

Impact of Mother-Child Temperament Mismatch on Disciplinary Practices

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Abstract: The impact of mismatch between temperaments of parents and children on nature of disciplinary practices adopted by the parents has not been studied extensively. Hence the present study was carried out with the aims and objectives to study the disciplinary practices adopted by mothers of preschool children and Impact of mismatch between mother- child temperaments on disciplinary practices. This was a prospective cross sectional study in which 300 mothers of preschool children were selected in a random manner. Consent of participating mother was obtained before administering the questionnaire which included the demographic details, circumstances requiring discipline, disciplinary practices adopted by the mothers, dimensions of child temperament and dimensions of mother's temperament. The temperament of mother and child included the seven dimensions: 1. Activity level 2. Regularity 3. Response to new situations 4. Adaptability 5. Distractibility 6. Persistence and 7. Intensity. The statistical analysis was done by using percentages, chi square test with the help of software Epi info version 6.6. Out of 300 subjects, 3 cases could not be included in the analysis because of incomplete information; hence results were analyzed and presented for 297 cases. The mother and child temperament was matched and it was found that there was a significant mismatch in the temperament between the two with regards to its dimensions response, distractibility and intensity. It was observed that the violent type of disciplinary practices were more frequent in cases of not good at studies ($p=0.000$), tantrums ($p=0.045$) and disobedience ($p=0.009$). To conclude it was found that there is mismatch between maternal and child temperament and also that there is significant increase in the chances of violent disciplinary practices used by mothers.

Keywords: Disciplinary practices, maternal temperament, child temperament, temperament mismatch, Impact.

INTRODUCTION

Parents are held responsible for raising children in all societies which is a challenging task. The most critical task is to effectively discipline the children and anxiety about failure to discipline or control their children's behavior. The word discipline, which originates from the a French word *disciplinaire* which means the system of teaching and nurturing that prepares children to achieve competence, self-control, self-direction and caring for others. An effective disciplinary system must contain 3 vital elements: 1.A learning environment : positive, supportive parent-child relationships 2.A strategy for systematic teaching and strengthening of desired behaviors (pro-active) and 3.A strategy for decreasing or eliminating undesired or ineffective behaviors (reactive). Each of these components needs to be functioning adequately for discipline to result in improved child behavior

Another model of understanding discipline is based on 3 overarching concepts: 1. Love-oriented discipline: the with-holding of affection and approval when children misbehave 2. Power-assertive discipline: using physical discipline, with-holding privileges, grounding and verbal commands 3.Inductive discipline: giving children reasons for behaving in particular ways

Disciplinary practices can be important to outcomes: Child self-esteem, Conscience development, Aggression, Behavior problems, Delinquency, Subsequent adult criminal behavior, depression and alcoholism. A number of factors can affect disciplinary practices: Various factors of the child, parent and family and demographic factors. Little effort has been made to study these factors in context to disciplinary practices especially in developing countries including India. There is often confusion between discipline and punishment and most parents use all techniques but one will usually predominate depending upon: Age of the

child, Gender of the child , Child’s and parent’s temperament, Parent’s own childhood experience, The levels of stress in the family and Situational factors including the type of misbehavior.

Temperament refers to individual differences in a person’s emotional reactivity and regulation and has seven dimensions. Most notably temperament refers to a preponderant style in how an individual does things or how he or she responds to people and to situations, rather than what the individual does or how he or she does it. The impact of mismatch between temperaments of parents and children on nature of disciplinary practices adopted by the parents has not been studied extensively. Hence the present study was carried out.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The study was conducted with the following aims and objectives:

- To study the disciplinary practices adopted by mothers of preschool children
- Impact of mismatch between mother- child temperaments on disciplinary practices

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Type of study

This was a prospective cross sectional study in which 300 mothers of preschool children were selected in a random manner. Consent of participating mother was obtained before administering the questionnaire which included the demographic details, circumstances requiring discipline, disciplinary practices adopted by the mothers, dimensions of child temperament and dimensions of mother’s temperament. The temperament of mother and child included the seven dimensions: 1. Activity level 2. Regularity 3. Response to new situations 4. Adaptability 5. Distractibility 6. Persistence and 7. Intensity. The statistical analysis was done by using percentages, chi square test with the help of software Epi info version 6.6. Out of 300 subjects, 3 cases could not be included in the analysis because of incomplete information; hence results were analyzed and presented for 297 cases.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows type of Disciplinary Practices adopted by the mothers in Relation to circumstances or reasons which included misbehavior, not well at studies, lying, tantrums, disobedience and quarrels.

