

Parenting Styles and Social Maturity of Children: A Theoretical Analysis

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Abstract

Parenting is very important in shaping how children feel, act and interact with others. The way parents raise their children affects how kids learn what is expected in society how they control their actions how they build relationships and how they fit into the world around them. This paper looks at how different ways of parenting affect how children grow in terms of being mature in situations. It uses the known types of parenting like authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved. The paper looks at how each of these may affect how children act and feel. The focus is on parenting, which is warm, responsive has clear rules and uses consistent discipline. This type of parenting is usually linked to results for children. The paper also talks about what it means for a child to be socially mature. This includes being able to act on their own take responsibility work with others control their feelings act the way with people and fit into different social settings. It says that the emotional and social environment parents create has an effect on these traits. The paper believes that the way parents act and talk with their children has an effect on how social and emotional skills develop. The analysis shows that the way parents raise their children is connected to how mature they're socially. Authoritative parenting is especially good, at helping this happen. The paper ends by saying that when parents are warm give guidance talk well and set the expectations it helps children grow in a healthy way and become more socially mature.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Social maturity, Authoritative parenting, Child development, Social development, Emotional development, Parenting, Child behavior.

Introduction

Parenting has been considered a biological and psychological mechanism evolved to ensure our survival. A healthy and functional parenting and family life is a determinant that ensures a normal emotional and social development of the children. Parents are expected to respond and address the needs and requirement of children in an appropriate ways as dysfunctional parenting could attract disruption with regard to social and emotional development of children. Among the four types of parenting styles explored so far, authoritative parenting has been associated with positive influence on the social and emotional development of children which is further associated with social maturity. The nature of social maturity is dependent on the nature of social and emotional development. Thus, parenting styles and social maturity are correlated. This paper aims to understand the relationship of parenting styles with social maturity. First, it discussed all the parenting styles, secondly, it look into the impact of parenting styles on behaviour of the children, then it discussed the relationship of parenting styles with social maturity. Lastly, it signifies the positive role of authoritative parenting in development of qualities ensuring social maturity.

Parenting Styles

American psychologist Diana Baumrind is a pioneer in the researches related to the relationships of children behaviour and parenting styles. Her researches were based on the assumptions that childrearing practices of the parents would have significant impact on children's behaviours. (Maccoby 1980). Similar to the observations of Patterson and Ainsworth, her ideas were primarily based upon the daily-life natural observations of interaction between the parents and children during dinner and bed times. Studies done in these aspects have shown that parents vary with respect to the control exerted, warmth and affection shown to their children.

Three kinds of childrearing practices or parenting styles have been identified through the researches done by Baumrind (1978) and her team which are as follows:

Authoritarian Parents: In this kind of parenting a tendency of controlling is reflected. They put absolute standards with regard to behaviours of children which are critically evaluated constantly. Here respect for parental authority is valued and non compliance to the same is dealt with harsh disciplinary measures.

Authoritative Parents: In this kind of parenting democratic approach is prominent. Parents expect conformation with regard to the standards of conduct with a scope of dialogue to ensure respect to the rights of both. Scope for autonomy is provided. It is based on appropriate and logical control and support.

Permissive Parents: They are likely to accept all kinds of behaviour, desires and demands of children. Little punishment is used very often with minimum expectations from children. With respect to the standards regarding conduct and behaviour few standards are imposed and children mostly are given freedom to regulate their own behaviours.

Neglecting Parenting: Maccoby and Martin (1983) have extended the parenting style after reworking on Baumrind's ideas and have added a fourth parenting style i.e. neglecting. They show no concern for their children and their parenting role and have been considered as abusive and unpredictable by some.

The authoritative parenting is regarded as child centred as children rights and views are recognized in it and they are considered as a contributor to the family. Although they set high demands and standards but they provide appropriate support for achieving the same. Exactly opposite to these parents are authoritarian parents, who do place high demands on their children without taking their views. The standards reflect an imposition on children. Parents are less likely to engage in dialogues with their children in this kind of parenting. It is characterised by a lack of warmth and affection towards children. Permissive parents are too positive towards their children behaviour and they put a minimum standard for them letting them regulate themselves, a reason it is called indulgent. (Maccoby 1980, Scarr et al. 1986). Although high level of control is reflected in both authoritarian and authoritative parents, authoritative parents are found to combine this control with warmth and respect to the agency of children.

