

Original Research Article

# Impact of Parenting Styles on Anxiety Sensitivity and Test Anxiety among Eighth Grade School Students

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## ABSTRACT

The central aim of the study is to examine the role of parenting style in anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety among the 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescents' school students. In this study, the researcher contacted with 8<sup>th</sup> grade school students with the age 13 to 14 years of Bengali families in Kolkata with monthly family income of Rs. 10,000-50,000/- per month. The total number of participants were initially about 300 students, but finally 120 (60 males and 60 females) could be retained. Candidates, whose highest obtained score in Parental Authority Questionnaire was same in at least two prototypes (permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritative) in respect of either father or mother or both, were not considered for the present study. Besides, candidates whose selected prototype (the dominant one; selected on the basis of highest obtained score in a particular prototype among different prototypes such as permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritative) differed in scales for father and mother were also not considered. An assurance was made that the selected participants did not suffer from chronic physical and mental disturbances. Results showed that the mean values for both anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety were maximum in case of authoritarian parenting style and the difference between male and female was not significant both for perception of stress and test anxiety. Results further showed that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students differed significantly in anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety with the variation in parenting styles. Overall, this study indicated that the parenting style which regards autonomy and consider a rational approach is most preferred one.

**Keywords:-** Parenting style, anxiety sensitivity, Test anxiety.

## INTRODUCTION

Parenting style is a psychological variable which signifies the various approaches that parents adopt for upbringing of their children. These approaches convey qualitative messages rather than quantitative. Parenting style indicates parent's responses to their children through predetermined behavior patterns. "Parenting practices are specific behaviors, while parenting styles represent broader patterns of parenting practices".<sup>[1]</sup> According to the developmental psychologists parent-child relationship may vary in different developmental phases

where the relationship between parent and child such as bonding changes. Such relationship may encounter major challenges during adolescents whose seeking and desiring freedom is sometimes justifiable and sometimes unjustifiable.<sup>[2]</sup> "A child's temperament and parents' cultural patterns have an influence on the kind of parenting style a child may receive".<sup>[3]</sup> Skillful, competent and proficient children are the result of kind of parenting which exercises proper nurturing, independence and firm control over their children and such pattern also help in the development of the additional skills.<sup>[1]</sup>

Discussing about the different theories of child rearing, the most important one is from Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development which states the children's way of representing and giving reason about this world. [4] Another important theory is by Erik Erikson who described eight developmental stages of life which are essential for each person to develop. To move in the next stage, a person has to extinguish a "crisis" where a person has to solve a new dilemma.

### **Classification of parenting style**

Baumrind (1967) identified three basic parenting styles namely authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting and permissive parenting. [5] He thought instead of being detached and punitive they should develop rules through which they can guide their children and must also be caring, loving and friendly to them. [6]

A child centered approach in parenting is which maintains compact maturity in relationship. They understand towards their children's feelings and guide them in regulation of the same also apologize them for their faults. [3] "They often help their children to find appropriate outlets to solve problems. Authoritative parents encourage children to be independent but still place limits on their actions". [6]

"Authoritarian parenting is a restrictive, punishment-heavy parenting style in which parents make their children follow their directions with little to no explanation or feedback and focus on the child's and family's perception and status". [6] Authoritarian parents prefer different kind of corporal punishment like brisk, dashing and yelling as a sort of disciplinary behavior.

On the other hand Permissive parents lack in parental role like expectations and disciplines though they try to be friendly with their children. Permissive parenting is very careless or indifferent and they set very few rules as well as punishments or rules. Permissive parents in most of the cases go with

whatever their children want and expect appreciation for their style that they hold up. [7] "Other permissive parents compensate for what they missed as children, and as a result give their children both the freedom and materials that they lacked in their childhood". [7]

Anxiety sensitivity as a professional term indicates that suffering from anxiety results in developing features in which people feel anxious that he or she may encounter with experiencing anxiety and various symptoms associated with it. Simply it can be said that it is an experiences of fearfulnesses about to develop distress. People who are high in this dimension believe that various physiological symptoms that they experience such as increased heart rate, dizziness, sweating etc, are terrific and will harm them a lot as these will go on developing dreadful results. [8]

On the other hand "test anxiety is a combination of physiological over-arousal, tension and somatic symptoms, along with worry, dread, fear of failure, and catastrophizing, that occur before or during test situations". [9]

The aim of the present study is to see the role or impact of parenting style on anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety among eighth grade school students.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Hypotheses:**

Hypothesis1: There would be significant difference in anxiety sensitivity between males and females 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescent school students.

