# Parent Child Conflict and Behaviour Issue Among Children in Relation to their Parenting Style

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## ABSTRACT

The Study was aimed at to see the role of authoritative and authoritarian parenting style in relation to their parent child conflict and behaviour problems among their children using correlation design followed by t-test.

Standardized tools were applied on the participants of the study to observe their Parenting style, parent child conflict and behaviour problems of their children. The result showed clearly revealed that "Authoritative the parenting , lower the parent child conflict and behaviour problems among their children" whereas "Authoritarian the parenting ,higher the parent child conflict and behaviour problems among their children".

In the first years of life, parents assume special importance as parents guide their young children from complete childhood dependence to self-reliance, and their care-giving styles can have both immediate and long-lasting effects on children's social functioning, moral development, peer play and academic achievement. Parenting styles may have a direct impact on the behavior of children, leading to a catastrophic change in behavior. Parents of children with severe behavioral problems often see themselves as having less power than a child and feel defeated when it comes to demands or confrontations. In addition, parents are often blamed, either directly or indirectly, for their inability to limit or stop the negative behavior of their children. Parents often use different parenting styles to raise their children, some use authoritarian parenting styles, some use authoritative parenting styles, and some permissive parenting styles to nurture their children. Inappropriate parenting can lead to a variety of behavioral problems in children that affect children throughout their lives.

Research has shown that there are many unhealthful behaviors among adolescents, such as poor diet, smoking, substance abuse and ill-adapted behaviour, contributing to their health problems, stress and anxiety disorders, or low self-attention and poor socialization in life. Nair et al., (2004) reported that the prevalence of depression or behavioral problems among adolescents in India needs to be understood in the context of high and ever-increasing evidence of alcohol, drug abuse, loneliness, suicidal and criminal tendencies among young Indians Other serious behavioral problems that prevail among adolescents conduct disorder and anxiety disorders. These behavioral and anxiety disorders also occur in the school environment. Disrespect for teachers in the system in terms of breaking the rules, violating

implicit norms or expectations, improper classroom setting, disruptive conversation, avoiding work, harassing classmates, defiance, rudeness, social withdrawal, etc., simply indicating conflict between children that may have roots in faulty parenting styles.

Research has generally associated authoritative parenting with higher social competencies for children. As a result, children of authoritative parents are more competent in peer relationships, engage in low levels of drug use, and have more emotional well-being than young adults. Although authoritarian and permissive parenting styles appear to represent opposite ends of the parenting spectrum, neither style has been associated with positive outcomes, likely because both minimize opportunities for children to learn to cope with stress. Too much control and toughness may limit children's opportunities to make decisions for themselves or to make their needs known to their parents. while children in permissive/indulgent households may lack the direction and guidance necessary to develop appropriate morals and goals.

Children from authoritative families are well behaved and well performed at school. They tend to be emotionally healthy, resourceful, and socially responsible. Children in authoritarian families are relatively well behaved. But their social skills tend to be inferior, and are more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, and poor self-esteem. Parenting styles are associated with different child outcomes, and the authoritative style is generally associated with positive behaviors such as strong self-esteem and self-competence (Jackson and Schemes, 2005).

Faulty parenting often leads to behavioral problems (externalizing and internalizing) in children, where children may become aggressive, violent, anxious, depressed, socially withdrawn, lonely, etc. Parenting must therefore be carried out efficiently and must guide children in how to deal with the lessons of life. When children experience problems of adaptation at home or at school, internalization among children is activated along with neglect, abuse and abandonment and, in the long term, stress can develop within, low self-esteem, apprehension and anxiety or lead to severe behavioral outcomes. In children, externalizing behavioural problems are typically associated with problems related to hyperactivity as well as behavioural problems. Children may become disruptive, defiant, aggressive, and anti-social (Apsche & DiMeo,2010; Hinshaw, 1987).  Conflict in families is defined as an interaction characterized by discomfort and the use of discomfort to reduce

discomfort (Montgomery & Fewer, 1988). Conflicts between parents and children can occur for a number of reasons. When conflict occurs, the whole family can be thrown into emotional turmoil. There are struggles between the parent and the child in every generation. Sometimes parents are accused of pushing their children too far and expecting too much, and the child is accused of not trying or being stubborn. When children feel that their parents are imposing unnecessary restrictions and are overly demanding, they experience discomfort, which ultimately results in behavioral problems leading to a deterioration in children's lives. Evidence has shown that parents have a critical influence on children's behavioral, emotional, personal and cognitive development.

