



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**A Study of the Parenting Styles adopted by Deaf and Hearing Parents of Children with Normal Hearing**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to explore the parenting styles of deaf and hearing parents of children with normal hearing. Parenting significantly influences social adjustment, emotional stability, academic achievement and psychosocial wellbeing of a child. A qualitative, descriptive research design was used. Deaf and hearing parents of children with normal hearing residing in Punjab were population of the study. 208 parents out of which 104 deaf parents (79 deaf mothers, 25 deaf fathers), 104 hearing parents (79 mothers, 25 fathers) were selected by convenient sampling technique. A self-made questionnaire was used to assess parenting style. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. The results indicated that despite certain similarities in parenting styles of hearing and deaf parents, significant differences are also found in their parenting. It is recommended that counseling should be provided to deaf parents, whereas impact of parenting styles should be publicize for all parent through media.

**KEYWORDS** Deaf Fathers, Deaf Mothers, Deaf Parents, Hard Of Hearing, Hearing Impairment, Parenting Styles

**Introduction**

When a child is born the very first place from where learning process starts is his home. The actions, attitudes or behaviors of parents such as parenting become the initial instructional mechanism for the child's learning and upbringing. According to American Psychological Association (APA), (2017) parenting is a process that is related to all those actions, behaviors and activities that parents perform or engage in to support and promote their child's development in all aspects whether physical, emotional, educational or psychosocial. Many studies have proven that parenting methodologies can significantly impact the child's wellbeing as they can influence child's upbringing at physical, emotional, psychological, academics and social levels. Although, we can find great diversity in the parenting styles of different families influenced by environmental, cultural, socioeconomic backgrounds, educational, disability etc., factors but irrespective of their approaches they use to guide or communicate with their children the main target of parenting remains same and that is physical, emotional, psychological, social and educational development of their children (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Fletcher et al., 2008).

Many researchers have come to an agreement that parental role is crucial for the child's psychological, emotional and behavioral wellbeing (Epstein & Sanders, 2002). According to Fletcher et al., (2008) three main components of parental involvement are their engagement with the child, their sense of responsibility towards the child and accessibility to all the rational needs. Therefore, parental involvements that are positive can benefit children in many ways, including better cognitive development, improved psychological adaptation, higher self-esteem, academic success, better social skills, and improved peer connections (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Epstein & Sanders, 2002).

Parenting styles have been classified into three or more psychological constructs by various studies. In this article four major parenting styles are focused including: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved. Every style has its own specific approach towards how parents bring up their kids. Each parent typically use one of these styles and occasionally exhibit traits from another style (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022).

In authoritarian style there is usually one-way communication mode where parents are the ones who make all decisions and set forth strict rules that child must obey and there is no space for discussion, negotiation or personal choices for the child. Disobedience, mistakes and errors in the set standards are met with harsh punishments. Parents always have high expectations and mostly less flexible and less nurturing in their parenting. Children raised in this style lack self-esteem and decision making power, have aggression or anger management issues, unsocial and sometimes even rebel as they grow older (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022). Authoritative parenting style support and develops a tight nurturing bond and two-way communication mode with children. Even though clear rules and guidelines are set but their rational and logical explanations are given for why they need to be obeyed. Parents are usually responsive, and supportive and they control their children behaviors not by punishments but discussions and reasoning (Spera, 2005). Generally, this parenting style provide healthiest outcomes for children and children raised in this style are usually confident, have higher self-esteem, friendly and sociable, self-regulated and responsible, achievement oriented and have better academic achievement levels (Chao, 2001; Park & Bauer, 2002; Querido, Warner & Eyberg, 2002; Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022). Parents in permissive style are usually more nurturing, warm, friendly and have less restrictive environment with no firm rules set for control and level of expectations from children are low. Discussion is very much part of communication and decision making is also as per child's choices. Punishing for disciplining is not part of this style. Children brought up in this style with too much freedom usually develop unhealthy habits or lifestyles, can become unmotivated, lack self-regulation and responsibility, selfish, impulsive, controlling or over demanding. However, these children usually have good social skills, better self-esteem and levels of depression are found low even in adolescence and adulthood (APA, 2017; Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022; Chao, 2001; Park & Bauer, 2002; Querido, Warner & Eyberg, 2002). In uninvolved parenting style parents are usually detached from the children. They provide for the basic needs but otherwise unconcerned with other upbringing needs of the child. A very limited level of communication exists, too much freedom is given with no expectations, absence of care or nurturing towards their children and remain truly uninvolved with their children psychological and emotional needs. Children brought up in this style usually develop self-reliance and independence at much earlier stage. However, they will have lower levels of self-esteem and confidence, unable to control emotions and deficiency in use of coping strategies, suffer in academic performance and have difficulty in maintaining or developing relationships (APA, 2017; Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022).

