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## Disciplinary Practices Adopted By Parents

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### **Abstract**

*Adolescence is perhaps the most difficult period of child rearing for parents. Discipline is to mould the child so that he will conform to the traditional expectations of the cultural group to which he belongs. Parental discipline is an important variable in connection that ultimately would reveal the behaviour of the child in different situations, which would determine the child's capacity to adjust to different surroundings, particularly in school. This study was thus taken up to identify the differences in disciplinary practices perceived by parents from different occupational strata and their adolescent children.*

**Key words:** Parents, Disciplinary techniques, training children

### **1.Introduction**

Discipline is teaching the child the way he should go. Child discipline is the most important element of successful parenting. Discipline (or training) might simply be defined as a process to help children to learn appropriate behaviour and make good choices. In addition to loving, effective discipline aids a child in exercising self-control, accountability and mutual respect. (www.allaboutparenting.org). Garg (1983) explained that, the mind of the child is like a sheet on which minute to minute impressions are formed. Parents can shape the personality and behaviour based on their actions and temperament. According to www.childdiscipline.withlove, if the child is not learning to recognize limits, he is learning to ignore them. The more he learns to ignore them, the harder it is for him to recognize any boundary in the future. By the time the child reaches teenage, the process become irreversible. In the words of O'Leary (1995) children are not born knowing how to act in accordance with the rules of their families or society. Most children learn (i.e. are taught) to behave appropriately (and inappropriately). Such teaching is one aspect of child rearing, and parents play a key role in disciplining or teaching their children to behave according to a wide range of rules. Although parental rules vary across families, children's age, cultures and historical periods, most people know a rule.

Goldstein (2006) suggests that all children need adults in their lives who will assist them to think before they act, to reflect upon various options to challenging situations, to realize that different consequences follow from their choices, and to take responsibility for their behaviour. O'Leary (1995), stated that methods of discipline are social standards as to who, when, why and how people are disciplined. Typically it is not socially acceptable for anyone other than the parents to spank a child. According to Goldstein (2006), discipline has two major functions. The first is to ensure that children have a consistent, safe and secure environment in which they can learn reasonable rules, limits and consequences as well as develop an understanding as to why these are important. The second function is equally important but not as readily emphasized as is to nurture self-discipline or self-control.

Goldstein (2006) further explains that when parents are reactive, crisis oriented, overly punitive, harsh, belittling, arbitrary, or inconsistent, the positive goals of discipline are likely to suffer. The development of self-discipline is also compromised when parents have very different disciplinary styles or when parents are hesitant to set limits for fear that their children will be angry with them. Some children take advantage of this fear by telling parents they don't love them. Finally, children will struggle to develop self-discipline when parents insist on unrealistic expectations for behaviour, resulting in children becoming increasingly frustrated and angry.

Adolescence is perhaps the most difficult period of child rearing for parents. Discipline is to mould the child so that he will conform to the traditional expectations of the cultural group to which he belongs. Parental discipline is an important variable in connection that ultimately would reveal the behaviour of the child in different situations, which would determine the child's capacity to adjust to different surroundings, particularly in school. It is quite natural that every parent behaves differently towards their child. It has also been seen that mother and father of one child behaves in a different manner with him. Although a teacher is also responsible to a

certain extent, parents play a more important and major role mainly because the child spends much more time at home with the parents than what he does in school. Studies also show that parent child relationship and child rearing practices among different socioeconomic classes suggest that parents of different classes treat their children quite differently. Thus parental disciplinary practices play an important role in the psychosocial development of the child as well making the good or bad personality of the child. Therefore, after proper understanding and evaluation of the above aspects the present study was selected to identify the differences in disciplinary practices perceived by parents from different occupational strata and their adolescent children.

## 2.Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to assess and examine:-

- mothers disciplinary practices
- fathers disciplinary practices
- parental disciplinary practices
- The differences in disciplinary practices adopted by mothers and fathers used for boys.
- The difference in disciplinary practices adopted by mothers and fathers used for girls.
- The difference in parental disciplinary practices adopted for boys and girls.
- The difference in mothers and fathers disciplinary practices adopted for both boys and girls.

## 3.Hypothesis

To achieve the objectives, the hypotheses designed are discussed below:-

- There is no significant difference between mothers and fathers disciplinary practices used for boys.
- There is no significant difference in the disciplinary practices of mothers and fathers used for girls.
- There is no significant difference in the parental disciplinary practices adopted for boys and girls.
- There is no significant difference in mothers and fathers disciplinary practices adopted for both boys and girls.

