

**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF DELINQUENCY PRONENESS AMONG
ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR PARENTING STYLE**

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Abstract

Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social changes, often accompanied by various adjustment challenges. Among these, delinquency proneness has emerged as a major concern influenced by multiple factors, particularly family environment and parenting styles. The present study aimed to examine delinquency proneness among adolescents in relation to their parenting styles. The study was conducted using the descriptive survey method on a sample of 1200 adolescents selected from two districts of Haryana, namely Jhajjar and Bhiwani. Standardized tools were used for data collection. Statistical techniques such as one-way ANOVA and Pearson's coefficient of correlation were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that there is a significant difference among the four types of parenting styles (democratic, autocratic, permissive, and uninvolved) with respect to delinquency proneness. The ANOVA results showed a highly significant difference ($F = 927.40$, $p < 0.01$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Further, the study found a significant relationship between delinquency proneness and parenting styles ($r = -0.5$, $p < 0.01$). Democratic parenting style showed a strong negative correlation with delinquency proneness, indicating its protective role, whereas autocratic parenting style showed a strong positive correlation, indicating increased risk. Permissive and uninvolved parenting styles also showed significant relationships with delinquency proneness. The study concludes that parenting style is a significant determinant of adolescent behavior, and effective parenting practices play a vital role in reducing delinquency proneness. The findings highlight the importance of promoting healthy parent-child relationships and creating supportive family environments to foster positive adolescent development.

Keywords: Adolescence, Delinquency Proneness, Parenting Styles, Democratic Parenting, Autocratic Parenting, ANOVA, Correlation

Introduction:

Adolescence is a developmental stage marked by significant biological, emotional, intellectual, social, moral, and ethical transformations. As with any period of transition, it may entail various potential difficulties and adjustment challenges—such as instability; emotional and psychological distress; internal turmoil; behavioral issues; health-related problems; anger and aggression; substance use and abuse; developmental and growth-related issues; sexual health concerns; social difficulties; cyber-addiction; and academic challenges, among others. However, the severity, rate, and pace of these problems vary from person to person due to their unique individual characteristics. Adolescents who receive strong support are better able to manage their emotions, whereas those who lack such support become more vulnerable during periods of emotional distress. During difficult times, they may feel lonely and isolated. Adolescence becomes particularly challenging for those grappling with mental, emotional, and behavioral issues; in such individuals, negative self-perceptions and maladaptive behavioral patterns may develop.

Criminal behavior is regarded as the outcome of the interplay between a child's internal predispositions and external precipitating circumstances. A propensity toward delinquency may primarily involve learned, aggressive drives, as well as personality traits influenced by the child's family, upbringing, school environment, peer group, intelligence, socio-economic status, and emotional maturity. These tendencies toward delinquency may prompt a child to seek out specific situations likely to elicit criminal responses. A criminal predisposition refers to the likelihood of an adolescent engaging in antisocial acts. The Oxford Dictionary defines the word "prone" as "likely to suffer from something." A criminal predisposition differs from the crime itself; just as crime constitutes antisocial behavior, a criminal predisposition represents the potential for a child to engage in such acts. It is the latent capacity to become a criminal—a potential that surfaces when an adolescent is exposed to fairly common temptations and opportunities. A lack of harmony between internal predispositions and the environment steers an adolescent toward delinquency; this implies that whenever circumstances arise that incite criminal behavior, the child will almost certainly succumb to the temptation and commit the crime. The repeated commission of such acts by an adolescent leads to their transformation into a criminal. Thus, the concept of "criminal predisposition" denotes the probability that a child may evolve into a criminal. Ultimately, this depends on the extent to which the child is predisposed to such behavior. Criminal predisposition is assessed by estimating the likelihood that an adolescent will engage in criminal acts should

environmental factors turn adverse. It is of paramount importance to identify such adolescents at an early stage in order to mitigate the prevalence and severity of behavioral issues that are incompatible with societal norms. According to Hove, Otten, Vries, and Engels (2009), "Parenting style is the broad environment in which a family functions, and which encompasses the child-rearing behaviors of parents or other primary caregivers." Thus, parenting style influences how a young person views their parents, and how they respond to the authority exercised by them. Parenting style is generally conceptualized as a constellation of attitudes (which establish the context in which parenting behaviors occur), parental characteristics, and behaviors. These elements describe the interactions between parent and child, and alter the effectiveness of socialization efforts across various situations; consequently, they create an emotional and communicative climate that reflects the overall nature of their style (Bee & Boyd, 2004; Brown et al., 1993; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). In contrast, the impact of parenting style is more indirect. According to them, parenting style modifies parents' capacity to socialize their children, thereby altering the effectiveness of their parenting practices (Bee & Boyd, 2004).