Parenting styles have a profound effect on the behavior of children. Parents are encouraged to trust their instincts and to be flexible, affectionate and attentive to their individual needs. They need to be prepared to change their parenting styles with the development of their child. However, when it comes to discipline, parents need to have coherent rules with consistent consequences. With consistent parenting, the child is able to learn what is expected of him or her and how to behave in a socially acceptable manner. Children are less likely to have behavioral problems when they know the rules, and the consequences for not following the rules. They may be excluded from social events and settings. They're moody, unhappy, unpredictable, and vulnerable to stressful conditions. They could be deceitful and secretive as a child and rebellious as a teenager. Numerous studies have found that children of authoritarian parents are at higher risk of depression. Children of authoritative parents tend to be self-conforming and self-assured. Typically, these children are goal-oriented towards their daily activities and practice performance-oriented behaviour. Children of authoritative parents may be able to cope with unexpected stress and deal with problems calmly and purposefully. These children get along well with peers and have high energy in a non-hyperactive way. They are cooperative and show respect for adults and authority figures (Daniels, 2009; Sclafani, 2004; Betts et aI., 2009). Nowadays, many behavioral problems are on the increase among children-hence the need for the hour to study parental responses to the child's expression of negative impact in terms of parenting styles. The present research is an attempt to see the parental response in terms of parenting styles in relation to behavioral problems and conflict behavior among their children. The main aim of this research is therefore to study the relationship between parenting styles and behavioral problems and parent-child conflict in their children with the following objectives:.

## OBJECTIVES:

To study the relationship of Authoritarian and Authoritative Parenting with their children's behaviour problem.

1. To study the Authoritarian and Authoritative Parenting in relation to parent-child conflict.

2. To see the difference between children experiencing authoritarian and Authoritative parenting in terms Conflict between parent and children and behaviour problems among children.

## METHODOLOGY

**Design:** The correlational design was used to see the relationship of the parenting styles (Authoritarian and Authoritative Parenting) with the behaviour problems and parent-child conflict in their children. Further, t-test was employed to see the difference between children in terms of children behaviour problem and conflict with respect to their Authoritarian Parenting and Authoritative Parenting.

**Participants:** The present study comprised of a sample of 100 school going children (50 boys and 50 girls) with the age range of 12-16 years, along with their parents who gave their consent to participate in the study.

**Tool Used:** The following standardized research tools were employed in the present study to gather the observation of the participants on the parenting style, parent child conflict and behavior issues among them respectively 1) Parental Authority Questionnaire (John Buri 1991), 2) Conflict Behaviour Questionnaire (Robin & Foster, 1989) and 3) Children Behaviour Checklist (Thomas M. Achenbach, 1983) having established reliability and validity.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The result shows that, the correlation of Authoritarian Parenting is significantly and positively correlated (See Table 1) with their Parent child conflict ($r=.709$, $p<.01$) and the behaviour problems in terms of Anxiety/Depressed ($r=.617$, $p<.01$), Withdrawn/Depressed ($r=.702$, $p<.01$), Somatic Complaints ($r=.700$, $p<.01$), Social Problems ($r=.701$, $p<.01$), Thought Problems ($r =.613$, $p<.01$), Attention Problems ($r=.720$, $p<.01$), Rule-Breaking Behaviour ($r=.577$, $p<.01$), Aggressive Behaviour ($r=.556$, $p<.01$), Other Problems ($r=.438$, $p<.05$).

Whereas the correlation of Authoritative Parenting Style is also significantly but negatively correlated (See Table 2) with their parent child conflict (r=-.759, p<.01) and the behaviour problems in terms of Anxiety/Depressed (r=-.697, p<.01), Withdrawn/Depressed (r=-.762, p< .01), Somatic Complaints (r=-.685, p<.01), Social Problems (r=-.673, p< .01), Thought Problems (r=-.595, p<.01), Attention Problems (r=-.697, p<.01), Rule-Breaking Behaviour (r=-.587, p<.01), Aggressive Behaviour (r=-.596, p<.01), Other Problems (r=-.504, p<.01). The result of correlation analysis clearly indicated the significant positive and negative correlation of Authoritarian and autorotative parenting with their Parent child conflict and beahviour problems among their children respectively.

