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Research Paper

Comparison of Perception of Parenting Style

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ABSTRACT

Parenting style is defined as the combination of strategies that parents use to raise their children, including discipline, communication, and warmth. The study aims to compare the perception of parenting style between parents and their children. The Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from a sample of two different families to get in-depth details of the underlying factors influencing their perception of the parenting dimensions. The results of the study showed that while one pair of parent-child selected for the study showed similar perceptions of the highest perceived dimension of parenting, the other pair had differing perceptions of the highest dimension of parenting. By understanding the differences in perception of parenting style, parents can be better equipped to adjust their parenting strategies to meet the needs of their children and foster positive developmental outcomes. The study can help to identify areas where parents may need to adjust their parenting style to better meet their children's needs.

Although an important developmental task for adolescents is to become more autonomous and independent, a warm and supportive relationship with parents remains key for adolescent mental health (Steinberg and Silk 2002). What a warm and supportive relationship with parents entails, however, is not so clear-cut, as adolescents and parents can perceive or experience parenting behavior quite differently. For instance, an adolescent might perceive the parent as critical or even rejecting, while the parent may experience his or her own behavior as constructive. Differences between these perspectives of parenting (also referred to as incongruence or discrepancies) have been found to relate to adolescent mental well-being (De Los Reyes et al. 2019; Hou et al. 2019).

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles, as conceptualized by Baumrind (1991), are typically categorized into four main types: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Each style is characterized by different levels of demandingness (control) and responsiveness (warmth) exhibited by parents towards their children. Authoritative parenting, characterized by high levels of warmth and responsiveness coupled with reasonable levels of control and demands, has been consistently associated with positive child outcomes such as higher self-esteem, better academic performance, and lower rates of problem behavior (Baumrind, 1991). In contrast, authoritarian parenting tends to be high in control but low in warmth, while

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permissive parenting is characterized by high warmth but low control. Neglectful parenting, on the other hand, is marked by low levels of both control and warmth.

Differences in Perception of Parenting Styles of Parents and Their Children

Despite the existence of these distinct parenting styles, research has shown that there are often differences in how parents perceive their own parenting style compared to how their children perceive it. This disjunction in perception can arise due to various factors, including communication barriers, generational gaps, and differing cultural norms and values (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Understanding these differences in perception is crucial for gaining insights into the dynamics of parent-child relationships and their implications for child development.

Recent research has focused on exploring the factors contributing to the variation in perception of parenting styles between parents and their children. Studies have investigated how parent and child characteristics, such as temperament, gender, and age, influence their perspectives on parenting (Fuligni & Zhang, 2004; McLoyd et al., 1994). Additionally, cultural factors have been found to play a significant role in shaping the perception of parenting styles, with immigrant families often exhibiting different parenting practices and values compared to their mainstream counterparts (Chao, 1994).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Darling and Steinberg (1993) conducted pioneering research to explore the congruence between parents' and adolescents' perceptions of parenting style. Their findings indicated a moderate level of agreement between parental and adolescent reports, albeit with notable variations influenced by cultural background and the developmental stage of the child. This study highlighted the complexity of parent-child interactions and the importance of considering multiple perspectives within the family unit.

Martinez and Garcia (2008) delved into the intergenerational transmission of parenting styles specifically within Hispanic families. Their research underscored the significant influence of cultural factors on perceptions of parenting, illustrating how cultural norms and values shape parental behaviors and children's interpretations of those behaviors. By focusing on a specific cultural group, this study contributed to a deeper understanding of the cultural nuances in parenting practices and perceptions.

Cross-cultural studies have further expanded our comprehension of how parenting styles are perceived across diverse societies. Chao (1994) and Fuligni and Zhang (2004) conducted seminal research on the acculturation gap between immigrant parents and their children. These studies revealed discrepancies in parenting perceptions driven by cultural adaptation and generational differences. They emphasized the importance of considering cultural contexts when examining parent-child relationships and highlighted the challenges faced by immigrant families in navigating cultural transitions while maintaining familial harmony.

In addition to the aforementioned studies, recent research has continued to explore the multifaceted nature of parenting style perceptions. For example, Smith et al. (2016) conducted a longitudinal study examining the stability and change in parent-child perceptions of parenting style over time. Their findings revealed dynamic shifts in perceptions influenced by both individual and contextual factors, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of the evolving nature of parent-child relationships.