Studies Related to Parenting Styles

Later, Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded Baumrind's classification by introducing the uninvolved (neglectful) parenting style. They emphasized that uninvolved parenting is linked with poor emotional development and behavioural issues among adolescents.

Steinberg et al. (1994) found that adolescents raised in authoritative families demonstrated better psychosocial competence, while those from authoritarian and permissive families exhibited higher levels of misconduct and problem behaviours.

Similarly, Lamborn et al. (1991) reported that adolescents from neglectful families showed the lowest levels of competence and highest levels of problem behaviour, reinforcing the importance of parenting style in adolescent adjustment.

Studies Related to Delinquency Proneness

Delinquency among adolescents has been widely studied in relation to family environment. Glueck and Glueck (1950) conducted one of the earliest studies and found that poor parental supervision and inconsistent discipline were major contributors to juvenile delinquency.

Patterson et al. (1989) proposed the coercion theory, suggesting that harsh and inconsistent parenting practices lead to the development of aggressive and antisocial behaviours in children. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) emphasized that ineffective parenting leads to low self-control in children, which in turn increases the likelihood of delinquent behaviour.

Further, Hoeve et al. (2009), through a meta-analysis, concluded that parenting factors such as monitoring, discipline, and emotional support are significantly associated with delinquency.

Studies on Parenting Style and Delinquency

Several empirical studies have explored the relationship between parenting styles and delinquency. Steinberg (2001) found that authoritative parenting is negatively associated with delinquent behaviour, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting are positively associated.

Simons et al. (1994) reported that parenting practices influence delinquency indirectly through mediating variables such as peer association and social environment.

However, some researchers have reported weak or non-significant relationships. Harris (1995) argued that peer groups have a stronger influence on adolescent behaviour than parents, thereby reducing the direct impact of parenting style on delinquency.

Similarly, Rowe (1994) emphasized that genetic and environmental factors outside the family may play a more dominant role in shaping delinquent behaviour.

Research Gap

Although numerous studies have examined parenting styles and delinquency, the findings remain inconsistent. While some studies report a strong relationship between parenting style and delinquency, others suggest weak or indirect associations influenced by mediating factors such as peer pressure, socio-economic status, and school environment.

Moreover, limited research has been conducted in the Indian context, particularly focusing on delinquency proneness (tendency) rather than actual delinquent behaviour. Therefore, there is a need for a systematic investigation to understand the relationship between parenting styles and delinquency proneness among adolescents.

Objectives:

Objective 1: “To study and compare the type of Parenting style among Delinquency prone adolescents.”

Objective 2: “To study & determine the relationship of Delinquency prone adolescents with their parenting styles.”

Hypotheses:

1. “Parenting styles do not differ significantly among delinquency-prone adolescents.”
2. “There is no significant relationship between delinquency proneness and parenting styles.”

Methodology:

For the current study descriptive survey method was used by the researcher. A sample of 1200 adolescents from two districts of Haryana state namely Jhajjar and Bhiwani were taken. Standardized tools were used by the researcher for data collection.

Statistics used:

t-test and Pearson's Coefficient of correlation was used for analysis.

Data analysis:

Objective 1: "To study and compare the type of Parenting style among Delinquency prone adolescents."

Hypothesis 1: "Parenting styles do not differ significantly among delinquency-prone adolescents."

As there are four parenting styles i.e. Democratic, Autocratic, Permissive and Uninvolved parenting styles, to verify this hypothesis, one-way ANOVA was employed on the scores of delinquency proneness of adolescents.