## Table 1

**Parent child Conflict and Behaviour Problems of children
in relation to Authoritarian Parenting Style**

| | Authoritarian Parenting | Conflict | BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | A/D | W/D | SC | SP | TP | AP | RB | AB | OP |
| Authoritarian Parenting | 1 | .709** | .617** | .702** | .700** | .701** | .613** | .720** | .577** | .556** | .438* |
| Conflict | | 1 | .567** | .794** | .647** | .573** | .491* | .602** | .445* | .439* | .438* |
| A/D | | | 1 | .645** | .735** | .699** | .635** | .632** | .691** | .635** | .700** |
| W/D | | | | 1 | .648** | .659** | .652** | .796** | .560** | .550** | .479* |
| SC | | | | | 1 | .743** | .723** | .620** | .653** | .639** | .576** |
| SP | | | | | | 1 | .736** | .716** | .719** | .620** | .663** |
| TP | | | | | | | 1 | .690** | .663** | .616** | .640** |
| AP | | | | | | | | 1 | .664** | .641** | .648** |
| RB | | | | | | | | | 1 | .603** | .625** |
| AB | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .632** |
| OP | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

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

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A/D: Anxiety/Depressed, W/D: Withdrawn/Depressed, SC: Somatic Complaints, SP: Social Problem, TP: Thought Problem, AP: Attention Problem, RB: Rule-Breaking Behaviour, AB: Aggressive Behaviour, OP: Other Problems

withdrawn/depressed(M=13.45/6.34), somatic complaints (m=8.59/5.76), social problem (M=17.41/14.37), thought problem (M=25.36/18.40), attention problem (M=16.47/13.43), rule-breaking behaviour (M=26.12/20.37). aggressive behaviour (M=27.78/17.36) and other problems (M=26.82/20.18).

Hence the result of the correlation and t- test analysis clearly revealed the that, "Authoritative the parenting, lower the parent child conflict and behaviour problems among their children"

whereas "Authoritarian the parenting, higher the parent child conflict and behaviour problems among their children".

**Further, the** result of the t-test analysis (See Table 3) showed the significant difference between the children experiencing authoritarian and authoritative parenting and their parent-child conflict (t= 2.44, p< .05) besides, the mean score of their parent child conflict is higher among authoritarian parenting than the authoritative parenting respectively (M= 24.30, M=14.27).

**Table 2**

**Correlation Analysis of Authoritative Parenting**

| | Authoritative Parenting | Conflict | BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | A/D | W/D | SC | SP | TP | AP | RB | AB | OP |
| Authoritarian Parenting | 1 | -.759** | -.697** | -.762** | -.685** | -.673** | -.595** | -.697** | -.587** | -.596** | -.504** |
| Conflict | | 1 | .537** | .604** | .637** | .587** | .481* | .517** | .433* | .429* | .407* |
| A/D | | | 1 | .612** | .702** | .719** | .795** | .732** | .701** | .711** | .720** |
| W/D | | | | 1 | .701** | .638** | .601** | .686** | .549** | .559** | .448* |
| SC | | | | | 1 | .732** | .714** | .776** | .613** | .609** | .569** |
| SP | | | | | | 1 | .721** | .700** | .699** | .720** | .710** |
| TP | | | | | | | 1 | .730** | .703** | .697** | .780** |
| AP | | | | | | | | 1 | .731** | .721** | .648** |
| RB | | | | | | | | | 1 | .703** | .695** |
| AB | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .732** |
| OP | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

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

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A/D: Anxiety/Depressed, W/D: Withdrawn/Depressed, SC: Somatic Complaints, SP: Social Problem, TP: Thought Problem, AP: Attention Problem, RB: Rule-Breaking Behaviour, AB: Aggressive Behaviour, OP: Other Problems.