Rationale of the study

The rationale for conducting this study stems from the fact that parenting style is one of the most crucial factors that can impact a child's social, emotional, and psychological development. Understanding the differences in perception between parents and their children about parenting styles can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of parent-child relationships. By comparing the perceptions of parenting styles between parents and their children, researchers can identify areas of agreement and disagreement, which can help to promote better communication and understanding between parents and their children.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sampling technique employed for the study is purposive sampling. A total of 4 participants were chosen, consisting of 2 children (one male and one female) and one parent associated with each child. The age range of the children who were selected for the study was 6-18 years, ensuring a diverse representation across different developmental stages.

Tools

Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ): The Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) is a widely used tool for assessing various dimensions of parenting behavior. Developed by Frick in 1991, the APQ evaluates parental practices across multiple domains, including positive involvement, supervision, positive discipline techniques, and consistency in disciplinary measures (Frick, 1991). The APQ consists of 42 items that measure six dimensions of parenting practices: Positive Reinforcement, Monitoring/Supervision, Inconsistent Discipline, Corporal Punishment, use of Verbal Hostility, and use of Physical Aggression. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The APQ has demonstrated strong psychometric properties, including high internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct validity. In terms of internal consistency, the APQ has demonstrated Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .63 to .93 for the six subscales. Test-retest reliability has been found to be satisfactory, with correlation coefficients ranging from .57 to .89. The construct validity of the APQ has been supported by numerous studies, which have shown that the questionnaire is able to discriminate between different parenting styles and practices, and that it is associated with a range of child outcomes, including academic achievement, social competence, and mental health.

Design

The participants were selected via purposive sampling, aligning with the exploratory design adopted for the study. Data collection involved administering the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) to the participants. Prior to questionnaire completion, rapport was established with the participants, who were then requested to fill out the questionnaire. In addition to the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to get in-depth details of the underlying factors influencing their perception of the parenting dimensions.

Statistical Analysis

The scoring of both parent and child responses to the questionnaire was conducted across five sub-domains: Involvement, Positive Parenting, Poor Monitoring, Inconsistent Discipline, and Corporal Punishment. To determine the highest dimension of parenting, the average scores of each domain were calculated separately for both the parent and child perceptions.

RESULTS

Table No. 1 Parent-Child scores for Pair-1

Sub-Domains	Parent's Scores	Child's Scores
Involvement	41	18
Positive Parenting	28	24
Poor Monitoring	17	19
Inconsistent Discipline	20	15
Corporal Punishment	5	3

The above table illustrates the scores of both the parent and the child in Pair-1 across five sub-domains. In the domain of Involvement, the parent scored 41, while the child scored 18. Regarding Positive Parenting, the parent received a score of 28, whereas the child scored 24. For Poor Monitoring, the parent and child scored 17 and 19 respectively. In terms of Inconsistent Discipline, the parent scored 20, contrasting with the child's score of 15. Finally, within the domain of Corporal Punishment, the parent scored 5, while the child scored 3 respectively.

Table No. 2 Parent-Child scores for Pair-2

Sub-Domains	Parent's Scores	Child's Scores
Involvement	48	38
Positive Parenting	30	22
Poor Monitoring	28	28
Inconsistent Discipline	15	14
Corporal Punishment	5	4

In Pair-2, the table presents scores reflecting parent-child perceptions across five sub-domains. For the sub-domain of Involvement, the parent scored 48, while the child scored 38. In Positive Parenting, the parent scored 30, contrasting with the child's score of 22. Poor Monitoring yielded scores of 28 for both parent and child. Inconsistent Discipline saw scores of 15 for the parent and 14 for the child. Finally, in the domain of Corporal Punishment, the parent scored 5, while the child scored 4.

Table No. 3 Highest dimension of parenting according to an average of the scores

Pair	Parent	Child
Parent-Child Pair-1	Positive Parenting	Positive Parenting
Parent-Child Pair-2	Positive Parenting	Involvement