## 4.Methodology

The area selected for the study included urban and rural areas in Ernakulam district. The places selected were Kaloor, Ernakulam and Thevara. The sample comprised of 50 boys and 50 girls (100 students) in the age group of 11-14 years. The method of sampling adopted was random sampling. The subjects were selected from three different schools in Ernakulam city. The schools selected were Model Technical Higher Secondary School, Kaloor, St. Teresa's School, Ernakulam, CCPLM, and Thevara. The tools used for the present study were (I)Self designed questionnaire to study the background information of the respondents and (II) Questionnaire named "Parental disciplinary practices scale". The self designed questionnaire consisted of 19 questions to collect background details of the respondents. The questionnaire named "Parental Disciplinary practices scale" was constructed and standardized by Garg (1983). The questionnaire consisted of 30 questions to assess the mothers and fathers disciplinary practices. The present test had two types of items i.e., positive and negative indicating the degree of parental discipline in maximum to minimum (positive statements) or minimum to maximum (negative statements). It is a combination of 5-point scale and 3 point scale and scoring is used to analyse the data. Critical ratio was the method used for statistical analysis.

## 5.Results And Discussion

The type of family, number of siblings and ordinal position of the children selected for the present study was subjected to study. The results are presented in the table given below.

SI No	Category	Respondents (%)			
		Boys (n=50)		Girls (n=50)	
		n	%	n	%
1	<b>Type of family</b>				
	Nuclear	40	80	44	88
	Joint	10	20	6	12
2	<b>Number of siblings</b>				
	1-2	44	66	47	94
	more than 3	0	0	1	2
	none	6	12	2	4
3	<b>Ordinal position</b>				
	1	36	72	31	62
	2	9	18	16	32
	3 and more than 3	5	10	3	6
4	<b>Parents show partiality</b>				
	Yes	4	8	2	4
	No	46	92	48	96

Table 1: Family Background Of The Respondents

The results presented in the table shows that more than three fourth of the selected population; (i.e.) 80-88 percent of children belonged to the nuclear family and only a small percent (20% and 12%) belonged to the joint family. Devadas and Jaya (1996) have pointed out that families all over the world are breaking away from joint family set up and are becoming nuclear. The parent study shows that the selected area is also no exception. The results on number of sibling shows that majority (86% boys and 94% girls) of respondents have only one or two siblings. Only 12 percent boys and four percent girls do not have any sibling. Thus the result is in the line in the small family norm, which is prevalent now a days. The table shows that majority of studied respondents (72 percent for boys and 62 percent girls) were elder ones in the family and large majority of respondents (92% of boys and 96% of girls) reported that their parents never show partiality between siblings.

#### 5.1.Comparison Of Mothers And Fathers Disciplinary Practices Used For Training Boys

This section deals with the comparison of mothers and fathers disciplinary practices used for boys. Mean scores of the two groups were computed to test the significance of difference between the mean values. The results obtained are given in table 2.

Category	N	Mean	S D	C R	Level of significance
Mothers	50	93.84	11.65	0.296	Not significant
Fathers	50	94.64	11.38		

Table 2: Comparison Of Disciplinary Practices Used For Boys

The above table shows the comparison of disciplinary practices of mother and father of boys. The statistical analysis reveals that there is no significant difference (CR=0.296) between mothers disciplinary practices with fathers disciplinary practices of boys. Hence the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the disciplinary practices of mother and fathers of boys is accepted. The mean score obtained by mothers disciplinary practices (93.84) showed not much difference in fathers disciplinary practices (94.64) of boys. However, the slight difference in mean shows that fathers (93.84) has slightly better disciplinary practices than mothers (94.64) of boys.

The above findings can be supported by the study conducted by Starrels and Morjorie (1994) which reports that fathers are much more involved with sons and tend to concentrate on more instrumental facets of support, whereas mothers tend to be more supportive across genders in the traditional, affective sense. The investigator found out that in most cases both mothers and fathers of boys were equally concerned about disciplining the boys. Mothers and fathers do not show much difference in disciplining a boy.

### 5.2. Comparison Of The Disciplinary Practices Adopted By Mothers With Fathers Disciplinary Practices On Girls

This section deals with the comparison of mothers and fathers disciplinary practices used for girls. Mean scores of the two groups were computed to test the significance of difference between the mean values. The results obtained are given in table.