Hypothesis2: There would be significant difference in test anxiety between males and females 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescent school students.

Hypothesis3: There would be significant difference in anxiety sensitivity due to the variation in parenting style among 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescent school students.

Hypothesis4: There would be significant difference in test anxiety due to the variation in parenting style among 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescent school students.

### The sampling technique

The purposive sampling technique was used for the present study.

### Sample

For selection of sample the researcher contacted with 8<sup>th</sup> grade school students with the age 13 to 14 years of Bengali families in Kolkata city. Their monthly family income was in the range of Rs. 10,000-50,000/- per month. The total number of participants were initially about

300 students, but finally 120 (60 males and 60 females) could be retained as candidates whose highest obtained score in Parental Authority Questionnaire was same in at least two prototypes (permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritative) in respect of either father or mother or both, were not considered for the present study. An assurance was made about that the selected participants that they did not suffer from chronic physical and mental disturbances.

The Sampling Criteria:

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age of the Subject: 13 to 14 Years.</li> <li>• Medium of education &amp; grade: Bengali medium 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.</li> <li>• Parental education : Minimum Secondary level</li> <li>• Parental Income: Rs (10000-50000)/month</li> <li>• Condition: Willing to cooperate with the Author`</li> <li>• Parental occupation: Business or service but at least, one of the parents is employed</li> <li>• Mother tongue: Bengali speaking</li> <li>• Occupation : Students</li> <li>• Residence: Residing in and around Kolkata</li> <li>• Having Consistency in academic</li> <li>• Record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of failure in examination</li> <li>• Suffering from any severe form of disease or disability</li> <li>• Uncooperative with the Author</li> <li>• Both parents are unemployed</li> <li>• Both parents are not alive</li> <li>• Candidates whose highest obtained score in Parental Authority Questionnaire was same in at least two prototypes (permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritative) in respect of either father or mother or both, were not considered for the present study. Besides, candidates whose highest obtained score in different prototypes (permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritative) differed in scales for father and mother were also not considered.</li> </ul>

### Tools:

#### *An information schedule:-*

An information schedule which contains the name, age, sex, educational qualification, academic record, marital status, occupation, number of family members, monthly family income, relationship with the parents, present and past history of alcohol and drug addiction, mental and physical health and history of parental separation, was prepared by the Author.

#### *Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991):* <sup>[10]</sup>

This short version questionnaire consists of 30 items and produces permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative scores for both the mother and the father. Responses to each of these items are given on a 5-point Likert scale which extends from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The short version confirmed adequate validity and internal consistency. <sup>[11]</sup> The test is self administered and takes only few minutes to administer. To score, each item is rated on a five point scale extending from strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5). Thus each participant will

produces six separate PAQ scores: mother's permissiveness, mother's authoritarianism, mother's authoritativeness, father's permissiveness, father's authoritarianism, and father's authoritativeness. The range of these scores for these variables is 10 to 50; higher the scores, greater the measured participant's perceived presence of the parental prototype.

In this present study, the most influencing and dominating parenting style as perceived by the participants was considered on the basis of highest obtained scores in respect of father and mother among all the three prototypes of parental authority (permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritativeness) and hence, was only considered for the analysis to be done later on. For those candidates, whose highest obtained score was same in at least two prototypes (permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritativeness) in respect of either father or mother or both, were not considered for the present study. Besides, candidates whose highest obtained score in different prototypes (permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritativeness) differed in scales for father and mother were also not considered.

#### **Children Anxiety Sensitivity Index:** <sup>[12]</sup>

The Children Anxiety Sensitivity Index or CASI is a self-reporting questionnaire which consists of 18 items stating reactions to body symptoms. Responses are given on the three-point scale in which 1 indicates suffering from none of the symptoms, 2 indicates some suffering from of the symptoms, and 3 indicates suffering a lot by the symptoms. In each item children indicates the degree to which they have a realization that experiencing or encountering anxiety will develop negative outcomes. The range of total score of CASI is 18 to 54 where higher the score, more the indication of suffering from anxiety sensitivity. Silverman et al. (1991) in their study showed that internal consistency of CASI is high with a coefficient of 0.87 and also good test retest reliabilities (0.76 and

