

Parenting style in Bangladesh

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Summary

Assessment of parenting style would help to identify the risk and resilient factors in the parent-child relationship. However, studies assessing the parenting styles in Bangladesh have not been conducted earlier. We aimed to determine the parenting styles and their association with different socio-demographic variables in Bangladesh. This cross sectional study was conducted from 2017 to 2018 in three purposively selected schools. Data were collected from 349 parents having children of 6-16 years by using the Bangla parenting style and dimension questionnaire and analyzed in stata version 16. The results showed that, the mean age of the responded parents was 39.3 years, ranging from 22 to 62 years. Among the respondents, 36.96% (129) were male and the majority of the parents (44.98%) were housewives. Among the respondents, 84.8% (296) were predominantly authoritative, 8.6% (30) were predominantly authoritarian, 4.3% (15) were predominantly permissive and 2.3% (8) were undifferentiated/ uninvolved. Mothers had a significantly higher score in authoritarian domain score than the fathers ($p=0.008$). The comparison in parenting style revealed that authoritative parenting style was significantly higher in Bangla medium school ($p=0.002$). The study revealed authoritative parenting as the most widely practiced style in Bangladesh. This is the first attempt to ascertain the parenting styles in the country. Therefore, a prudential judgment and further studies are warranted to generalize the study results.

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Introduction

The parent-child relationship is one of the primitives, however, enduring interactions of human beings where parents actively guide their children to grow up physically, mentally, culturally, and socially. Parenting is the child-rearing practice of parents by which they continuously interact with children in daily life.¹ Three typologies of parenting have been proposed by Diana Baumrind mentioned as authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive based on the parental interaction pattern with their children.² Subsequently, Maccoby and Martin (1983), identified two categorical measures mentioned as demandingness and responsiveness to classify the parenting styles.³ Based on parental interactions on demandingness and responsiveness, parenting styles have been revealed in four types mentioned as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved.³ Parenting styles have an immense effect on child development both in short- and long-term outcomes. Additionally, culture has complex interactions influencing the types and outcomes of parenting.^{4,5}

Bangladesh is a densely populated, however, a rising economy in South Asia. Due to its change in economic status, urbanization, digitalization and internet expansion, female empowerment,

increased literacy and proportion of females in outside works, and change in the demography of the country, the family structure and interactions among the family members are expected to change over the course of time. Assessment of parent-child relationship patterns would help to identify the risk and resilient factors for mental health and disorders prevailing in the family. Nevertheless, there is an extreme dearth of studies assessing parenting styles and the impact of any specific style on child development. On this background, we aimed to assess the parenting styles and their association (if any) with different socio-demographic variables in Bangladesh which could act as a baseline avenue for further research on parenting in the country.

Materials and methods

This was a cross sectional study conducted in the department of psychiatry, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) from 2017 and 2018. We selected three schools i.e., Engineering University School and College, Nabakumar Institute and Dr. Shahidullah College and Academia from Dhaka city purposively. Among the selected schools the first two schools are Bangla medium and the last one is English medium. We assumed Nabakumar Institute and Dr. Shahidullah College as

lower middle social class, Engineering University School and College as middleclass and Academia as upper class social distribution. Data were collected from 349 parents having children of 6-16 years. After getting permission as well as adequate support to enter the classroom, the first author described the study methods and data response guidelines. Then, the questionnaire was distributed among the students so that they can collect responses from their either parents and suggested returning that on a mentioned date. The questionnaire was supported by a cover letter and response guidelines. We obtained 349 responses from our distributed 502 questionnaires. We analyzed the data collected by using the Bangla parenting style and dimension questionnaire (Bangla PSDQ).⁶ The instrument contains 35 items in three domains i.e., 20 items in the authoritative domain, nine items in the authoritarian domain, and six items in the permissive domain. The instrument showed acceptable reliability and validity mentioned by the validation study published by Arafat in 2018. The detailed psychometric properties and item distribution have been reported in the earlier study.⁶Data were analyzed using descriptive and analytic statistics. Results were expressed using tables and graphs. Frequency (percentage) and mean \pm SD were used for describing categorical and continuous variables respectively. Univariate analysis was done using chi-square test, independent samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) where appropriate. Post-hoc comparisons of means were done using Bonferroni adjustments. A p-value of <0.05 was considered significant. All statistical analysis was carried out in stata version 16. Three parenting domain scores were calculated by averaging the domain-specific item scores. Then predominant parenting style was determined by retrieving the domain with the highest score among the three domains for each parent. Parents with equal scores in two or more domains were considered to have an uninvolved/undetermined parenting style. Ethical approval was taken from the institutional review board of BSMMU (BSMMU/2016/10524), on 15.10.2016. Formal permission was taken from the schools before starting the data collection. Informed written

