

Perceived Parenting Styles and Intolerance of Uncertainty among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

People vary in their ability to tolerate uncertainty. In other words, some people can handle a great deal of uncertainty while others cannot handle even a little bit. However, a considerable role in shaping children's emotional health is played by parents, especially during the adolescents. In this view, the relation between parenting style and the intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents is examined in this study. Using purposive sampling, data was collected from a sample of 150 participants and after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the analysis of correlation and independent sample t-test was done on the selected 150 data. The results also show that there is a significant negative relationship between authoritative parenting style and intolerance of uncertainty among adolescents and a significant positive relationship between intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents and authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. However, no significant differences in gender have been found in all the variables. The implications of the study are discussed.

Keywords: Parenting Style, Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, Intolerance of Uncertainty, Adolescents

The process of parenting is dynamic and impacted by socio-cultural elements. It is one of the most important factors that contributes to the development of child and childhood psychopathology (Sahithya et. al., 2019). There is enough data to conclude that parenting style has a significant impact on a child's development, even though there is no single, all-encompassing theory of parenting and how it impacts children's development (Thergaonkar & Wadkar, 2007). Parents play a significant impact in determining children's emotional health, especially throughout the formative years of childhood (Clarke et. al., 2013). As a result, models describing the genesis and maintenance of childhood disorders have highlighted the key importance of parental practices (Garb et. al., 2005). Excessive parental control restricts the child's development of autonomy, and affects child's confidence and sense of competence, especially in social situations (Sahithya et. al., 2019).

Children that experience high levels of parental control but little parental supervision exhibit extrinsic motivational orientation, higher rates of anxiety and depressive symptoms, and

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aggressive behaviour. Children who had parents who supported their autonomy were found to have higher levels of intrinsic motivation and to have much less bullying over time than those who had parents who did not (Bronstein et al., 2005).

The aim of this study is to understand how parenting style is related to the level of tolerance of uncertainty in adolescents. According to the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association. (n.d.), parenting or parenting style all actions related to the raising of offspring. Different human parenting styles—the manner in which parents engage with their children—have been documented by researchers, with the majority of classifications depending on the emotional warmth (warm vs. cold) and control (high vs. low) dimensions.

One of the most influential of these classifications is that of U.S. developmental psychologist Diana Baumrind (1927–2018), involving four types of styles: authoritarian parenting, in which the parent or caregiver stresses obedience, deemphasizes collaboration and dialogue, and employs strong forms of punishment; authoritative parenting, in which the parent or caregiver encourages a child's autonomy yet still places certain limitations on behavior; permissive parenting, in which the parent or caregiver is accepting and affirmative, makes few demands, and avoids exercising control; and rejecting–neglecting parenting, in which the parent or caregiver is unsupportive, fails to monitor or limit behavior, and is more attentive to their own needs than those of their child.

Intolerance of uncertainty (IU) is defined as an individual's cognitive predisposition that affects his perception, interpretation, and reaction to vague situations (Dugas et al., 1998). In reaction, to control the outcome of the situation, the individual unconsciously exhibits this IU in his emotional, behavioral, and cognitive reactions to these ambiguous situations that are inclined to be negative. Too much anxiety and worry are developed and maintained by the key role of IU that demonstrates an explicit relation with worry (Freeston et al.1994). People with high IU expect no situation's results to be favourable, so they are unable to deal with the issue without knowing the results (Buhr & Dugas, 2002).

The crucial developmental stage of adolescence is distinguished by significant biochemical and physiological changes. When it comes to behaviour, adolescence is characterised by erratic emotions and demanding behaviour as people learn to manage their peer relationships, develop their separate identities, and make the transition to adulthood (American Psychological Association. (n.d.). In adolescents, anxiety is closely associated with intolerance of uncertainty (IU), a cognitive tendency typified by a fear of the unknown.

There is little research on intolerance of uncertainty (IU) in youth samples, but IU has helped us comprehend excessive worry and adult anxiety problems. This gap exists because there isn't a reliable psychometric indicator of IU in young people. Yet, a psychometrically sound measure of IU in young people was discovered because of the significant background study that was done on the subject of uncertainty in adolescents. It was easier to choose this specific topic of study for the research because of the dearth or gap in research on the degree of tolerance in youngsters. While making dangerous decisions, adolescents have a remarkable tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty.

Previous research on the relation between Intolerance of Uncertainty (IU) and other behaviors in individuals during adolescence is limited. In the study titled “Perceived Parental Rearing Behaviors, Anxiety, and Intolerance of Uncertainty among University

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Students”, the results of showed that perceived rejecting and over-protective parental behaviors had significantly positive relationship with experiences of anxiety and intolerance of uncertainty (Zafar and Jami, 2017).

Similarly, the paper “Parenting Profiles, Intolerance of Uncertainty, and Worry among Chinese Primary School Children” (Shen et al., 2020). The supportive parenting profile had the lowest level of IU, and the disengaged and supporting parenting profiles exhibited lower levels of worry than the harsh and extremely severe parenting profiles. However, the findings on the relation between parenting style and intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents were limited.

The current study explores the relationship between parenting styles and intolerance of uncertainty among adolescents, with the future aim of identifying key components of parenting styles for preventing internalizing and externalizing problems.

METHOD

Objectives

The following objectives were decided to answer the research question Will there be a relationship between parenting style and intolerance of uncertainty.

- To find out the relation between parenting style and the intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents.
- To find out which style of parenting is highly correlated with level of intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents.
- To examine gender differences in the level of intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents.

Hypotheses

H1: There will be a correlation between parenting style and intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents.

H2: There will be significant difference in level of tolerance of uncertainty between genders

Research Design

The research design used in this study is correlational design. A correlational design is one in which two or more variables are measured and the statistical relationship between them is assessed with no manipulation of an independent variable.