The mean and variance of the four groups are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 1:

Descriptive Statistics of Four Groups

Groups	N	Sum	Mean	Variance
Dynamic	1200	24912	24.91	28.72
Autocratic	1200	20252	20.25	8.16
Permissive	1200	25584	25.58	17.18
Uninvolved	1200	29800	29.80	11.87

ANOVA Summary

The ANOVA results are presented in Table 2:

Table 2:

ANOVA Summary Table						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F-crit.
Between Groups	45857.23	3	15285.74	927.40	0.00	2.607
Within Groups	65863.70.	3996	16.48			
Total	111720.92.	3999				

Interpretation of ANOVA Results

The obtained F-value (927.40) is significantly higher than the critical value (2.607) at the 0.01 level of significance. Moreover, the p-value is less than 0.01, indicating that the result is statistically highly significant.

This clearly shows that:

There exists a significant difference among the mean scores of the four dimensions of parenting style.

Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference among the types of parenting style is rejected.

Post-Hoc Analysis (Group Comparison)

To further understand the differences among groups, the mean scores were compared:

Uninvolved (Mean = 29.80) has the highest score

Permissive (Mean = 25.58) and Column 1 (Mean = 24.91) show moderate scores

Autocratic (Mean = 20.25) has the lowest score

The differences between uninvolved parenting style and the other types are notably high, indicating significant variation. Similarly, autocratic parenting style differs considerably from the remaining types.

Thus, it can be inferred that:

The variation among different type of parenting styles is substantial, and most group pairs differ significantly from each other.

There is a statistically significant difference among the four types. The calculated F-value is much higher than the critical value, confirming strong significance. Uninvolved parenting style shows the highest mean performance, whereas autocratic parenting style shows the lowest. The differences among different type of parenting styles are not due to chance but due to the effect of the independent variable. The analysis reveals that the types of parenting styles differ significantly with respect to the delinquency proneness. Hence, delinquency proneness has a significant impact on the parenting style. Further analysis through post-hoc tests confirms that most of the parenting styles differences are meaningful.

Objective 2: “To study & determine the relationship of Delinquency prone adolescents with their parenting styles.”

Hypothesis 2: “There is no significant relationship between delinquency proneness and parenting styles.”

Table 3: Relationship of Delinquency proneness of adolescents with respect to their

parenting style

Variable	N (sample)	"r" value	Level of significance
Delinquency Proneness	1200	-0.5**	Sig. at 0.01 level
Parenting style	1200		
Dimensions of Parenting Style	N	"r" value	Level of significance
Democratic	1200	-0.7**	Sig. at 0.01 level
Autocratic	1200	0.8**	Sig. at 0.01 level
Permissive	1200	-0.6**	Sig. at 0.01 level
Uninvolved	1200	-0.5**	Sig. at 0.01 level

The data presented in Table 3 reveal the correlation between delinquency proneness and overall parenting styles, as well as specific dimensions of parenting styles. The coefficient of correlation (r) and level of significance indicate both the strength and direction of the relationships. The overall correlation between delinquency proneness and parenting style is $r = -0.5$, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a moderate negative relationship. When examining the dimensions of parenting styles:

Democratic parenting style shows a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.7$), significant at the 0.01 level. Autocratic parenting style exhibits a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.8$), also significant at the 0.01 level. Permissive parenting style has a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.6$), significant at the 0.01 level. Uninvolved parenting style shows a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.5$), significant at the 0.01 level. All obtained correlation values are statistically significant, indicating that the relationships observed are not due to chance.

The findings clearly demonstrate that parenting style plays a significant role in influencing delinquency proneness among adolescents. The negative correlation between overall parenting style and delinquency proneness suggests that healthier or more effective parenting practices are associated with lower levels of delinquent tendencies. The strong negative relationship with democratic parenting implies that adolescents raised in environments characterized by warmth, communication, and reasonable control are less likely to exhibit

delinquent behavior. In contrast, the strong positive correlation with autocratic parenting indicates that strict, controlling, and less emotionally responsive parenting is associated with higher delinquency proneness. This suggests that excessive control without emotional support may contribute to rebellious or deviant behaviors.