Based on the average of the scores of the five sub-domains of parenting, the highest dimension as perceived by the Parent and the child of Pair-1 was found to be Positive Parenting for both of them. However, for the Parent and the child of Pair-2, the highest dimension of parenting as perceived by the parent and the child was found to be Positive Parenting and Involvement respectively.
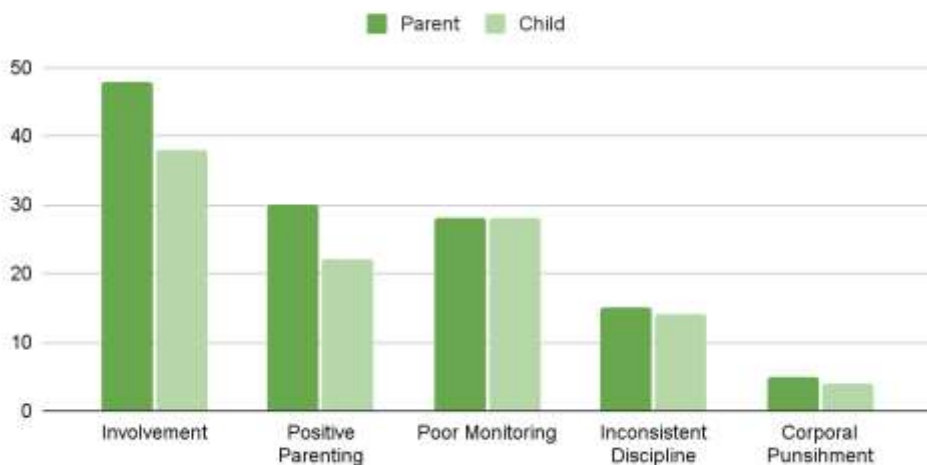
Scores of Parent-Child Pair-1
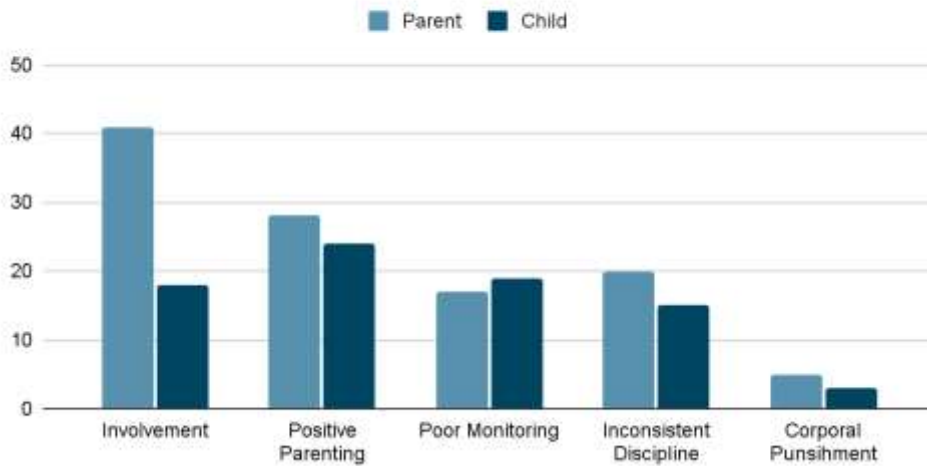
Graph No. 1 Scores of Parent-Child Pair-1

The above graph shows higher levels of Involvement, Positive Parenting, Inconsistent Discipline, and Corporal Punishment domains as perceived by the parent as compared to the levels of the domains as perceived by the child of Pair-1. However, the levels of the domain of Poor Monitoring were higher as perceived by the child when compared to the levels as perceived by the parent.

Scores of Parent-Child Pair-2

Graph No. 2 Scores of Parent-Child Pair-2

The above graph shows higher levels of Involvement, Positive Parenting, Inconsistent Discipline, and Corporal Punishment domains as perceived by the parent as compared to the levels of the domains as perceived by the child of Pair-2. However, the levels of the domain of Poor Monitoring were the same as perceived by the child when compared to the levels as perceived by the parent.

DISCUSSION

Parental Involvement is a critical domain in child development, associated with improved outcomes for children. Parents engage in various activities related to their children's upbringing, such as providing emotional support, monitoring activities, and assisting with homework (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Research by Hill and Tyson (2009) demonstrated a positive relationship between Parental Involvement and academic achievement in both African American and Latino adolescents, with higher levels of parental involvement correlating with increased likelihood of high school graduation and college attendance. The results showed that parental involvement was positively related to academic achievement in both groups. The study also found that parents who were more involved in their children's education had children who were more likely to graduate from high school and attend college. Another study by Crosnoe and Elder (2004) investigated the role of parental involvement in adolescent development. The study found that parental involvement in adolescence was positively associated with academic achievement, fewer behavioral problems, and better mental health outcomes. Another study supported that parental involvement was particularly important for adolescents from low-income families. The present study found that the domain of involvement had higher scores as perceived by parents when compared to the scores of the children in both pairs. This might be because of a difference in opinion between the parent and the child because of the generation gap.

