

Strengthening couple relationships for optimal child development in marriage life

T. Shantha Kumar^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Abstract Parenting quality is widely accepted as a primary predictor of children's mental health. The present study examined the effectiveness of a parenting program in fostering optimal parenting and child mental health. The selected program was How to talk so kids will listen & listen so kids will talk (How-to Parenting Program). This program was selected because its content corresponds closely to what the parenting style literature suggests is optimal parenting (i.e., includes structure, affiliation and autonomy support). Eleven groups of six to twelve parents were conducted in 7 local grade schools. The program, offered by two trained leaders, consisted of eight weekly sessions and taught a total of 30 skills. A total of 82 parents completed questionnaires both prior to and after the program. Participants' children between eight and 12 years old (N = 44) completed questionnaires at school, at both assessment points. Repeated measures ANOVAs using parent reports indicated that structure, affiliation and autonomy support were increased after the program, compared to baseline. The level of child internalizing and externalizing problems also decreased significantly. Importantly, children reports confirmed that parental autonomy support increased from pre to post-test and child-reported well-being improved as well.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, Depression, Parental Praise, Perceived Accuracy*

The concept of parenting styles was first introduced by Diane Baumrind to explain differences in the way parents attempt to control and socialize their children.

Here you will find information about the four basic parenting styles:

1. Authoritative parenting, who encourage kids to be responsible, to think for themselves, and to consider the reasons for rules
2. Authoritarian parenting, who expect their orders to be obeyed without question and who rely on punishment--or the threat of punishment--to control their kids
3. Permissive parenting, who are responsive and warm (a good thing) but also reluctant to enforce rules (a bad thing)
4. Uninvolved parenting, who offer their children little emotional support and fail to enforce standards of conduct

¹ Assistant Prof, Department of CS (Shift II), Alpha Arts & Science College, Chennai, India

[*Responding Author](#)

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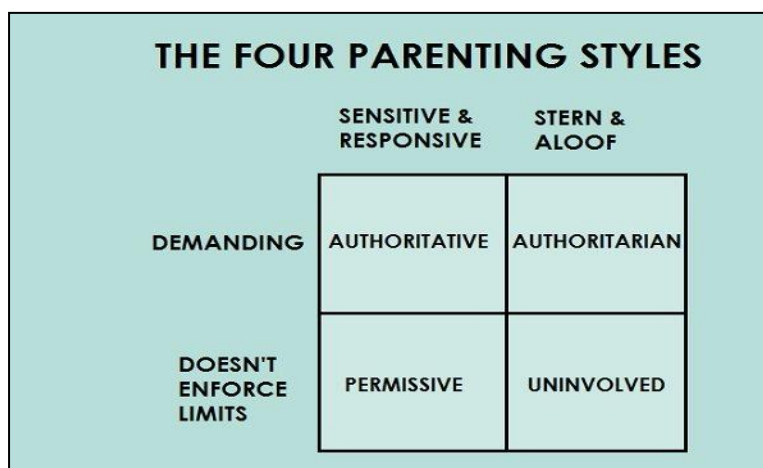


Fig. 1 Types of Parenting Styles

Parents influence their children through specific practices, like encouraging them to play outdoors, or helping them with their homework. But parenting is more than a set of specific practices. What about the overall approach that parents take to guiding, controlling, and socializing their kids? The attitudes that parents have about their children and the resulting emotional climate that creates?

It's this general pattern--this emotional climate--that researchers refer to as "parenting style" (Darling and Steinberg 1993). And research suggests that parenting styles have important effects on the ways that children develop. The aim of this paper is to use measures of life satisfaction from different surveys to estimate the size and permanence of the effects of marriage on subjective well-being.

We then dig deeper into the possible sources of these effects. We first look at the age patterns for the positive effects of marriage, finding that the U-shape in age is less marked for those who are married. In the same vein, we explore the role of friendship within marriage, finding that in our data the well-being benefits of marriage are much greater for those who also regard their spouse as their best friend.

Friendship as a Mechanism

Friendship could help explain why the benefits of marriage are not subject to adaptation, as one's partner provides unique social support for each challenge one faces in life. Additionally, friendship can help explain why people who are unmarried but living as a couple enjoy most of the well-being benefits of marriage, especially if, as we find, their partner is also their best friend. If friendship explains much of the well-being benefits of marriage, then life satisfaction should be higher for those whose spouses are also close friends. This is easily tested using the BHPS data, since respondents are asked about their closest friendship, with spouse or partner being one of the choices. Approximately half of married people and of those who are cohabiting list their partner as their best friend.

Marital Quality

Marital quality is a key concept explaining the happiness of a marriage. As described earlier, a culturally relevant marital scale was adopted for understanding the quality of marital relationship among working professionals. Thus, the total Marital Quality Score was obtained

by adding the score of each response in the Marital Quality Scale, after reverse-coding the negatively worded items.