Table-1: Type of Disciplinary Practices in Relation to Circumstances

Type	Misbehavior	Not Good at Study	Lying	Tantrums	Disobedience	Quarrels
Discussion /explanation	111/204 (54.4)	205/263 (77.9)	161/293(54.9)	227/246(92.3)	159/231(68.8)	210/254(82.7)
Withholding rewards	5/25 (20)	5/48 (10.4)	5/59 (8.5)	8/52 (15.4)	0/49 (0)	0/61(0)
Threatening to slap	8/175 (4.6)	13/142(9.2)	5/95 (5.3)	0/42(0)	9/152(5.9)	0/132(0)
Locking in Room	0/40(0)	5/47(10.6)	0/10(0)	0/15(0)	0/37(0)	0/18 (0)
Not speaking	8/89 (8.9)	0/20 (0)	5/29(17.2)	10/30(33.3)	27/112 (24.1)	0/10 (0)
Shouting/ scolding	142/262(54.2)	50/201(24.9)	48/206(23.3)	25/228(10.9)	76/239(31.8)	51/220(23.2)
Hitting/slapping	19/157(12.1)	13/81(16)	69/105(65.7)	6/73(8.2)	10/103(9.7)	26/101(25.7)
Ignoring	4/14(28.6)	14/24(58.3)	4/14(28.6)	21/35(60)	8/18(44.4)	4/18 (22.2)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages.

The commonest type of disciplinary action was discussion or explanation followed by ignoring and not speaking to the child. Hitting the child was observed to be highest (65.7%) in cases of telling a lie.

Shouting or scolding was highest (54.2%) in cases of misbehavior. Violent type of discipline was more common in cases of telling a lie (Table 2).

Table-2: Mode of Disciplinary Practice in Relation to Circumstances

Mode of Practice	Misbehaving	Not good at studies	Telling lie	Tantrum	Disobedience	Quarrels
Violent	19(6.4)	13(4.4)	69(23.2)	6(2.0)	10(3.4)	26(8.8)
Non Violent	278(93.6)	284(95.6)	228(76.8)	291(98.0)	287(96.6)	271(91.2)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

The mother and child temperament was matched (Table 3).

Table-3: Mother and Child Temperament Matching

Mother / child temperament	Activity	Regularity	Response	Adaptation	Distractibility	Persistence	Intensity
Matching	136(45.8)	126(42.4)	112(37.7)	128(43.8)	74(24.9)	151(50.8)	213(71.7)
Non Matching	161(54.2)	171(57.6)	185(62.3)	169(56.9)	223(75.1)	146(49.2)	84(28.3)

It was found that there was a significant mismatch in the temperament between the two with

regards to its dimensions response, distractibility and intensity.

Table-4: Comparison of Type of Disciplinary Practices in Relation to Temperament

Type of Disciplinary Practice	Number	Temperament		P Value
		Matching	Non Matching	
Discussion/Explanation : Total : Frequent	297(100)	118(39.7) 91(77.1)	179(60.3) 164(91.6)	0.000
Withholding rewards : Total : Frequent	108(36.4)	29(26.9) 10(34.5)	79(73.1) 52(65.8)	0.004
Threatening to slap : Total : Frequent	266(89.6)	106(39.8) 60(56.6)	160(60.2) 136(85.0)	0.000
Locking in Room : Total : Frequent	87 (29.3)	15(17.2) 4(26.4)	72(82.8) 10(13.2)	0.221
Not speaking to the child : Total : Frequent	130(43.8)	37(28.5) 23(62.2)	93(71.5) 46(49.5)	0.190
Shouting/scolding : Total : Frequent	283(95.3)	110(38.2) 77(70.0)	173(61.1) 173(100.0)	0.000
Violent (hitting/slapping) : Total : Frequent	173(58.2)	56(32.4) 23(41.1)	117(67.6) 33(28.2)	0.091
Ignoring : Total : Frequent	101(34.0)	47(46.5) 17(36.2)	54(53.5) 1(1.9)	0.000