Sample and Sampling

The study was conducted on 150 adolescents using convenience sampling. Only those who meet the inclusion criteria were eligible for the study. The analysis was done on the 150 data (98 females and 52 males).

Inclusion Criteria:

- Adolescents residing in Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu
- Age range: 13-18 years
- Knowledge of English Language

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Measures

Administration

Google forms were used to collect data. The first section of the form collected the demographic details and the further sections consisted of two questionnaires that measured the study variables.

Tools

The variables of the present investigation were measured by using the following tools.

- **Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale for Children (IUSC):** (Comer et al., 2009) The Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale for Children (IUSC) includes 27 items relating to the idea that uncertainty is unacceptable, reflects badly on a person, and leads to frustration, stress, and the inability to take action. Participants rate items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "not at all characteristic of me" to 5 = "entirely characteristic of me".
- **Perceived Parenting Style Scale:** (Divya & Manikandan (2013) The Perceived Parenting Style Scale developed by Divya and Manikandan (2013) measure the perception of the children about their parent's behaviour. It measures perceived parenting style of the subject with regard to three dimensions such as authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. It consists of 30 items in which responses were elicited in a five point Likert scale.

RESULTS

Data in table 1 shows the demographics of the participants of this research study. The sample consisted of 52 (34.66%) males and 98 (65.33%) females.

Table 1 Socio demographic characteristics of participants

Gender	n	%
Male	52	34.66
Female	98	65.33

Table 2 shows the results of the correlational analysis between the scores of Intolerances of Uncertainty Scale for Children (IUSC) and Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS). Based on the results of the study, Intolerance of Uncertainty is significantly negatively correlated with Authoritative Parenting Style $r = -0.267$, $p < .01$. Intolerance of Uncertainty is significantly positively correlated with Authoritarian Parenting Style $r = 0.400$, $p < .01$ and Permissive Parenting Style $r = 0.228$, $p < .01$.

Table 2: Shows the correlation between the parenting style an Intolerance of Uncertainty

Variable	Authoritative Parenting Style	Authoritarian Parenting Style	Permissive Parenting Style
Intolerance of Uncertainty	-.267*	.400*	.228*

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

Table 3 shows the results of the gender differences in the study variables. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare level of Intolerance of uncertainty for males and females. There was not a significant difference in the scores for males ($M = 80.77$, $SD = 20.12$) and females ($M = 78.31$, $SD = 20.52$); $t = -.491$, $p = .624$.

Table 3 Results of gender difference among the variables

Logistic Parameter		n	M	SD	t	p
Intolerance of Uncertainty	Male	52	80.077	20.1229	-.495	0.622
	Female	98	78.316	20.5282		

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to find out the relation between parenting style and the intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents. The data was collected from 150 students predominantly from Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

Three major types of parenting styles, namely, Authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style and permissive parenting style were considered. The relationship between these three parenting styles with level of Intolerance of Uncertainty was examined. There is a significant negative correlation between authoritative parenting style and intolerance of uncertainty as well as a positive correlation with authoritarian parenting style and permissive parenting style.

A very few studies have specifically examined the relationship between parenting style and intolerance of uncertainty. However, the findings of the study Perceived Parental Rearing Behaviors, Anxiety, and Intolerance of Uncertainty among University Students by Humaira Jami and Chand Bano Zafar indicated that emotional warmth was inversely connected with anxiety and intolerance of uncertainty among students, and that perceived rejecting and overly protective parental behaviours had a strong positive association with experiences of anxiety and intolerance of uncertainty (Zafar and Jami, 2017). Rejecting and overprotective parenting style being highly similar to authoritarian parenting style and emotional warmth being an important factor in authoritative parenting style. The findings are consistent with the present study.

Similarly, findings from the study Parenting Profiles, Intolerance of Uncertainty, and Worry among Chinese Primary School Children by Yaqing Shen et al shows that the supportive parenting profile had the lowest level of IU by Yaqing et al, (2020). According to research (Muris et al. 2000), parenting practices have a significant impact on how worry develops and is maintained in children and adolescents. The intolerance of uncertainty (IU; Zlomke and Young 2009), which is a dispositional negative orientation towards uncertainty and its effects, has also been identified by researchers as a factor that may mediate the effects of parenting style on children's worry (Donovan et al. 2017).

In this study, no significant difference in overall level of intolerance of uncertainty was found between males and females. This was consistent with the findings of the study by Bottessi et al., (2022). The age limit considered in the study could also be one factor that shows the least significant difference among genders. This study was however limited by the sampling technique chosen, and its restriction to one specific geographical location and thus could contradict the findings of other studies as well.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relation between parenting style and level of intolerance of uncertainty among adolescents. The findings suggest that authoritative parenting style decreases the level of intolerance of uncertainty among adolescents. However, the level of intolerance of uncertainty increases with authoritarian and permissive

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parenting styles. All these variables do not have significant differences between the genders. Thus, both boys and girls exhibit a similar level of intolerance of uncertainty during adolescence.

Implications

Parental behavior is one of the most influential factors on the development of adolescent externalizing and internalizing behavior problems. And thus the different parenting could have a high level of impact on the level of intolerance of uncertainty in adolescents. The relationship between parenting styles and adolescent adjustment is a key component that should be included in interventions according to adolescents' behavior problem profiles. It could be noticed that the gap found in this area of study is quite noticeable and furthermore, the results shed light on the need that family interventions are complemented with individualized interventions with adolescents that accumulate stressful life events. Positive parenting, however, is a challenging endeavor, particularly throughout adolescence when there is a propensity for family conflict to rise, partly as a result of developmental changes and new obstacles that both boys and girls must confront. Thus, it could be clearly identified that family support policies should offer parental education programmes to parents of teenagers.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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