



# A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL PRACTICES AMONG BOYS AND GIRLS (9-12 YEARS)

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The present study was conducted with the purpose to assess and compare the level of parental practices among children belonging to late childhood years (9-12 years) based on gender. A sample of 300 students (150 boys and 150) girls was drawn purposively through a preliminary survey in selected schools. The tool on "Parental Practices" was constructed and standardized by the investigator. For assessing the level of parental practices in children based on gender, 'Frequency' and 'Percentage' were calculated for various selected dimensions. For comparing perception of parental practices in children based on gender, Z-test for difference between two means was computed. Results of the study indicate that greater number of respondents perceived to have higher level of parental practices. There were no significant differences observed in the level of parental practices among boys and girls.

**Keywords:** Late Childhood, Perception, Parental Practices.

## INTRODUCTION

The role of parent is one of the several adult roles achieved by large percentage of men and women in society today. Unlike other roles, parenting has unique characteristics. As children develop, the changes in their developmental characteristics bring about changes in the parenting role. Popular psychology often addresses the question of nature versus nurture. For most people, a child's parents are the most influential and play a significant role until adolescence. The manner, in which parents interact with their children, can promote and support the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Therefore, it is important that parents realize the value of parental interaction and support in their children's lives. By improving parental attitudes and child-care practices, a context for healthy growth and development, in which a child can thrive, can be created (Reder *et al.*, 2003).

According to Baumrind (2012), there are three types of parenting styles. Authoritarian parenting make an attempt to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, any deviations will result in forceful measures to curb self-will. Conversely, a permissive parent “allows the child to regulate his own activities as much as possible”. These children often have very little parental guidance in life’s decisions. Between these two extremes is authoritative parenting. It is a democratic approach of parenting where a parent directs the child’s activities in a rational, issue-oriented manner and encourages verbal give and take. Children are encouraged to make their own decisions and exert their own freedom, however boundaries are established and compromises with parents are made. Rather than dictating, authoritative parents listen to their child’s point of view, make suggestions and provide direction to them. In the present study, parental practices not only include disciplinary techniques such as authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting but also the roles played by parents, i.e., parents as caretakers, encouragers, parental communication and interaction, control and discipline, parental role in character building and attitude formation, development of industry in children, parental role in academic activities and development of good habits in children. Positive parenting facilitates the child to build up and develop positive behavior and self-concepts which are crucial for becoming good citizens of the society. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this direction with the following objective:

1. To assess and compare perception of parental practices of children (9-12 years of age) based on gender.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted on 300 children between 9-12 years of age (late childhood years), belonging to nuclear families and studying in co-educational schools located within the municipal limits of Udaipur city, selected through a preliminary survey. A questionnaire on Parental Practices was developed and standardized to assess the dimensions of parenting. The Parental Practices Questionnaire” was administered on the sample as per the convenience of the school administration to gather the desired information. For assessing the level of parental practices perceived by children, the data obtained were coded and the ‘Frequency’ and ‘Percentage’ were calculated for various selected dimensions. For comparing the level of parental practices in boys and girls, Z-test for difference between two means was computed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. **Distribution of respondents for the level of perception of parental practices on the basis of gender**

The information regarding the percentage distribution for the level of parental practices in late childhood years based on gender is given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents for the level of perception of parental practices in late childhood years based on gender**

n =300

Table 1 depicts that girls (82.66%) perceived to receive more care from parents as compared to boys (74.66%) where, caretaking includes parental involvement in day to day activities and acquainting children with the expectations and the reasons behind parental expectations from them. In the present study, girls were found to be more satisfied with the parental care that they receive than boys do.

S.No.	Parental Practices	BOYS (n <sub>1</sub> =150)			GIRLS (n <sub>2</sub> =150)		
		High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
1	Caretaking	74.66	25.33	-	82.66	17.33	-
2	Encouraging	66	33.33	0.66	76.66	23.33	-
3	Communication & Interaction	78.66	18.66	2.66	86	12.66	1.33
4	Control and discipline	60.66	32	7.33	63.33	32	4.66
5	Character Building & Attitude Formation	96	1.33	2.66	95.33	4.66	-
6	Developing Industriousness	76	22.66	1.33	69.33	30.66	-
7	Academic Activities	74	25.33	0.66	77.33	22	0.66
8	Development of Good Habits	96.66	2.66	0.66	96.66	3.33	-
OVERALL		82	17.33	0.66	82.66	16	1.33

Similarly, majority of boys and girls, i.e., 65%-75% experienced higher levels of encouragement from their parents for performing challenging tasks or getting appreciated for doing a good job. Maximum number of boys and girls reported to have a higher level of communication and interaction with their parents, where they can express their problems, issues, daily routine activities and parental expectations regarding good and bad behavior are discussed. The present study consisted of children belonging to 9-12 years of age (Table 1) in which children are still in connection with their parents rather than an absolute involvement with the peer group. This can be justified in the research conducted by Nickerson *et al.* (2005) which reported that middle and late childhood aged children described more communicative relationships with parents than adolescents.

