

Disciplinary strategies adopted by parents according to child variables

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ABSTRACT

Discipline is an organized, regulated and orderly way of life, learning to conform to the expected patterns of behaviour and customs in an acceptable manner. According to Hoffman's information processing theory (Hoffman, 1977), there are three types of disciplinary strategies- Power-assertive, Love-withdrawal, Inductive. The study sample were mothers of 220 preschool children in Tirupati and Hyderabad towns where three types of pre-schools *viz.*, laboratory nursery schools, anganwadi centers and private schools were available. Mothers were administered with Disciplinary Strategies Adopted by Parents Scale. Results revealed that Majority of the mothers were using less power assertive and more love withdrawal strategies. Disciplinary strategies adopted by mothers did not differ significantly according to gender of the child but mothers differed significantly in the mean scores of power assertive and inductive disciplinary strategies according to age of the child.

INTRODUCTION

Discipline is an organized, regulated and orderly way of life, learning to conform to the expected patterns of behaviour and customs in an acceptable manner. Discipline comes from the Latin word 'disciplina', meaning 'instruction' or 'teaching to correct, strengthen, or perfect'. Disciplining is a universal aspect of socialization strategy adopted by parents and caregivers in all cultures to teach children the values and normative behaviours of their society.

According to Hoffman's information processing theory (Hoffman, 1977), there are three types of disciplinary strategies- Power-assertive (physical

punishment, threats or withdrawal of privileges), Love-withdrawal (withholding attention, affection or approval) and Inductive (reasoning, reminding children the rules and explaining the impact of children's behaviour on others). Disciplinary strategies used by parents may vary systematically according to parenting style. The way a child is disciplined is an indicator of the parenting styles adopted by the parents.

Objectives :

- To know the disciplinary strategies practiced by mothers of pre-school children.
- To assess whether disciplinary strategies adopted by mother differ according to gender of the child.

- To assess whether disciplinary strategies adopted by mother differ according to age of the child.
- To assess whether adisciplinary strategies adopted by mother differ according to birth order of the child.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Tools :

The following tool was specially developed for present research purpose (Bornstein, 1994). Disciplinary Strategies Adopted by Parents (DSAP) Scale has two sections. Section I includes General Information, Section II deals with questions related to threotypes of disciplinary techniques. Power-assertive, Inductive strategy and Love-withdrawal disciplinary methods. The tool was standardized following techniques for establishing reliability and validly.

Sample:

The sample of the study constituted 220 pre-school children (110 boys and 110 girls) who belonged to different types of pre-schools (Laboratory nursery school, Anganwadi center and Private schools) at Tirupati and Hyderabad. Mothers of the selected children that is (n=220) constituted the sub samples of the study.

Data collection :

Stratified random sampling technique was used to select then sample. In the first stage 5 Government

schools (4 Anganwadi centers and one Laboratory nursery school) and 5 private schools were selected randomly from each area. In the next stage, children in the age group of 4+ years and 5+ years in three types of schools were selected using stratified random sampling technique. Thus, 110 boys and 110 girls were identified from different settings of 20 schools from Tirupati and Hyderabad. The home addresses of these children were collected from school records. The investigator personally visited homes and established good rapport with the parents of the sample children. Parents were administrated with Disciplinary Strategies Adopted by Parents Scale and asked to indicate the type of disciplinary strategy they have used for the past three days from the date of interview for each items in the scale that is (Today, Yesterday and Day before yesterday). The data obtained from final study was scored and suitable statistical analysis was performed.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

It can be noted from Table 1 that sample parents have used different types of disciplinary strategies. When disciplinary strategies practiced by mothers were compared, majority of the sample mothers (63.2 %) were less power assertive. Next to it, nearly one fourth of mothers (20.9 %) were moderately power assertive and only 15.9 per cent of mothers were using more power assertive. With regard to inductive disciplinary strategy adopted by mothers more than one third of the mothers

| Sr. No. | Type of disciplinary strategy | Number | Per cent |
|---------|---------------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1. | Power assertive strategy | | |
| | Less power assertive | 139 | 63.2 |
| | Moderate power assertive | 46 | 20.9 |
| | More power assertive | 35 | 15.9 |
| | Total | 220 | 100.0 |
| 2. | Inductive strategy | | |
| | Less inductive | 77 | 35.0 |
| | Moderate inductive | 62 | 28.2 |
| | More inductive | 81 | 36.8 |
| | Total | 220 | 100.0 |
| 3. | Love withdrawal strategy | | |
| | Less love withdrawal | 30 | 13.6 |
| | Moderate love withdrawal | 79 | 35.9 |
| | More love withdrawal | 111 | 50.5 |
| | Total | 220 | 100.0 |

(36.8 %) were more inductive. Almost equal number of sample mothers (35.0 % of mothers) were less assertive. Nearly one fourth of the mothers (28.2 %) were moderately assertive.