Where's in terms of their behaviour problems the t values again showed the significant difference between children experiencing authoritarian and authoritative parenting in terms of their anxiety/depressed (t= 6.28, p< .01), withdrawn/depressed (t=6.21, p< .05), somatic complaints (t=5.95, p< .01), Social problem (t=5.79, p< 0.1), thought problem (t=5.49, p< .01), attention problem (t=2.33, p< .05), rule-breaking problem (t=5.89, p< .01), aggressive behaviour (t=8.02, p< .01), and other problems (t=6.95, p< .01). Besides, the mean scores of the children experiencing authoritarian parenting is also higher than the children experiencing authoritative parenting in terms of anxiety/depressed (M=22.76/15.53), withdrawn/depressed(M=13.45/6.34), somatic complaints (m=8.59/5.76), social problem

(M=17.41/14.37), thought problem (M=25.36/18.40), attention problem (M=16.47/13.43), rule-breaking behaviour (M=26.12/20.37). aggressive behaviour (M=27.78/17.36) and other problems (M=26.82/20.18).

## Table 3
## t-test Analysis

| S.No. | Variables | Authoritarian Parenting | | Authoritative Parenting | | 't' values |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| I | Conflict | 24.30 | 4.5 | 14.27 | 4.9 | 2.44* |
| ii | Anxiety/Depressed | 22.76 | 5.7 | 15.53 | 2.5 | 6.28** |
| iii | Withdrawn/ depressed | 13.45 | 5.0 | 6.34 | 2.0 | 6.21* |
| iv | Somatic Complaints | 8.59 | 2.30 | 5.76 | 2.17 | 5.95** |
| v | Social Problem | 17.41 | 2.35 | 14.37 | 2.23 | 5.79** |
| vi | Thought Problem | 25.36 | 9.23 | 18.40 | 6.78 | 5.49** |
| vii | Attention Problem | 16.47 | 2.14 | 13.43 | 2.07 | 2.33* |
| viii | Rule-Breaking Behaviour | 26.12 | 8.34 | 20.37 | 5.31 | 5.89** |
| xi | Aggressive Behaviour | 27.78 | 8.5 | 17.36 | 5.05 | 8.02** |
| X | Other Problem | 26.82 | 7.2 | 20.18 | 4.5 | 6.95** |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Hence the result of the correlation and t- test analysis clearly revealed the that, "Authoritative the parenting, lower the parent child conflict and behaviour problems among their children" whereas "Authoritarian the parenting, higher the parent child conflict and behaviour problems among their children".

## Parenting Style and Parent Child Conflict:

**The Result of the present study clearly revealed that** "Authoritative the parenting, lower the parent child conflict among their children and Authoritarian the parenting, higher the parent child conflict among their children".

Result of the present study does find support from earlier work done directly or indirectly though research is lacking in this area of research. Patterson et al., (1992) conducted a research and found that higher levels of conflict have been related to adolescent antisocial

behavior and family violence. The perceptions of conflict with parents were high, adolescents were found to be more likely to engage in problem behaviors in the future. This was more prominent in children reared up by authoritarian parents.  In a study Park et al. (2010) found that children from authoritative homes had fewer psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, aggression, social problems and fewer disagreements with their parents suggesting less conflict with family members. Pettit, Bates, and Dodge (1994) conducted a research that indicated that when supporting parents showed a preventive, specific approach to teaching their children social skills, their children had fewer behavior problems. This research reflected the supporting parents' tutoring and instruction in order to help their children avoid and resolve conflicts. Therefore, these children were expected to show better behavioral adjustment and lack of parent-child conflict. Hence, the result confirms that higher the authoritarian parenting higher will be the parent-child conflict whereas, higher the authoritative parenting lowers the parent-child conflict.

## Parenting Style and Behavioural Problem among the Children :

the result of the correlation and t- test analysis clearly revealed the that, "Authoritative the parenting, lower the behaviour problems among their children" and authoritarian the parenting, higher the behaviour problems among their children".

Researchers found that authoritarian parenting style results in negative outcomes in adolescents and is correlated with less than healthy outcomes including depression, anxiety, aggression, social incompetence, low self-esteem, decreased happiness, low success, and increased nervousness (Furnham & Cheng 2000; Kaufmann, Gesten, & Santa Lucia 2000; Wolfradt, Hempel, & Miles 2003). In a study on parenting style and depression among adolescents, Joshi et al. (2009) found that, adolescents who lived with authoritarian parents had more depression than those who lived with authoritative parents. Other researchers also found that authoritarian parenting and depression are strongly correlated (Milevsky et al., 2007; Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2009). Thompson, Hollis, and Richards (2003) showed that authoritarian mothers may have children with behavior problems as early as age 5 to 10 years old, especially when the authoritarian mothers experience stress, depression, and socioeconomic problems; they may discipline their children more strictly and harshly. Another study, Barnow et al. (2005), found that when children are exposed to strict parenting,

they might show aggressive attitude as a protest to their parents. Overall, one might say that children raised by authoritarian parents have possibility to exhibit aggression behavior.