Table 1 suggests that majority of boys and girls (60%-63%), experienced democratic form of parenting, where parents used reasoning for disciplining and controlling the behavior of the child. Maximum percentage of boys and girls reported that their parents play an important role in the character building and attitude formation which includes teaching about moral values, building up a strong moral character, encouraging sympathetic and empathetic attitudes, correcting inappropriate behavior and developing respect and courteousness towards others.

The results of the present study reveals that majority of respondents reported that their parents were high to moderately involved in developing industriousness by making them responsible towards household and school tasks and guiding them in problem solving.

Majority of boys (74%) and girls (77.33%) reported to have high involvement in academic activities. Students who received parental help with homework achieved higher academic scores, even greater difference when the mother provided this help. When parents attended meetings with the principal and teachers, as well as participated in extracurricular activities, there was a noticeable effect on students' performance. (Torrecilla and Castilla, 2020)

It is evident from Table 1, majority (96.66%) of boys and girls respectively, reported that their parents employed practices for the development of good habits such as personal cleanliness, hygiene, good dietary habits and respect towards others. Kitsaras, *et al.* (2020) suggests that establishing good habits such as personal hygiene and cleanliness, etc, has been shown to be really important for a number of health, wellbeing, development and social outcomes.

Table 1 shows that overall, there are almost similar scores obtained by boys (82%) and girls (82.66%) but the level of parental practices is slightly higher of girls than that of boys, except for parental role in developing industriousness where boys scored higher than girls, probably because of the variation in the responsibilities given to both boys and girls. During the sample survey for the present study, higher number of boys reported to go out and get the household necessities or do shopping for themselves rather than girls, which justifies the difference in the scores obtained by boys and girls.

## 2. Comparison of perception of parental practices of boys and girls

Table 2 depicts the overall and dimension wise values of the z-test calculated for the perception of parental practices of boys and girls belonging to late childhood years. The mean scores obtained by the respondents were falling in the moderate range of perception of parental practices questionnaire.

**Table 2: Comparison of perception of parental practices on the basis of gender**

**n=300**

S.NO.	Parental Practices	BOYS (n <sub>1</sub> =150)		GIRLS (n <sub>2</sub> =150)		
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	z- value
1	Caretaking	32.19	4.40	31.58	4.35	1.21
2	Encouraging	24.72	3.94	25.02	3.39	0.72
3	Communication & Interaction	29.48	5.16	24.66	12.30	4.43*
4	Control and discipline	26.52	6.19	26.28	5.25	0.34
5	Character Building & Attitude Formation	32.26	4.87	32.35	3.47	0.17
6	Developing Industriousness	28.53	4.47	28.59	4.30	0.11
7	Academic Activities	28.53	4.47	28.59	4.30	0.11
8	Development of Good Habits	35.29	5.06	34.60	4.64	1.22
OVERALL		23.70	2.55	23.57	2.71	0.43

**\*significant at 5% level of significance**

Although there were no significant differences found between the two sample means, overall boys obtained a slightly higher mean score (23.70) than girls (23.57). Contrary to the results of the present study, Batool and Riaz (2019) revealed that the involvement of parents was compared and variations were found in male and female students. Svensson (2004) also found differences between boys and girls regarding socialization. The research found that girls seem to have stronger bonds to their parents and to school, in comparison to boys (Wikstrom and Butterworth, 2006).

The similarity of scores in the present study between the two sample means may be due to the similar rearing practices by parents and also a provision for similar prospects for equal development of boys and girls. It is also important to note the changing perception of parents towards the stereotypic gender roles or the differential treatment formerly given to both boys and girls. Earlier boys were subjected to harsh punitive treatment whereas girls were treated gently with guidance, but the society is moving towards an equalitarian approach leaving behind

the stereotypic attitudes towards both the genders (i.e. females are considered to be economic contributors and males are also regarded as caregivers) (Dodson, 2006). Due to the changing scenario in the contemporary situations, parent are giving equal opportunities to both boys and girls (as evident from Table 2) to take up authoritative control and develop diligence within them.

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