0.79) both for the nonclinical and clinical samples respectively. <sup>[12]</sup>

#### **Test Anxiety Scale:** <sup>[13]</sup>

Test Anxiety questionnaire by Nist and Diehl (1990) consists of ten statements. <sup>[13]</sup> Each statement has five alternative responses such as 'Never', 'Rarely', 'Sometimes', 'Often' and 'Always'. This test is a standardized tool as reliability and validity had been established by computing Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (0.762), at 0.01 level of significant. So, the test is both valid and reliable. The test is self administered and can be administered within a few minutes. In scoring, distribution of values in this test is such that 'Never' is assigned with a score of 1, 'Rarely' is assigned with a score of 2, 'Sometimes' is assigned with a score of 3, 'Often' is assigned with a score of 4, 'Always' is assigned with a score of 5. Finally to obtain total score, the scores in all the statements were added. A low score (10-19) reflects no test anxiety, scores ranges between 20 and 35 reflects some of the characteristics of test anxiety with the level of stress and tension in possibly healthy manner. Scores over 35 reflects unhealthy level of test anxiety. The maximum probable score is 50 and the minimum score is 10.

#### **Statistical analysis:**

SPSS-23 was used for statistical analysis. Both descriptive (frequency, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test and ANOVA) were used in this study to analyze the data.

## **RESULTS**

### **Results from descriptive and inferential statistics: hypotheses testing**

In result section, under descriptive statistics mean and SDs of different variables were calculated

**Table – 1: Mean and SDs of males and females 8<sup>th</sup> grade school students for anxiety sensitivity and Test anxiety**

Variables	Group	Mean	SD
Anxiety sensitivity	Permissive (28)	24.00	4.91
	Authoritarian (44)	34.28	5.74
	Authoritative (48)	12.83	2.95
Test anxiety	Permissive (28)	21.11	3.87
	Authoritarian (44)	26.68	4.41
	Authoritative (48)	12.79	2.70
Anxiety Sensitivity	Male (N-60)	24.18	10.87
	Female (N-60)	22.70	10.32
Test anxiety	Male (N-60)	7.92	1.02
	Female (N-60)	6.29	.812

Results indicated that mean values for both anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety were maximum in case of authoritarian parenting style.

To realize the gender difference and difference in anxiety sensitivity due to the variation in parenting style, all the three hypotheses have been tested.

Hypothesis1: There would be significant difference in anxiety sensitivity between males and females 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescent school students.

Hypothesis2: There would be significant difference in test anxiety between males and females 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescent school students.

Hypothesis3: There would be significant difference in anxiety sensitivity due to the variation in parenting style among 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescent school students.

Hypothesis4: There would be significant difference in test anxiety due to the variation in parenting style among 8<sup>th</sup> grade adolescent school students.

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, t-test was conducted. Results are presented in Table -7

**Table – 2: t Values of males and females 8<sup>th</sup> grade school students for anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety**

Variables	Group	t
Anxiety sensitivity	Male (N-60)	0.50
	Female (N-60)	
Test anxiety	Male (N-60)	0.85
	Female (N-60)	

df=118, \*P< .05, \*\*P< .01

Results reveal that the difference between male and female was not significant both for anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety.

Thus hypothesis 1 and 2 were not accepted.

To test hypotheses 3 and 4, one way ANOVA was conducted. Results are presented in Table -3

**Table 3: Results of ANOVA (one way) to determine the effect of parenting styles on anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety: (N=120, df=2, 117; \* p < .05, \*\*p < .01)**

Independent variable	Levels	Dependent Variable	F
Parenting styles	Permissive	Anxiety sensitivity	254.28**
	Authoritarian		
	Authoritative	Test anxiety	165.78**

\* p < .05, \*\*p < .01

Results reveal that there exists significant difference among 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety with the variation in parenting styles.

Thus hypothesis 3 and 4 were accepted.