Parenting Style and Children Behaviour

According to Baumrind (1971, 1978) behaviour of a child could be predicted on the basis of parenting styles he or she has. Each parenting styles comes with certain specific scope for personality development of the child. Authoritative parenting provides a scope where children have to be accountable to the parenting authority which gives them a sense of

responsibility. They come to understand that the choices and behaviours are not without restriction and that certain restrictions are required for being systematic and functional. Later on, in their life these practices make them socially responsible. They are provided with a scope for autonomy, self confidence as parental support is there to guide them. Parents not only expect them to perform well and set high standard but also provide support and mentoring to achieve the same. Authoritarian parenting don't leave a scope for autonomy as children are not given choices and independence but parents impose high standards without enough support. This relationship and practices have significant implications for children later on. In their social life they lack confidence in any initiative as they have not given scope to think and apply their own brain. Those with permissive parents are given scope for independence and autonomy but without appropriate support and guidance it is not enough for building confidence and maturity. Children fail to understand that at larger social level not all of their desires could be fulfilled then and there. They fail to understand the meaning and importance of postponement of their desires which attracts a sense of frustration. The negligent or uninvolved parenting creates a environment that lack any support or guidance.

Parenting Styles and Social Maturity

Social maturity could be defined as attainment of specific skills that enable an individual to be a productive and functional member of the society. Humans are interdependent being and this interdependence plays a significant role in human's survival. As different individuals are different in their orientation, attitude, interest, values etc. a context of conflict is always there and to avoid that efficient interpersonal communication and emotional intelligence is required. Individuals are also required to understand their responsibilities and roles in society that ensures well being of everyone. (Greenberg, Josselson, Knerr and Knerr, 1995). Social maturity is related to a critical understanding of society and interaction of its various units. It enables the individuals to adapt well in society (Galambos and Costigan, 2003).

Social maturity is determined by presence of specific socio-emotional characteristics. These characteristics are determined majorly by the kind of parenting individuals have experienced. Specific parenting style is responsible for specific socio-emotional capacities and traits and not all could be considered as favourable with regard to social maturity. As discussed above the most favourable parenting style with regard to social maturity is authoritative parenting style.

Role of Authoritative Parenting in Social Maturity

Some of the positive impact and implications of authoritative parenting in development of social and emotional capacities are as follows:

Established Identity: Parents who create a home environment of trust and love are more likely to have a healthy relationship with their children. Children get space to express their feelings. With a scope with vested responsibility and autonomy they are able to solve problems on their own which gives them self confidence and faith in oneself. Under the set rules and warm support, they are more likely to be empathic (Hauser et al. 1984, Powers et al. 1983).

High Self-Esteem: When parents take the opinion of children in the matter of common interest and ask for their contribution, it gives them a sense of worth. A lot of factors are to be evaluated to take any decision. This practice not only gives them an understanding of decision-making process but also the determinants that has to be assessed before taking any steps. Individual high in self-esteem is more likely to engage in social interaction and groups as they feel confident to express their feelings, share their ideas that makes them an important member of social groups. Higher self esteem could be seen as a sign of social and emotional maturity as without having the skills and understanding of society one could not be a valued member of society (Buri et al. (1988).

Higher Autonomy: Higher autonomy is an important determinant of social maturity. Autonomy comes with the functioning of agency which comes into play while giving one's voice, expressing one's feelings, ideas and views. Authoritative parents give children autonomy in this regard. The voices are heard but depending on their merits and significance and to the extent they are executable they are either accepted or rejected. This practice of with regard to using of agency, children build a sense of autonomy where they put their voices with confidence and understand that there are logical restrictions and limitations with regard to the demands or expressions. This not only makes them a responsible and productive member of society or group but a member with a positive attitude and responsibility (Allen et al. 1994; Collins and Laursen 2004;

Fuhrman and Holmbeck 1995; Lamborn and Steinberg 199; Steinberg et al. 1994, 1991, Weiss and Schwarz 1996).

Development of Morality, Social Responsibility and Pro-social Behaviour: Within a affectionate and supportive environment authoritative parents' model high standard of conduct for their children. The expectations of parents with regard to the behaviour and achievement helps to develop moral reasoning in children as they not only support but support with logical reasoning and guidance which keeps a control on the conducts of children. This practice helps build moral reasoning. As the behaviours are evaluated and appropriate guidance is provided, the children are more likely to be socially responsible and as their emotions got a recognition and scope of expression it leads to a healthy emotional development which increases empathy and pro-social behaviour. All these factors together determine the social and emotional maturity of individual (Eisenberg 1990; Eisenberg et al. 2004; Grotevant and Cooper 1998; Walker et al. 2000; Walker and Taylor 1991).

Higher School Achievement and Competence: Authoritative parents engage in the scholastic activities of their children which lead to better school achievement and adaptation. School is an institution of socialization of individuals in social values which makes them a productive member of society. A healthy school experience is a sign of development of skills and values which are required to be a valued member of society. It is also considered as an indicator of better societal adaptation. The training and practices of schools make interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence possible which leads to social maturity. The other kind of parenting styles have been considered as a factor responsible for lower levels of achievement and school adjustment problems which further hamper the social maturity of children (Baumrind 1991, Brody et al. 2002, Connell et al. 1994, Steinberg et al.1992; Dornbusch et al. 1987; Pittman and Lansdale 2001).