Table 4 shows the comparison of type of disciplinary practices in relation to temperament. Threatening to slap was significantly greater in cases where mother and child temperament was not matching.(p=0.000).Similarly shouting at child or scolding was significantly more in mother child temperament mismatch.(p=0.000).On the other hand

ignoring was significantly higher in cases having matching mother child temperament.(p=0.000). Not speaking with the child was also significantly more in matching mother child temperament (p=0.190).

The disciplinary practices were categorized into violent and nonviolent (Table 5).

Table-5: Violent versus non-violent Mode of Disciplinary Practices in Relation to Temperament

Circumstances	Mother-Child Temperament		P value
	Matching	Non-matching	
Misbehavior Violent Non-violent	9(47.4) 109(39.2)	10(52.6) 169(60.8)	0.482
Not good at studies Violent Non-violent	14(20.3) 104(45.6)	55(79.7) 124(54.4)	0.000
Telling a lie Violent Non-violent	5(38.5) 113(39.8)	8(61.5) 171(60.2)	0.923
Tantrums Violent Non-violent	0(0.0) 118(40.5)	6(100.0) 173(59.5)	0.045
Disobedience Violent Non-violent	0(0.0) 118(41.1)	10(100.0) 169(58.9)	0.009
Quarrels Violent	1(3.8)	25(96.2)	0.000

Non-violent	117(43.2)	154(56.8)	
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It was observed that the violent type of disciplinary practices were more frequent in cases of not good at studies ($p=0.000$), tantrums ($p=0.045$) and disobedience ($p=0.009$).

Although all children start school at the same age, they are not all ready at the same time. Children can have very different temperaments that can greatly affect how they respond to school. A child's temperament is inborn. It cannot be changed. It is a big part of what makes your child who she is. There are no "good" or "bad" temperaments – just different ones. Our temperaments are what make us unique. Every temperament has its own strengths.

This study examined the seven dimensions of child as well as maternal temperaments and tried to find out mismatch between them, if, any. It was found that there is mismatch between maternal and child temperament and also that there is significant increase in the chances of violent disciplinary practices used by mothers. In the existing literature it is observed that although child temperament and maternal parenting both are associated with social functioning in models that did not account for their shared variance, only child temperament remained significantly associated with social functioning after accounting for maternal parenting[1]. Therefore, it was concluded that maternal parenting, alone, is not necessary for child's social competence. Furthermore, that study also provided some evidence that the relation between maternal positive involvement and child social competence may vary at different levels of harm avoidance.

Previous studies have shown that both temperament and parenting styles are independent factors for causing behavioural problems associated with poor social outcomes [2, 3, 4, 5]. Other studies have examined the independent roles of temperament and parenting on children's externalizing and internalizing behaviour, but did not examine the social outcomes [6]. Some of the recent, research has begun to examine how temperament and parenting may interact to affect children's development, including social outcomes[8,9]. However, to the best of our knowledge, ours is the first study to look specifically at the direct effect of maternal and child temperament mismatch on their disciplinary practices. Children with difficult temperamental characteristics seem to be at heightened risk for eliciting parenting, especially mothering, that is negative, angry or coercive, and highly controlling. Children's negative emotionality has been found to be linked to their mother's strict and harsh disciplinary style hostility, criticism, an authoritarian parenting style Zhou *et al.*[7].

CONCLUSION

It was found that there is mismatch between maternal and child temperament and also that there is significant increase in the chances of violent disciplinary practices used by mothers

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