consent was taken from the responding parents before the data collection. Data were kept anonymous and confidential.

Results

The results showed that, Among the 349 parents, 84.8% (296) of the parents were predominantly authoritative, 8.6% (30) were predominantly authoritarian, 4.3% (15) were predominantly permissive and 2.3% (8) were uninvolved/undifferentiated parents as per the responses (Figure 1). The response distribution of parents in the three domains revealed that, the authoritative parents rated their behavior on very often and always whilst authoritarian parents rated themselves on once in a while and half of the times as per the PSDQ item responses (Figure 2). The mean age of the responding parents was 39.3 years, ranging from 22 to 62 years. Among the parents, 37% (129) were fathers and the rest 63% (220) were mothers, where the largest portions of parents (51.49%) were identified in 31-40 years of age range, 41.55% of parents completed Masters, and the majority of the parents (about 40%) were housewives (Table 1). Mothers had a significantly higher score in authoritarian domain score than the fathers ($p=0.008$). Parents who completed higher secondary school

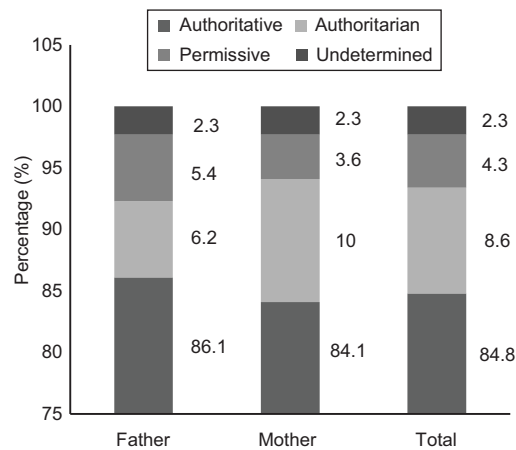


Figure 1: Distribution of participants according to their predominant parenting style (n=349)

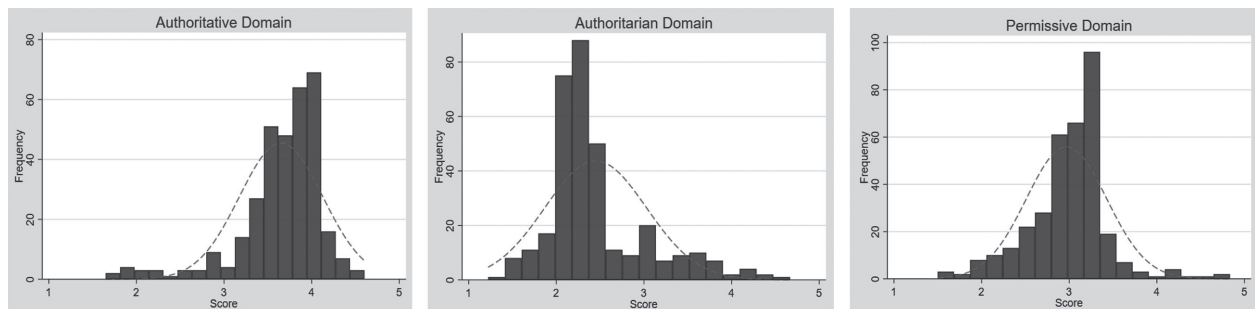


Figure 2: Histogram showing distribution of participants' score in three parenting domains (n=349)