Resistance to Peer Pressure: Authoritative parents are able to maintain a very good relationship with their children. Children have greater trust on their parents. The issues related to peer pressure are expressed and shared with the parents by the children. Parents guidance and suggestions help children to have a resistance with regard to the peer pressure and they are less likely to engage in any negative behaviour for which they are pressurized by their peers. It is only possible because

relationship with their parents decreases any possibility to search for emotional support outside home (Steinberg 1986, 1987, Steinberg and Silverberg 1986). But in all child rearing practices where parents are not able to maintain a very healthy relationship with their children, children search for support outside the home and are likely to come under the influence of their peers. Research in this regard has suggested that greater conformation is found in the children where parents do not give a scope of participation of children in the decision-making process and are overly strict. But in all child rearing practices where parents are not able to maintain a very healthy relationship with their children, children search for support outside the home and are likely to come under the influence of their peers. Research in this regard has suggested that greater conformation is found in the children where parents do not give a scope of participation of children in the decision-making process and are overly strict (Fuligni and Eccles (1993). Thus, authoritative parenting gives a scope to children to have an understanding and evaluation before conforming or accepting or coming under influence of any other individual persuasion. This practice is a very good sign of emotional and social maturity where decision making is not made under influence of other individual but on the basis of critical analysis which minimises scopes of diversion from societal values (Cui et al. 2002).

Lesser Mental health issues: Parental warmth and support minimize scope of mental distress, suicidal tendencies and violence. Child rearing practices are responsible and play a very critical role in the shaping of the personality of the children. When the emotional requirements of the children are not full- filled and they are abused, it results into psychopathology, emotional disturbances and violence. Shaping the thoughts and channelizing the emotional energy which is important skill to adapt in society, is attributed to warm and supportive parenting (Resnick et al. 1997; Brody et al. 1988, Steinhausen et al. 2006).

Development of Maturity with Regard to Sexuality: An association has been found between the sexual maturity of the individuals and the kind of parenting style they have. Supportive home environment and a warm relationship with parents have been related to sexual maturity. While it's opposite home and child rearing practices are related with risky sexual behaviours by the teenagers. The teenage girls who do not found closeness with mothers are found to get engaged in sexual activity at an early age irrespective of the approval or disapproval of

their mothers. A strong disapproval by parents regarding sexual indulgence in warm environment has been found to be postponing desires of teenagers. This practice of postponement of desires builds in them a tendency of control and responsibility which is very significant in social maturity (Ford et al. 2005, Pittman and Chase-Lansdale 2001, Sieverding et al. 2005, Sieving et al. 2000, Woodward et al. 2001; Resnick et al. 1997; Meschke et al. 2002, Rodgers 1999).

Resistance towards substance abuse: In authoritative parenting there is a high expectation with regard to conformity and compliance to the parental authority and standards of conduct. Parent's negative attitude and disapproval towards drug, smoking, alcohol etc. prevent children or teenager inclination towards substance abuse (Baumrind 1991; Brody et al. 2000, 2002; Cleveland et al. 2005; Resnick et al. 1997; Weiss and Schwarz 1996; Whitaker and Miller 2000). The authoritative parenting style helps building control on oneself and is likely to extend to other aspects of life.

Parenting styles significantly impact the personality of the child irrespective of the socio-economic context, culture, parent's education and family structure (Steinberg 1990, 2001). The researches done all over the world have suggested that authoritative parenting is most influential and is associated with better outcome in terms of social and emotional development, higher achievement and positive self-esteem in children. Apart from this a lot attributes and characteristics are associated with this parenting style which eventually determine the social and emotional maturity of a child. (Dmitrieva et al. 2004; Steinberg 1990, 2001; Vazsonyi et al. 2003).

Conclusion

Family provides the initial context for socialization of children and indoctrination of values necessary to ensure better adaptation in society. Through primary and secondary socialization important developmental processes and maturity is achieved. The nature of interaction of children with parents determines the nature and quality of significant skills and knowledge. The type of parents-child relationship a child has determined nature of interaction between them. Among the parenting styles, authoritative parenting provides a better facilitation and conducive environment to attain significant developmental traits. The authoritative parenting has been considered the best child rearing practices because it gives a scope for the children to build autonomy, have higher self-esteem and self-

control. The important characteristics responsible for better adaptation and social and emotional maturity are acquired in a context where children get scope to express them, where autonomy is vested, accountability of conduct is placed. According to Youniss and Smollar 1985, with respect to the age children mature and with respect to it greater responsibilities, autonomy and self-control is assigned and expected. The parental authority is not cantered to parents but is decided mutually. This process has been called system of reciprocity Maccoby, 1992. This practice of reciprocity prevalent in authoritative parenting makes the child responsible about their conduct, trust their decision and take initiative.

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