Positive Parenting is an approach that emphasizes the use of positive reinforcement, communication, and discipline strategies to promote children's healthy development. This domain is associated with better outcomes for children, including higher self-esteem, better mental health, and fewer behavioral problems. Pinquart and Kauser (2018) examined the relationship between positive parenting and children's mental health outcomes. The study found that positive parenting was associated with better mental health outcomes for children, including fewer behavioral problems and higher levels of self-esteem. The study also found that positive parenting was more effective than other parenting styles, such as authoritarian or permissive parenting, in promoting positive outcomes for children. Sanders et al. (2014) investigated the effectiveness of a positive parenting program in reducing behavioral problems in children. The study found that parents who participated in the Positive Parenting program reported fewer behavioral problems in their children compared to a control group. The program was also found to be effective in reducing parenting stress and improving parent-child relationships.

Parental Monitoring is an important domain in parenting that involves keeping track of children's activities and whereabouts and being aware of their friends and peer groups. This domain is associated with better outcomes for children, including reduced risk of risky behavior, better academic performance, and improved mental health. Kerr and Stattin (2000) examined the role of Parental Monitoring in adolescent behavior. The study found that higher levels of parental monitoring were associated with a lower likelihood of adolescent delinquency and substance use. The study also found that parental monitoring was more effective when combined with warm and supportive parenting practices. Soenens et al. (2010) investigated the relationship between parental monitoring and adolescent autonomy. The study found that high levels of Parental Monitoring were associated with lower levels of adolescent autonomy, but that this relationship was moderated by the quality of the parent-child relationship. When the parent-child relationship was characterized by warmth and support, parental monitoring was positively associated with adolescent autonomy.

Inconsistent Discipline is a domain in parenting that refers to the use of inconsistent discipline strategies or enforcement of rules. Inconsistent Discipline has been associated with negative outcomes for children, including higher levels of externalizing behaviors, such as aggression and delinquency. Weymouth et al. (2016) examined the relationship between inconsistent discipline and children's externalizing behaviors. The study found that Inconsistent Discipline was associated with higher levels of externalizing behaviors in children, even when controlling for other factors such as child temperament and parenting warmth. Lansford et al. (2014) investigated the role of inconsistent discipline in predicting children's aggressive behavior across different cultures. The study found that inconsistent discipline was a significant predictor of children's aggressive behavior across different cultures, including China, Colombia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, the Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, and the United States.

Corporal Punishment is a domain in parenting that involves the use of physical force to correct or control a child's behavior. Corporal Punishment has been linked to negative outcomes for children, including increased aggression, poor mental health, and reduced academic achievement. Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of research on the effects of corporal punishment on children and found that corporal punishment was associated with increased aggression, increased antisocial behavior, decreased mental health, and decreased cognitive functioning in children. The study also found that the negative effects of corporal punishment were similar across different cultures and countries. Afifiet al. (2017) investigated the association between exposure to corporal punishment during childhood and later intimate partner violence perpetration. The study found that exposure to corporal punishment during childhood was associated with an increased likelihood of perpetrating intimate partner violence in adulthood, even when controlling for other factors such as parental education and childhood abuse.

Limitations
Limitations of the study include the narrow focus on only two family samples, limiting the generalizability of findings to broader populations. Additionally, the study lacks diversity in socioeconomic status, cultural background, and family dynamics, potentially overlooking important variations in parenting practices and child outcomes. Therefore, future research should aim to include a more diverse and representative sample to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of parenting and child development.

CONCLUSION
The present study aimed to compare the perception of parenting style between parents and their children. The results showed that the perception of the domains of parenting of the parent and the child might differ as in the case of the Pair-2 of the Parent and the child, in which the highest perceived domain for the parent was Positive Parenting, and for the child, it was Involvement. However, for Pair-1 of the parent and the child, the highest perceived domain for both was Positive Parenting. The findings of the study can be used to develop parenting education programs that aim to bridge the gap between parents' perceptions and their children's perceptions of parenting styles.

Implications
Understanding the differences in parenting perceptions can lead to improved communication and stronger relationships between parents and children. By acknowledging and addressing these differences, parents can work to improve their parenting practices and better understand their children's needs. The study can help parents identify areas where their

parenting styles may differ from their children's perceptions and make changes accordingly. This can lead to more effective parenting practices and better outcomes for children. The study can shed light on the impact of parenting perceptions on children's mental health outcomes. Children who perceive their parents' parenting style differently from their parents may experience stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. By understanding these differences, parents can work to address these issues and provide support to their children.

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