certificate (HSC) and above had significantly lower authoritarian domain score than those who were up to secondary school certificate (SSC) ($p < 0.001$). The parents of students studying in Bangla medium had a significantly higher authoritative score than

those of who were studying in English medium ($p = 0.002$). Parents of students from Academia had significantly lower authoritative domain score and higher authoritarian domain score than that of other schools ($p = 0.003$ and $p = 0.027$, respectively) (Table 1).

Table 1: Association between parenting style and socio-demographic variables (n=349)

Characteristics	Total Frequency (%)	Authoritative Mean \pm SD	Authoritarian Mean \pm SD	Permissive Mean \pm SD
Age groups				
21 – 30	34 (10.12)	3.55 \pm 0.50	2.44 \pm 0.66	2.88 \pm 0.41
31 – 40	173 (51.49)	3.67 \pm 0.48	2.48 \pm 0.58	2.99 \pm 0.44
41 – 50	115 (34.23)	3.66 \pm 0.46	2.39 \pm 0.53	2.96 \pm 0.48
>50	14 (4.17)	3.56 \pm 0.63	2.44 \pm 0.69	2.79 \pm 0.34
p value		0.521	0.714	0.291
Parents				
Father	129 (36.96)	3.65 \pm 0.04	2.33 \pm 0.04	2.93 \pm 0.04
Mother	220 (63.04)	3.65 \pm 0.03	2.51 \pm 0.04	2.99 \pm 0.03
p value		0.950	0.008	0.252
Education				
Under SSC	33 (9.46)	3.44 \pm 0.68	2.68 \pm 0.82	2.95 \pm 0.68
SSC	37 (10.6)	3.62 \pm 0.60	3.00 \pm 0.79	3.05 \pm 0.58
HSC	68 (19.48)	3.69 \pm 0.42	2.32 \pm 0.39 ^{ab}	2.96 \pm 0.40
Graduation	59 (16.91)	3.65 \pm 0.36	2.40 \pm 0.55 ^b	2.90 \pm 0.41
Post-graduation	145 (41.55)	3.66 \pm 0.47	2.32 \pm 0.43 ^{ab}	2.97 \pm 0.40
p value		0.260	<0.001	0.651
Occupation				
Housewife	139 (44.98)	3.60 \pm 0.53	2.53 \pm 0.64	2.93 \pm 0.49
Job holder	90 (29.13)	3.76 \pm 0.38	2.35 \pm 0.52	3.03 \pm 0.45
Teacher	43 (13.92)	3.69 \pm 0.43	2.28 \pm 0.42	2.96 \pm 0.33
Business	23 (7.44)	3.60 \pm 0.53	2.43 \pm 0.52	2.85 \pm 0.39
Others	14 (4.53)	3.49 \pm 0.49	2.46 \pm 0.50	3.06 \pm 0.46
p value		0.072	0.065	0.308
Monthly family income (BDT)				
\leq 25000	79 (27.82)	3.66 \pm 0.50	2.53 \pm 0.69	2.88 \pm 0.49
>25000 – 40000	72 (25.35)	3.61 \pm 0.49	2.38 \pm 0.51	2.91 \pm 0.44
>40000 – 75000	63 (22.18)	3.63 \pm 0.63	2.38 \pm 0.55	2.96 \pm 0.52
> 75000	70 (24.65)	3.66 \pm 0.45	2.36 \pm 0.45	2.99 \pm 0.39
p value		0.878	0.229	0.496
Family members				
2 - 4	198 (59.28)	3.67 \pm 0.03	2.42 \pm 0.04	2.99 \pm 0.03
\geq 5	136 (40.72)	3.62 \pm 0.05	2.47 \pm 0.05	2.91 \pm 0.04
p value		0.318	0.513	0.122
Religion				
Islam	320 (93.02)	3.67 \pm 0.03	2.45 \pm 0.03	2.98 \pm 0.03
Hinduism	24 (6.98)	3.52 \pm 0.09	2.44 \pm 0.11	2.92 \pm 0.09
p value		0.137	0.940	0.590
Medium of education				
Bangla medium	270 (77.36)	3.69 \pm 0.03	2.42 \pm 0.04	2.96 \pm 0.023
English medium	79 (22.64)	3.50 \pm 0.05	2.55 \pm 0.07	3.00 \pm 0.05
p value		0.002	0.103	0.442
School name				
Engineering University School and College	171 (49.00)	3.72 \pm 0.50	2.36 \pm 1.44	2.93 \pm 0.44
Nabakumar Institute and Dr. Shahidullah College	99 (28.37)	3.64 \pm 0.46	2.52 \pm 0.64	3.00 \pm 0.51
Academia	79 (22.64)	3.50 \pm 0.41 ^c	2.55 \pm 0.58	3.00 \pm 0.43
p value		0.003	0.027	0.381

