

Assessment of contextual traits: Parenting styles and peer pressure amongst juvenile delinquents

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The present study was undertaken to assess the contextual traits of juvenile delinquents. The sample comprised of 120 respondents in 16-18 years of age range, selected from observation homes of six districts, from three cultural zones of Punjab. Further the sample was distributed over two sexes *i.e.* 80 juvenile delinquent boys and 40 juvenile delinquent girls. Scales used to collect the relevant information for the study were: Children's Perception of Parenting Style (Pyari and Kalra, 2005), Peer Pressure Scale (Saini and Singh, 2012). Data depicts that maximum number of the delinquents belonged to the average level of delinquency. The results revealed that a large number of respondents reported accepting, overprotective and autocratic type of parenting styles. A large proportion of juveniles had shown low level of peer pressure but quite a good number of delinquents had shown medium and high level of peer pressure.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Juvenile delinquency, Parenting style, Peer pressure

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Children are heritage of Lord" or "Children are the closest thing to heaven" these are some old phrases we are hearing since our childhood, but the scenario of today's world is changing day by day. Risky surrounding, negligence of basic needs, bad company and other kinds of abuses may push an innocent child into delinquency. Parenting is a process of paramount importance as it has its impact on educational and sociological sphere. There are different types of parenting style, permissive parenting, neglectful parenting, indulgent parenting, authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, overprotective and over demanding parenting style. Extreme negative behavior such as neglect, hostility and rejection were associated to delinquency. Children

who experience rejection by their parents or other significant people are at risk to develop distorted mental representations of themselves and their environment (Rohner *et al.*, 2004). In authoritarian parenting style parents focus more on external control rather than their self regulation (Hoffman and Cerbone, 1994) and this external authority imposition can increase the chances of the adolescent to become delinquents.

The term bad companionship is also used somewhere to describe the bad affect of peer pressure. Peer pressure is feeling pressure from peer groups or age mates to do something harmful for others as well as for self, indirectly or directly. Researchers and other social scientists have identified many underlying risk factors

for emerging youth problems such as smoking, drinking, drug abuse, gambling, violence etc. Peer pressure is one of the most significant risk factors in such problems. Development of delinquency in boys with disruptive and aggressive behaviour was studied by Vitro *et al.* (1997). The major early risk factors for delinquent behavior among juveniles include low intelligence, impulsiveness, poor parental supervision, low school achievement, punitive or erratic parental discipline, child physical abuse, parental conflict, cold parental attitude, antisocial parents, disrupted families, low family income, large family size, high delinquency-rate schools, antisocial peers, and high crime neighborhoods (Farrington, 2005).

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was carried out in selected observation homes of three different cultural zones (*i.e.* Majha, Doaba and Malwa) of Punjab state. On the basis of availability of observation homes, six districts were selected from the three cultural zones of Punjab state. The districts which were selected were Ludhiana, Jalandher, Faridkot, Hoshiyarpur, Amritsar and Gurdaspur. From all the enrolled delinquents in the selected observation homes, 120 delinquents in the age range of 16 to 18 years were randomly selected as respondents. The total numbers of selected male respondents were 80 and female respondents were 40.

Research instruments :

Children’s perception of parenting style:

The current scale was administered to measure the children’s perception of parenting style which was developed by Pyari and Kalra (2005). This scale measures six areas of parenting style *i.e.* Democratic, Autocratic, Accepting, and Rejecting, Over projecting and Over Demanding.

Peer pressure scale:

This (Saini and Singh, 2012) was administered to assess the peer pressure among of the respondents with

the help of 25 items. Around 20 minutes were taken to perform the scale. It is a self report 5-point Likert scale which gives estimate of peer pressure in adolescents.

Procedure of the data collection :

The respondents were selected from the observation homes from the three cultural zones of Punjab. They were assured that their identity will not be revealed at any forum and all the information will be kept confidential and will be used only for the research purpose. Rapport was developed with every respondent to get in depth information. One to one interaction was done to fill the information of the respondents. Personal interview and observation method were used to collect the data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data from the Table 1 depicts that a large number of the delinquents belonged to the average level (67.5%) of delinquency while, 20 per cent of them had high level of delinquency and only 12.5 per cent of the juvenile delinquents reported low level of delinquency. The table further describes the gender wise distribution of the delinquency level among juvenile delinquents. According to the data delinquent boys followed the same pattern as the total respondents. A large numbers of delinquent boys (73.75%) were showed average level of delinquency while only 15 per cent of the juvenile delinquent boys had low level of delinquency and remaining 11.25 per cent had shown the high level of delinquency. Similar patterns were revealed by the delinquent girls as majority of the delinquent girls (70%) were reported average level of delinquency followed by high level of delinquency (22.5%) and a very few of them (7.5%) had low level of delinquency. No significant gender differences have been found between the different levels of delinquency among juveniles.

