolescents) are 16 years old.

Graph (B) shows the gender of the respondents, wherein 49.33% (111 adolescents) are males and the remaining 50.67% (114 adolescents) are females.

Graph (C) shows the family type of the respondents, wherein 58.67% (132 adolescents) belong to nuclear families and the remaining 41.33% (93 adolescents) belong to joint families.

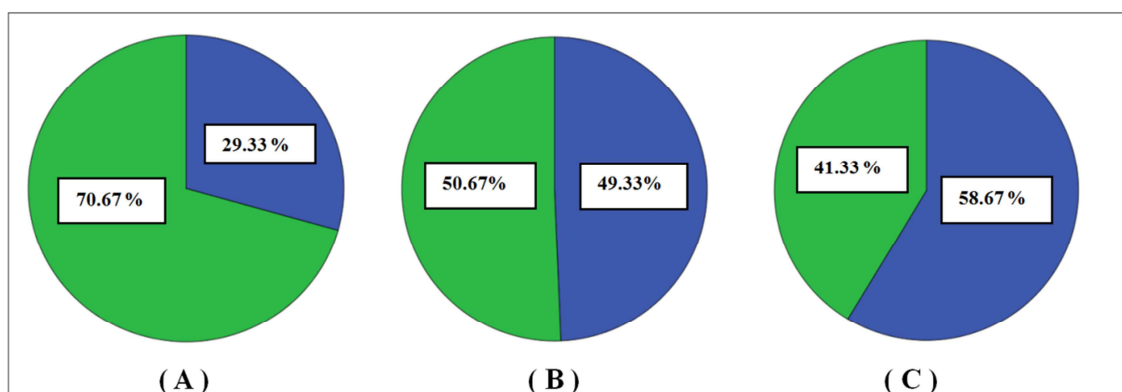


Figure 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondent.

Table 1 shows the minimum values, maximum values, mean and standard deviations of the existing variables namely, adolescent's beliefs about aggression, non violence, their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour and overall wellbeing

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables.

S. No	N	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	225	Beliefs about Aggression	16.33	4.39
2.		Beliefs about Non Violence	14.52	5.93

S. No	N	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
3.		Authoritative Parenting Index	38.89	11.58
4.		Well Being	14.24	5.66

The following results are presented according to the hypotheses:

H1: Adolescent's beliefs about aggression will have a significant relationship with their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.

The results show a positive correlation between adolescent's beliefs about aggression and their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour. This further implies that adolescents having beliefs supporting the use of aggression have a high score on their parent's authoritative behaviour.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients of Adolescent's Beliefs about Aggression and Non Violence with their Perception of Parent's Authoritative Behaviour.

S. No	N	Variables	Beliefs about Aggression	Beliefs about Non Violence
1.		Responsiveness	0.875**	-0.924**
2.	225	Demandingness	0.762**	-0.768**
3.		Total Authoritative Parenting Index	0.868**	-0.904**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H2: Adolescent's beliefs about non violence will have a significant relationship with their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.

The results show a negative correlation between adolescent's

beliefs about non violence and their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour. This further implies that adolescents with a low score on their parent's authoritative behaviour show higher levels of support for using nonviolent strategies.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficients of Adolescent's Wellbeing with their Perception of Parent's Authoritative Behaviour.

S. No	N	Variables	Adolescent's Wellbeing
1.		Responsiveness	0.727**
2.	225	Demandingness	0.584**
3.		Total Authoritative Parenting Index	0.705**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H3: Adolescent's wellbeing will have a significant correlation with their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour.

The results show a positive correlation between adolescent's wellbeing and their perception of parent's

authoritative behaviour. According to the tool, Adolescent Well Being Scale [30], a higher score is indicative of depressive features. This further implies that adolescents who are high on their wellbeing have a low perception of their parent's authoritative behaviour.

Table 4. Regression Analysis - Model Summary of Authoritative Parenting Index.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.922 ^a	0.850	0.849	4.509

a. Predictors: (Constant), Non Violence Score, Aggression Score.

The above tests the goodness of fit of the model. A high Adj. R square of 0.849 implies that the data fits the model well. It also states that 84.9% of the variability in the score of

Parent's Authoritative Behaviour is explained by the non violence score and aggression score of the adolescents.

Table 5. Regression Analysis - Coefficients^a of Authoritative Parenting Index.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
		Beta	t	Sig.
Aggression	41.059 3.507		11.706	.000
Non Violence	0.918 0.134	0.348	6.871	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Authoritative Parenting Index Total Score.

The above table 5 gives the p-value of the t-test which analyses whether the regression coefficients are significant or not. According to the results, p-value=0.0<0.05, which implies that the regression coefficients are significant. Thus, adolescent's beliefs about aggression non violence score significantly affect the Authoritative Parenting Index total score.

The interpretation of Unstandardized Beta Coefficients

reveal that for every one-unit increase in the beliefs about aggression score the Authoritative Parenting Index total score increases by 0.918 times. Similarly, every one-unit increase in beliefs about non violence score the Authoritative Parenting Index (API) total score decreases by 1.182 times.

The following Regression Model can be used for prediction:

$$\text{API Total} = (41.059) + 0.918 \times \text{Aggression Score} - 1.182 \times \text{Non Violence}$$

5. Discussion

The present study examined the adolescents beliefs about aggression, non violence and their perception of parent's authoritative behaviour. The parenting approaches used by parents, plays an essential role in providing their children with adequate mental health. Healthy relationships permit children's needs to be addressed by the parents. According to the research findings, families play a vital role in the character building of the adolescents. Their beliefs about aggression and non violence are acquired and developed within the family environment. Parents have a considerable effect on the wellbeing of their children [31].

The results of the study indicated that authoritative parenting index had a significant positive relationship with the adolescent's belief about aggression. Its absence plays an important role in forming the adolescent's belief about non violence. The results are consistent with the research findings of the National Institute of Mental Health [6, 9, 10]. Researches have revealed that authoritarian parenting styles lead to the display of aggressive, delinquent and anti social behaviors in children. Further studies confirmed the role of authoritarian style in the creation of behavioural disorders [7, 11].

Authoritarian parents are highly demanding and directive, but not responsive. They clearly define rules and expect their children to follow them without any questioning or even discussion. It is said that these parents shape, council and evaluate the behaviour and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set of standards of conducts, usually a absolute, standard, which values obedience as a virtue and favours punitive, forceful measures to curb the child [32, 33].

Researchers found that authoritative parenting style was related to higher levels of adolescent depressive symptoms [34]. Studies that examined relationship between parental care or warmth and adolescent depression have consistently found a negative relationship [35]. That is, higher parental care or warmth is related to lower rates of adolescent depression. Thus, authoritative parenting index tends to show low level of wellbeing in adolescents.

6. Conclusion

The current study points out to the importance of wellbeing and harmony in the existing society, wherein parenting plays a predominant role. Aggression and violence in adolescents are a serious societal concern today. Adolescents today, can become the mediators for future change paving the road to positive societal development. This study highlights the importance of parenting and its consequences on adolescents behaviour. It is strongly inferred that beliefs about aggression and non violence are influenced by parental responsiveness and control. The degrading value systems and alarming erosion of non violence, calls for an immediate intervention.

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