The negative correlations with permissive and uninvolved parenting styles suggest a somewhat complex relationship. While these styles are generally considered less structured, the results indicate that lower levels of control or involvement may still be associated with reduced delinquency in this dataset. However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously, as they may depend on contextual or cultural factors.

Since all correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that: There exists a significant relationship between delinquency proneness and parenting styles among adolescents.

Overall, the study highlights that parenting style is a crucial determinant of adolescent behavior, with democratic parenting acting as a protective factor, while autocratic parenting increases the risk of delinquency.

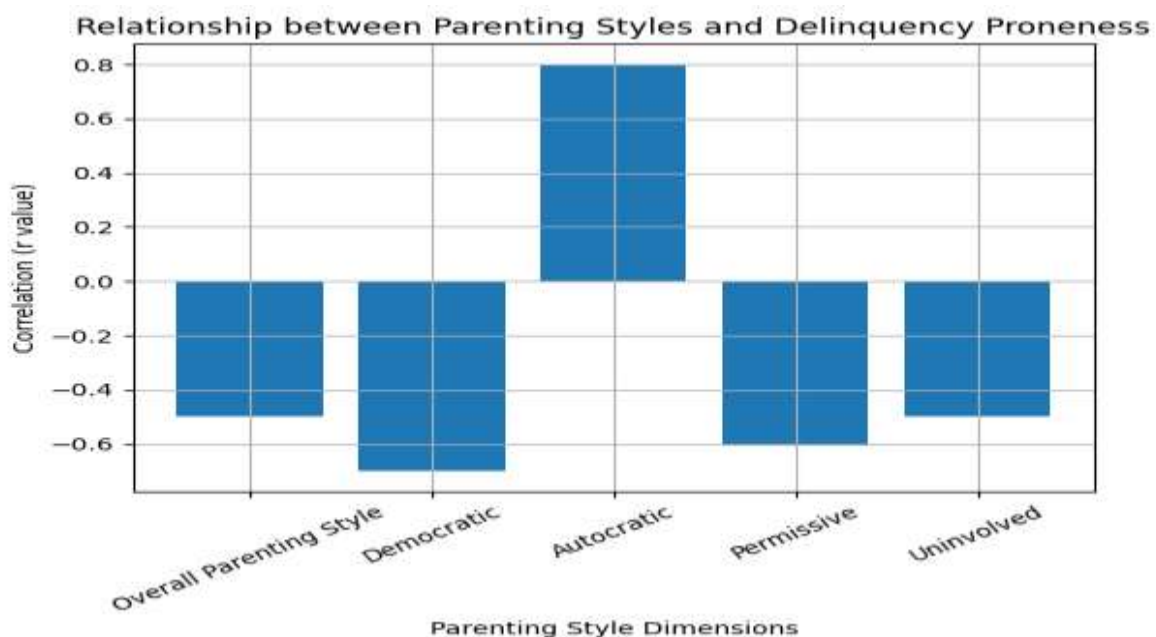


Fig.1 : Showing relationship of Delinquency and parenting Style

Discussion of results:

The present study was undertaken to examine delinquency proneness among adolescents in relation to their parenting styles. The findings of the study are discussed in light of the objectives, hypotheses, and previous research.

Discussion with Reference to Objective 1

The first objective was to study and compare the types of parenting styles among delinquency-prone adolescents. The results obtained through one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference among the four parenting styles ($F = 927.40$, $p < 0.01$). Hence, the null hypothesis stating that parenting styles do not differ significantly was rejected.

The mean comparison indicated that:

Uninvolved parenting style showed the highest mean score of delinquency proneness, Followed by permissive and democratic parenting styles, While autocratic parenting style showed the lowest mean score. These findings suggest that adolescents experiencing lack of parental involvement are more prone to delinquent tendencies. This aligns with the findings of earlier studies, such as those by Lamborn et al. (1991) and Maccoby and Martin (1983), who reported that uninvolved or neglectful parenting is associated with poor emotional development and higher behavioural problems. However, the finding that autocratic parenting shows the lowest mean delinquency proneness appears to deviate from some earlier research (e.g., Baumrind, 1971; Patterson et al., 1989), which suggests that harsh and controlling parenting leads to higher delinquency. This discrepancy may be attributed to cultural context, where stricter parental control in certain societies (such as Indian settings) may sometimes act as a deterrent against deviant behavior.