Table 2 (Fig. 1) per cent distribution of respondents across various levels in different styles of perceived

Table 1 : Per cent distribution of juvenile delinquents across various levels of delinquency				
Delinquency levels	Total respondents (n=120) f(%)	Boys (n ₁ = 80) f(%)	Girls (n ₂ = 40) f(%)	z-value
Low	15(12.50)	12(15.00)	3(7.50)	1.17
Average	81(67.50)	59(73.75)	28(70.00)	0.43
High	24(20.00)	9(11.25)	9(22.50)	1.63

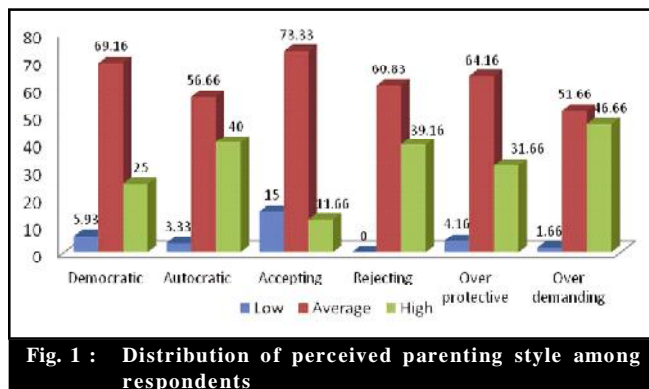


Fig. 1 : Distribution of perceived parenting style among respondents

parenting:

Data from the Fig. 1 depicts the distribution of respondents as per level of perceived parenting style across various levels. The data shows that majority of the juvenile delinquents (73.83%) reported average level of accepting parenting style. Sixty nine per cent of the juvenile delinquents had shown the average level of democratic parenting style which means an overall positive parenting style. The third most perceived parenting style among juveniles was average level of over protective parenting style (64.16%) followed by rejecting (61%) and autocratic (51.6%) style of parenting. Approximately 47 per cent of respondents perceived high level of over demanding parenting style followed by autocratic and rejecting (40% each). 31.6 per cent of the respondents shown high level of over protective style of parenting followed by those 25 per cent who had high level of autocratic kind of parenting style.

The higher percentage of accepting parenting style reflects that most of the delinquents had parents with a tendency to not interfere in the children’s matter and accept them as they are either good or bad. It depicts that these kind of parents are least involved with their children to protect or guide them which may indulge them towards the delinquency. The average level of democratic parenting style describes that care, love, protection, guidance are in proper amount but as now a days parenting is a very challenging profession and sometimes it does not have the desired impact. The third most perceived parenting among juveniles was over protective style, as per the name suggest the parents were over protected towards the child especially for girls which can be a reason of emotional repressiveness at can lead them towards delinquency.

Rejecting parenting refers to neglecting the child

and his developmental needs, autocratic parenting means rigid bossy behaviour towards children and over demanding parenting depicts being overly demanding towards children; all these parenting styles are not good for the optimum development of the child. The high levels of negative parenting styles are more harmful than the average level of positive parenting as supported by Gilbert *et al.* (2000) who suggested that parenting was associated with adolescent problematic behaviour among urban minority group. A significant difference was found between the different levels of all the dimensions of perceived style *i.e.* Democratic, Autocratic, Accepting, Rejecting, Over protective and Over demanding.

Glimpse of the Table 2 denotes the distribution of the total sample across different levels of peer pressure. As per the data most of the juvenile delinquents were reported low peer pressure (35.8%) while 34.2 per cent of the respondents had medium level of peer pressure and the rest thirty per cent of the respondents had experienced high level of peer pressure. There was a significant difference between the levels of peer pressure among juvenile delinquents. Peer-relationship difficulties (Parker and Asher, 1987) in childhood predict serious adjustment problems in later life. The major early risk factors for delinquent behaviour among juvenile include antisocial peers, poor parental supervision and high crime neighbourhoods (Farrington, 2005).

Levels of Peer Pressure	f (%)
Low	43 (35.8)
Average	41 (34.2)
High	36 (30)
Mean (±SD)	72.5(±22.2)
F value	378.92*

*p<0.05

Summary :

Adolescents are valuable assets of nation. Adolescence is the most controversial and complex period of life span in which immaturity and confrontation with reality confuses the child due to rapid changes in the social system adolescents are facing too many social and emotional changes in their lives. A delinquent child is a person who is under 18 years but commits an offensive act and is in the remand. A child who is delinquent may be surrounded by many risk factors like bad peer group, poor parenting or risky neighbourhood.

Peer pressure is feeling pressure from the age mates especially to do harmful things to self or to others. Negative peer influence can be a major cause of being delinquent among the juveniles. Parenting styles are the different patterns used by the parents or caregivers to raise their children. Poor parenting style which include over protective, over demanding, autocratic or rejecting can affect the wholesome development of the child. A large number of the delinquent juveniles reported accepting kind of perceived parenting style followed by over protective and autocratic type of parenting style. Although results showed that many of the delinquents had shown average democratic parenting style but quite a high number of delinquents also shown high over demanding kind of parenting style. A large proportion of juveniles had shown low level of peer pressure but quite a good number of delinquents had shown medium and high level of peer pressure.

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