Several researchers found that parent-child interactions characterized by a controlling parent and a resisting child were negatively associated with adjustment in children (Campbell, Breaux, Ewing, & Szumowski, 1986;; Putallaz, 1987). Gámez-Guadix, et al. (2010) found that parents using corporal punishment significantly increased the probability of their children expressing antisocial traits or negative behaviours. Mulvaney and Mebert (2007) showed a significant correlation between corporal punishment and negative behavioural adjustment among children. Chen et al. (2006) demonstrate that harsh discipline is linked to behavior problems ranging from conduct disorder to depression and low self-esteem. Researchers found that the use of harsh discipline by either parent was related to greater adolescent depression and externalizing behavior. Barnes and Farrell (1992) found that parenting styles were significant predictors of behavioural problems, suggesting that positive parenting techniques such as high level of parental support and monitoring tended to have children who were less likely to exhibit behaviour problems in general. Researchers found that authoritative parenting style has an advantage in contributing to positive psychological well-being among children. When children grow up with authoritative parents, the way their parents nurture them may help these children become mature. Also, when authoritatively raised children have problems, they may have better problem-solving skills since their parents have modeled problem solving strategies. Authoritative parents listen and provide guidance to their children, hence this ability to communicate with their parents may leave these children feeling more satisfied with their life (Jackson & Schemes 2005; Liam et al., 2010; Pezzella 2010; Timpano et al., 2010).

Liem et al. (2010) investigated whether authoritative parenting during childhood correlates with young adolescent depression. The results of their study supported their hypothesis that authoritative parenting during childhood does negatively correlate with young adolescent depression symptoms. Children raised by authoritative parents are better able to develop social competence compared to other children. Jackson and Schemes (2005) study conducted on university students, found that students who have authoritative parents showed a higher level of social adjustment than those who have authoritarian parents. A study conducted on parenting styles and children's behavior determined that children who had authoritative parents showed more responsibility compared to children from homes where

different parenting styles were used. Regarding the academic achievement performance of children, a study suggested that children of authoritative parents showed accomplishment in academics, scoring higher on their academic pursuits. One might say that authoritative parenting might encourage children to develop a sense of responsibility to themselves and their surroundings. In the same line, authoritative parenting is also able to motivate children to study hard and gain high success in education (Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengart, & Cauffman, 2006).        Rossman and Rea, (2005) study explored that authoritative parenting led to better child adaptation and less externalizing problems such as being less aggressive and higher learning and conduct problems in children are due to strong authoritarian parenting while permissive parenting leads to a higher anxiety level and higher internalizing problems in children such as depression and social withdrawal. De Lisi, (2007) found that children of authoritative parents have higher grades in school; are more achievement oriented, independent, self-reliant, friendly, and cooperative; are less depressed, anxious, and dependent; and show lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. Furthermore, the relation between authoritative parenting and positive cognitive and social development in children appears to occur across social classes and ethnic groups. Thus, the research literature shows the positive aspects of authoritative childrearing styles over the alternative types of styles.

Hence, the result confirms that higher the authoritarian parenting higher will be the behaviour problems in children whereas, higher the authoritative parenting lowers the behaviour problems in children. Authoritative parenting style continues to influence children's development in positive ways. Conceptually, the authoritative style parents have both responsive and demanding dimensions. Their children have fewer behavioral problems and there is low conflict level between the parents and children. Thus, there will be less internalizing and externalizing symptoms ultimately cutting the conflict level between the parents and children. Whereas, the Authoritarian parenting style is associated positively with internalizing and externalizing behavior in children. Also, authoritarian parents are only demanding but they are unresponsive. They utilize the punishment for their own children. Hence, being too strict in childhood may result in children's behavior problems leading to a conflict between parents and children.        Thus, the present study confirms that the authoritarian parenting style is associated with the behavioral problems in children and parent-child conflict in them.

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