Marital Quality and Religion Religion could be a factor that alleviates tension between persons and at the same time, it could also trigger conflicts. Though inter-religious marriages are fairly uncommon at pan-India levels, those from urban areas and with higher education tend to be the majority in such marriages (Goli, Singh and Sekher, 2013). There are two divergent views on the influence of religious difference on marital satisfaction.

Problem

Despite the central role for responsive parenting in different research frameworks, much of what we know about this parenting style comes from descriptive studies. This means that we can only infer the importance of responsive parenting. To assume a causal influence of responsive parenting on child outcomes would require data from experimental studies with random assignment. A strong body of experimental studies that demonstrate how greater degrees of responsive parenting promote higher levels of learning could provide a clearer understanding of the mechanism by which responsive behaviors promote a child's learning. Fortunately, there is growing evidence from interventions targeting the facilitation of responsive parent practices that show positive results and some evidence that when responsive behaviors are increased children showed at least short-term increases in cognitive, social, and emotional skills.^{16,17}

However, many questions still need to be addressed including whether there is specificity between particular responsive behaviors and the support they provide for certain areas of child development as well as whether there are sensitive periods of early development when particular types of responsive behaviors are most helpful.

Key Research Questions

1. Do increases in parent responsiveness behaviors result in increases in young children's learning?
2. Can interventions targeting responsive parenting work for different types of high risk parents?
3. Do increases in the various aspects of responsiveness explain the positive changes in different aspects of cognitive and social development?
4. Is there an optimal time in the child's development when responsiveness is particularly important, or is consistency across development necessary for more optimal learning to occur?
5. Is parental responsiveness equally effective, or does its effectiveness vary for children with varying characteristics (e.g., socio-economic status, ethnicity, biological risk factors)?

Medical Data

Governmental health care records were used to determine the medical history of all participants (i.e., parents and children). Comprehensive health care records have been widely used for epidemiological and other health studies in regions where centralized data are available.

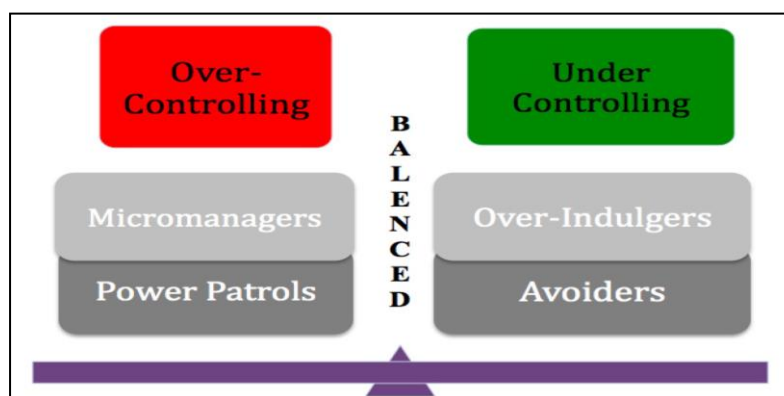


Fig. 2 Balanced System of Controlling

Financial Matters

Various studies have reported money as one the most frequent sources of spousal conflict (Oggins, 2003; Chethik, 2006). Tichenor (1999) stressed that discussing matters related to finance was a very emotional issue and could trigger defensiveness among marital partners as it was closely related to feelings of self-worth and also a sense of vulnerability. In a study of 100 husbands' and 100 wives' diary reports of 748 conflict instances, Papp et al (2009) found that marital conflicts about money were longlasting, problematic, and recurrent, and at times even did not have a resolution in comparison to nonmonetary issues. Bertrand et al (2013) found that couples were more likely to divorce when women earned more than their husbands. Since labour force participation of women in a full-time career is a relatively new phenomenon, it could either lead to positive responses from the male partner or create anxiety among the marital dyad (Malec, 2015). In this regard, the study sought to investigate how frequently money was an issue of contention in the marriages of the respondents.

Habits/ Addictions

The increasing dependence on some behavior such as gambling, eating, exercise, work, internet, cell phone use, and sex come under the purview of addictions (Robinson, 1998; Griffiths, 2000). It is crucial to note that dual career couples, who have equally competing worlds, can resort to habits and addictions to relieve their stress. The spillover of stress can affect the quality of relationship between the couples. A study by Billings et al (1979) did not find a significant difference between the marital interactions of alcoholics and their wives from those of non-alcoholic married distressed couples.

CONCLUSION

From interviews and observations of the commuter partner marriage, findings are among others:

1. Almost all the husband state quite satisfied with his marriage. Only is Subject 2 less satisfied, on aspects of sexual intercourse which he considers less aggressive.
2. All the wives feel less satisfied toward marriage, although differing in its aspects. Subjects 1 and 2 are not happy because their husbands have the other women to satisfy their sexual needs, while Subject 3 is less satisfied on the financial aspects as well as the heavy workload for taking care of 6 children.
3. All subjects man / husband of cheating with another woman. Infidelity of subject 1 and 2 is known by their wives and creating conflicts and dissatisfaction, while the third subject will do infidelity only at certain times (when unbearable).

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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