When love withdrawal strategy is considered, half of the sample mothers (50.5 %) were more love withdrawal. Followed by more than one third of the sample mothers (35.9 %) were moderately love withdrawal. Very few 13.6 per cent of mothers used less love withdrawal strategy.

From Table 2 it is evident that the disciplinary strategies adopted by mothers did not differ significantly according to gender of the child. The t- values were not significant for three types of disciplinary strategies. However, the mean scores show that when compared to girls mothers scored more for assertive type of disciplinary strategy for boys (Mean 31.40, SD= 16.372). Mothers scored more towards implementation of inductive (Mean 44.49, SD= 14.570) and love withdrawal strategy (Mean 60.89, SD=13.952) towards girls than

for boys. Bronstein (1994), reported that parents tend to use different control techniques for sons and daughters and it was reported that when compared to daughters, fathers used physical control with sons due to aggressive behaviour of sons.

It is observed from the Table 3 that mothers differed significantly in the mean scores of power assertive and inductive disciplinary strategies according to age of the child. The t value for power assertive was 3.736 and for inductive strategy it was 2.958 which were significant at 0.001 level. It can be observed from table that as the age of the child increased from 4+ years to 5+ years, the mean scores for power assertive strategy by mothers was increased (28.16 for 4 years and 32.12 for 5 years), and the mean scores for inductive and love withdrawal disciplinary strategies were decreased with increased of age of the child.

Exercising of power assertive strategy means, usage of physical punishment, spanking etc. The findings are in line with the report of Dietz (2000) and Ghate *et al.*

| Sr. No. | Gender | Type of disciplinary strategies | | | | | |
|---------|---------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| | | Power assertive | | Inductive | | Love withdrawal | |
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1. | Boys (n=110) | 31.40 | 16.372 | 41.58 | 14.327 | 59.68 | 13.860 |
| 2. | Girls (n=110) | 28.88 | 14.039 | 44.49 | 14.570 | 60.89 | 13.952 |
| | Total (n=220) | 30.14 | 15.268 | 43.04 | 14.490 | 60.29 | 13.887 |
| | t-Value | 1.500 @ | | 2.229 @ | | 0.416 @ | |

| Sr. No. | Age | Type of disciplinary strategies | | | | | |
|---------|------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| | | Power assertive | | Inductive | | Love withdrawal | |
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1. | 4+ Years (n=110) | 28.16 | 14.263 | 44.71 | 14.181 | 60.95 | 13.485 |
| 2. | 5+Years (n=110) | 32.12 | 16.031 | 41.36 | 14.666 | 59.63 | 14.309 |
| | Total (n=220) | 30.14 | 15.268 | 43.04 | 14.490 | 60.29 | 13.887 |
| | t-Value | 3.736** | | 2.958** | | 0.494@ | |
| | | P<0.001 | | P<0.001 | | | |

** indicates significance of value at P=0.01

| Sr. No. | Birth order of the child | Type of disciplinary strategies | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| | | Power assertive | | Inductive | | Love withdrawal | |
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1. | First born (n=105) | 30.03 | 14.972 | 43.14 | 14.655 | 60.46 | 14.165 |
| 2. | Second born (n=95) | 29.33 | 14.738 | 42.85 | 14.522 | 61.19 | 12.676 |
| 3. | Third born and above (n=20) | 34.60 | 18.997 | 43.35 | 14.165 | 55.10 | 17.238 |
| | Total (n=220) | 30.14 | 15.268 | 43.04 | 14.490 | 60.29 | 13.887 |
| | f-Value | 0.991@ | | 0.015@ | | 1.613@ | |

(2003). They also reported that, the age of a child has been implicated in parental discipline responses, with younger children tending to experience physical punishment more than older children.

It is clear from Table 4 that mothers did not differ significantly in using three types of disciplinary strategies according to birth order of the child. Nevertheless, mean scores indicated that mothers used more power assertive strategy with third born child (mean= 34.60, SD=18.997) rather than first and second born child. Whereas, mothers used more love withdrawal strategy with first and second born child rather than third and later born child. Controversy to this findings of the for present study, in a study on disciplinary techniques used by parents according to birth order of child a study reported by Bhogle (1991), revealed that more strictness was observed with the eldest child in comparison to the later born. The reason may be due to difference in cultural background of study areas. Several researchers felt that culture plays a significant role in parental disciplinary practices.

Conclusion :

– Majority of the mother's exercised less power assertive, more inductive and more love withdrawal disciplinary strategies.

– Disciplinary strategies adopted by mothers did not differ significantly according to gender of the child. The t- values were not significant for three types of disciplinary strategies.

– Mothers differed significantly in the mean scores

of power assertive and inductive disciplinary strategies according to age of the child.

– As the age of the child increased from 4+ years to 5+ years, the mean scores for power assertive strategy by mothers was increased.

– Mothers did not differ significantly in using three types of disciplinary strategies according to birth order of the child.

Implications of the study :

The present study will be helpful to educate and create awareness among young parents to know about appropriate parenting styles and disciplinary techniques.

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