p value was determined by independent samples t test and one-way ANOVA where appropriate. Post-hoc pair-wise comparisons were done using Bonferroni adjustment ($p < 0.05$ in comparison to ^aUnder SSC, ^bSSC, ^cEngineering University School and College).

Discussion

Although parenting has an immense effect of almost all domains of life of the child it is under-researched in non-western countries.^{5,7} We aimed to determine the practiced parenting styles among Bangladeshi parents which hadn't been done previously. We also aimed to assess whether any variations in parenting style in regards to socio-demographic variables exist. We collected data from three schools of Dhaka city by the validated self-reporting PSDQ Bangla scale. The study revealed that, authoritative parenting (84.8%) was the most commonly practiced style in the country followed by authoritarian (8.6%) and permissive (2.3%). Mothers had a significantly higher score in authoritarian domain score than the fathers ($p=0.008$). The student who was studying in Bangla medium had parents with a significantly higher authoritative score than those who were studying in English medium ($p=0.002$). The study revealed a huge difference among the parenting styles when compared to the other studies based on the practicing pattern of predominant parenting style. The authoritative style has been predominantly identified in the Western countries. Thus, findings of this study contradicts the notion that Asian parents are more authoritarian than Western parents.^{4,5,8} The authoritarian parenting style was predominantly noted in Kenya where physical punishment has been considered for controlling children.⁹ The study also revealed another contradicting finding that, mothers were more authoritarian than father as previous studies from China revealed strict father and kind mothers.¹⁰ Studies from India also revealed strict fathers and supportive mothers while interacting with children.⁴ It was also difficult to explain as Bangladesh had a patriarchal family culture where males worked outside, play the controlling roles for the children whilst mothers were busy child rearing and caring. We speculated that, social desirability effect could affect the parents while responding the questions. Further studies were recommended to address the gaps. Additionally, perception of parenting from the children and variations of parenting between the parents, and variations of interactions between male and female children should be explored in the country to depict a complex scenario as perceptions varies across the persons such as children, self, partner.¹¹

This was the first attempt to assess the parenting styles among parents of Bangladesh. However, several limitations should be considered while implementing the study results. Firstly, data were collected from three purposively selected schools of Dhaka city that might not represent the whole country. Secondly, about half of the responses were collected from a single school. Thirdly, we couldn't assess the responses from the children as well as other partners which indicated an important area of bias in response and social desirability concerns. Fourthly, we didn't

compare the parents of the same family. Fifthly, we didn't consider the variations of two-parent families and single parent families. Sixthly, the study didn't assess the impact of parenting in aspect of children. Lastly, we didn't assess the variation of parenting style according to sex of the children.

Conclusion

The study assessed the parenting style among the parents of 6-16 years of children studying in three schools of Dhaka city. Authoritative parenting was identified as the predominant style in the country. This is the first attempt to ascertain the parenting styles in the country. Therefore, a prudential judgment and further studies are warranted to generalize the study results.

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