Category	N	Mean	S D	C.R	Level of Significance
Mothers	50	89.28	11.48	0.19	Not significant
Fathers	50	88.4	3.72		

Table 3: Comparison Of Mothers And Fathers Disciplinary Practices Used For Girls

The above table shows the comparison of disciplinary practices of mothers and fathers disciplinary practices used for girls. The statistical analysis reveals that there is no significant difference (C.R=0.19) between the disciplinary practices of mothers with fathers. Hence the null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference in the disciplinary practices of fathers and mothers of girls was accepted. The mean score obtained for mothers disciplinary practices (89.28) do not show much difference with fathers disciplinary practices (88.4) of girls. However, the slight difference in mean shows that mothers (89.28) adopted slightly better disciplinary practices than fathers (88.4) of girls. The investigation found out that mothers and fathers do not show much difference in disciplining a girl child. Reports show that mothers were more strict in disciplining girl children than fathers which may be because mothers were more concerned and precautions about girl children than boys.

### 5.3. Comparison Of Parental Disciplinary Practices Adopted For Boys And Girls

In this section critical ratio was found out to compare the disciplinary practices of parents of boys and girls. Mean scores of the two groups were computed to test the significance of difference between the mean values. The results obtained are given in table-4.

Category	N	Mean	S D	CR	Level of significance
Parents of boys	100	94.24	11.52	4.76	0.01
Parents of girls	100	88.84	8.16		

Table 4: Comparison Of Parental Disciplinary Practices adopted For Boys And Girls

From the computed critical ratio given in the above table it is evident that the critical ratio obtained 4.76 ( $4.76 > 1.96$  at 0.01 level). It shows that there is significant difference in the parental disciplinary practices adopted for boys and girls. The difference between the two categories is significant at 0.01 levels. Based on the above findings, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the disciplinary practices adopted by boys and girls was rejected. Alternatively, it is stated that there is significant difference in disciplinary practices adopted by parents of boys and girls. The higher mean score (94.24) obtained by parents of boys show that they have better disciplinary practices than their counterparts (88.84). The above findings are in line with the study conducted by Wiley and Sons (2002). The study reported that boys believed that they would receive more physical punishment, milder requests and less induction than girls. Both boys and girls reported that their parents would treat boys more severely than they would girls.

According to study conducted by Das (2006), in Indian society, boys are generally given preference in every sphere of life. Boys obtained better parental support when compared to girls. The gender differences in levels of support are derived from culturally distinct ways of viewing boys and girl's family and social roles. The study reveals that parents of boys were stricter than parents of girls in disciplining owing to the difficulty involved in disciplining boys.

### 5.4. Comparison Of Mothers Disciplinary Practices With Fathers Disciplinary Practices Adopted For Both Boys And Girls.

In this section critical ratio was found out to compare the disciplinary practices adopted by mothers and fathers for both boys and girls. Mean scores of the two groups were compiled to test the significance of difference between the mean values. The results obtained are given in table-5.

Category	N	Mean	S D	CR	Level of significance
Mothers of both boys and girls	100	91.56	11.79	0.73	Not significant
Fathers of both boys and girls	100	91.52	8.74		

Table 5: Comparison Of Disciplinary Practices Adopted By Mothers With That Of Fathers For Both Boys And Girls

The above table shows the comparison of mothers and fathers disciplinary practices adopted for both boys and girls. It is evident that there is no significant difference in mothers and fathers disciplinary practices of both boys and girls. Hence the null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference between the disciplinary practices of mothers and fathers for both boys and girls was accepted. The mean scores obtained by mothers disciplinary practices (91.56) do not show much difference with the score of fathers disciplinary practices (91.52). The slight difference in the mean shows that mothers (91.56) have better disciplinary practices than fathers (91.52). The above findings can be supported by the study conducted by Nair (2009), which says that in the context of rapid demographic transition in Kerala, the intrafamilial relationships have changed. The primary responsibility of child disciplining and child rearing is mainly in the hands of mothers. In a study conducted by Sputa and Paulson (1995), adolescents in both the ninth and twelfth grades said that their mothers were more involved in parenting than fathers. According to study conducted by www.britanica.com mothers and fathers may differ in their practices in some families but were similar in others. The investigation found out that there was not much difference in parental disciplinary practices among mothers and fathers. However, mothers show slight better disciplinary practices than fathers. It is mainly because those mothers had much more time to be with their children than fathers.

## 6. Conclusion

The mothers and fathers of boys and girls were equally concerned about disciplining their children. But the parents of boys were stricter than parents of girls in disciplining. It is mainly due to the difficulty involved in disciplining boys. The area of living, family status and background influence the disciplinary practices adopted by the parents. As majority of respondents of the study were from urban area, hailing from middle-income family and majority of them are from nuclear family there was no difference in disciplinary practices of parents.

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