Discussion with Reference to Objective 2

The second objective was to determine the relationship between delinquency proneness and parenting styles. The results revealed a significant relationship between these variables, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The overall correlation ($r = -0.5$) indicated a moderate negative relationship, suggesting that effective parenting reduces delinquency proneness. Democratic parenting showed a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.7$), indicating that supportive, communicative, and balanced parenting reduces delinquent tendencies. This finding is consistent with Baumrind (1967, 1971) and Steinberg (1994), who emphasized the positive developmental outcomes of authoritative parenting. Autocratic parenting showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.8$), suggesting that strict and controlling parenting increases delinquency. This supports Patterson's Coercion Theory (1982) and findings by Glueck and

Glueck (1950), which highlight the negative impact of harsh discipline. Permissive parenting showed a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.6$), and uninvolved parenting also showed a negative correlation ($r = -0.5$). While these findings may appear inconsistent with some previous studies, they indicate that the relationship between parenting and delinquency is complex and context-dependent. These results support the broader view proposed by Hoeve et al. (2009) that parenting influences delinquency through multiple dimensions such as monitoring, emotional support, and discipline.

Integration with Previous Research

The findings of the present study are largely consistent with existing literature that highlights the significant role of parenting styles in shaping adolescent behaviour. Democratic parenting emerges as a protective factor, while autocratic parenting increases risk. At the same time, the study also reflects the arguments of Harris (1995) and Rowe (1994), who suggested that factors such as peer influence, socio-economic conditions, and cultural context may moderate the relationship between parenting and delinquency.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Parenting styles significantly differ among delinquency-prone adolescents. There exists a significant relationship between parenting styles and delinquency proneness. Democratic parenting style acts as a protective factor and reduces delinquent tendencies. Autocratic parenting style increases the likelihood of delinquency. Uninvolved parenting style is associated with higher delinquency proneness, highlighting the importance of parental involvement. The influence of parenting style on delinquency is significant but also shaped by cultural and environmental factors.

Educational Implications

The findings of the present study have important implications for parents, teachers, counselors, and policymakers:

1. For Parents

Parents should adopt a democratic (authoritative) parenting style, characterized by warmth, communication, and reasonable control. Excessive strictness (autocratic style) should be avoided, as it may lead to rebellion and delinquent tendencies. Parents must ensure active involvement in their children's lives to prevent emotional neglect and behavioural issues.

2. For Teachers and Schools

Schools should organize parental awareness programs to educate parents about effective parenting styles. Teachers should identify early signs of delinquency proneness and provide guidance and support. A positive school environment can act as a protective factor against delinquent behaviour.

3. For Counsellors and Psychologists

Counselling interventions should focus on family dynamics and parenting practices.

Adolescents showing delinquency proneness should be provided emotional and behavioural support. Parent counselling sessions can help improve parent-child relationships.

4. For Policy Makers

Policies should promote family welfare programs and parenting education. Community-based interventions can help in reducing adolescent delinquency. Awareness campaigns can highlight the importance of positive parenting practices.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its significance, the study has certain limitations:

1. The study was limited to two districts (Jhajjar and Bhiwani), which may restrict generalization.
2. The sample included only 1200 adolescents, which may not represent the entire population.
3. The study relied on self-reported data, which may involve bias.
4. Only parenting styles were considered, while other factors like peer influence, socio-economic status, and media exposure were not included.
5. The study focused on delinquency proneness (tendency) rather than actual delinquent behaviour.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations, the following suggestions are made for future research:

1. Similar studies can be conducted on a larger and more diverse sample across different regions.
2. Future research may include additional variables such as peer pressure, school environment, and socio-economic status.
3. Comparative studies can be conducted between urban and rural adolescents.
4. Longitudinal studies can help understand the development of delinquency over time.
5. Experimental studies can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of parenting intervention programs.

6. Research can also focus on gender differences in delinquency proneness.
7. Studies can explore the combined effect of parenting style and digital/social media exposure.

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