## DISCUSSION

The key findings which have revealed from the study are discussed through enlightening the interesting findings of the previous researches. The findings will continue to be discussed through the following sub-head-

8<sup>th</sup> grade students significantly differed in anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety with the variation in parenting style

The present study showed that students' anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety varied with the variation in parenting styles. Results also showed that students mostly affected with authoritarian parenting style as reported anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety scores were maximum in this case. These study findings will be discussed and analyzed in the light of some recent studies. Preethi (2012) conducted a study which identified the parenting styles of parents and compared the stress and self-esteem on the basis of these parenting styles, hence, authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. Results revealed that difference in scores of self esteem and stress were obtained between authoritative and authoritarian parenting style. Candidates indicated more stress in authoritarian parenting rather than authoritative parenting. [14] In another study conducted by Erozkhan (2012) that examined the relationships between anxiety sensitivity and perceived parenting styles of adolescents and also predicted the role of perceived parenting styles on anxiety

sensitivity. The findings indicated that the different parenting styles which were indicated to be significantly correlated to anxiety sensitivity were democratic, protective-demanding, and authoritarian parenting styles and were also showed to be significant predictors of anxiety sensitivity. [15] An interesting earlier study may be stated which indicated that parents adopt authoritarian parenting style under stressful situations and this study to some extent corroborated by the present study findings. Ajilchi, Kargar and Ghoreishi (2012) conducted a study to evaluate the relationship between parenting styles of overstressed mothers with their children's self esteem. Multiple regression analysis indicated that an authoritarian parenting style was negatively correlated with children's self esteem. Furthermore, over stressfulness of mothers relating to social isolation was positively related to children's self esteem. [16]

Another significant component of this study hence, test anxiety on which students also differed with the variation in parenting style. To analyze these findings an earlier study may be highlighted which differed from the present study findings as conducted by Nwosu (2016) on the relationship between parenting style, test anxiety and self-efficacy of Nigerian secondary school students. Results showed that permissive parenting showed negative relationship with students test anxiety, academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy whereas authoritarian parenting indicated positive relationship with test anxiety, academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, but a negative relationship with emotional self-efficacy and authoritative parenting showed a negative relationship with test anxiety but positive relationship with academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy. [17] Interestingly this study findings differed from most of the study conducted in such concerned area. Another study which is more or less similar with present study findings was conducted by

Thergaonkar, Neerja and Wadkar (2007) to explore the relationship between test anxiety and parenting style. Results showed that a significant negative correlation was obtained between test anxiety and democratic attitude of parents and acceptance of parents by the child. From these findings the author stated that holding with a democratic parenting style and more the children accept their parents resulting in prevention of test anxiety. [18]

Discussing the study findings, from author's perspective it may be stated that irrespective of only focusing on in which parenting style children suffer more, necessary awareness as well as therapeutic and management program may be organized by Government and private organization to combat with these curse of the society which actually inhibiting individuals in their complete growth and development.

#### **Weaknesses of the study**

There were limitations in the present study:

- I. The relatively small sample size probably reduced the generalizability of the study.
- II. Sample was biased because most of the students belong to the different schools situated in south Kolkata
- III. The tools of this study were self reporting inventory which probably included self reporting biases.
- IV. Only 120 data were considered for further analysis among total number of 300 candidates who could not fulfill the necessary criteria.
- V. Only 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were included for the present study.
- VI. Candidates whose highest obtained score in Parental Authority Questionnaire was same in at least two prototypes (permissiveness, authoritarianism and authoritativeness) in respect of either father or mother or both were not considered for the present study. Again, candidates whose highest obtained score in different prototypes (permissiveness, authoritarianism and

authoritativeness) differed in scales for father and mother were also not considered.

### Recommendations for future study

The most crucial fact which has come out from this study is that rational, well accepted and considerate parenting should be the only approach to increase the probability of a successful parenting which people expect at the end. Following recommendations or suggestions for future study may be stated below-

- 1) In future, a similar study may be conducted with larger participants that could enhance generalizability of the study.
- 2) Other relevant psychological variables such as self esteem, locus of control and other similar variables may be included to analyze variations of parenting style on different personality factors.
- 3) Future study may be conducted with the sample which should be drawn following those methods that reduce biasness as much as possible.
- 4) Future study may be conducted that could identify those factors that directly or indirectly influence different unhealthy and unexpected mode of parenting.

### CONCLUSIONS

From the study it may be concluded that among the different parenting styles, authoritarian approach was indicated as most stressful by the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Again gender difference was not significant both in case of anxiety sensitivity as well as test anxiety and with the variation in parenting style, students significantly differed in terms of anxiety sensitivity and test anxiety.

Overall, this study indicated that in 21<sup>st</sup> century where people regard autonomy and consider a rational approach in most of the situations, there too domination and possessiveness parenting not only create stressful situations for students but also affects their overall psychological

mechanism which in turn may paralyze their full growth and development for further life.

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