As previously discussed that there is great diversity in adoption of parenting styles as per the choices of parents but these choices and styles are greatly influenced by other including disability/impairment (Antonopoulou, et al., 2017). The present study focused to highlight the differences in parenting styles of hearing parents and deaf parents. Many researches and studies have indicated that just like hearing parents, deaf parents are also nurturing, caring, competent and committed when it comes to the wellbeing and upbringing of their children (Preston, 1994; Clark, 2003; Singleton & Tittle, 2000). Therefore, it is expected that parenting styles of hearing and deaf parents might be similar but studies have shown that prominent differences are observed in parenting styles of hearing and deaf parents (Klimentová, et al., 2017; Hadjidakou & Nikolarazi,

2008). These differences could exist due to lack of exposure and access to effective parenting skills, lack of communication between deaf parents in their childhood with their hearing parents resulting in unhealthy, infuriating relationship between them, existence of communication interruption and problems between deaf parents and their hearing children (Allsop & Kyle, 1997; Singleton & Tittle, 2000; Clark, 2003; Hadjikakou & Nikolarazi, 2008; Klimentová, et al., 2017), restrictions or limitation of information flow within the family and outside family or community systems (Children of Deaf Adults [CODA] International, 2005; Redlich, 2008) and insufficient experiences of incidental learning (Allsop & Kyle, 1997). Also low self-esteem and lower levels of confidence in deaf parents make them inconfident in their decision making ability resulting in confusing parental behaviors and disruptive communication between them and their children. This usually cause social adjustments problems in their children with normal hearing (Preston, 1996; Singleton & Tittle, 2000). All these aspects might greatly impact how the deaf parents rear their hearing children and which parenting style they adopt.

Generally, hearing children have hearing parents but sometimes hearing children might have both deaf parents or one of them could be deaf (CODA International, 2005). Present studies have informed that children raised by deaf parents are usually bilingual and bicultural (CODA International, 2005; Redlich, 2008). These children usually serve as interpreters of their parents and other deaf members of community. Therefore, this additional responsibility can contribute to the children's maturity and independence and closer bond with their parents only if the parental role and interpretations are clear and appropriate. Alternately, if the aforementioned requirements are not met, it could result in the youngster being exposed to inappropriate interpretations of the various contexts (Abutalebi et al., 2012; Bialystok, Craik, & Luk, 2012; Mechelli et al., 2004; Singleton & Tittle, 2000).

Due to lack of exposure to good models of parenting (Allsop & Kyle, 1997) and irritating relation of deaf parents with their hearing parents in their childhood may change the way deaf parents rear their child (Hadjikakou & Nikolarazi, 2008). Additionally, unclear parental behavior and disrupted communication between hearing child and their deaf parent can lead to challenges in social adjustment of their normal hearing children (Preston, 1996; Singleton & Tittle, 2000).

Limited research work is done on the parenting practices or styles adopted by deaf parents of hearing children (CODA International, 2005; Redlich, 2008), and more focus is always given to studies on the communication between hearing children and their deaf parents (Klimentová, et al., 2017; Šatava, 2009). Even in Pakistan field work in this research area is scarce. Therefore, this study is an attempt to identify the parenting styles of deaf parents rearing hearing children in Pakistani context.

## **Material and Methods**

This study was descriptive in its nature, following a quantitative approach. Population of the study comprised all deaf parents of children with normal hearing as well as parents with normal hearing residing in different cities of Punjab province. The data was collected from 104 deaf parents and 104 parents with normal hearing regardless of their age, educational background, locality, family structure and employment status. As 79 deaf mothers and 25 deaf fathers consented to participate in the study, thus, same proportion was selected for hearing parents with the help of convenience sampling technique.

## Instrument

Based on literature review related to parenting styles adopted by deaf parents and the styles adopted by parents with normal hearing, questionnaire was developed. Data was obtained using self-constructed questionnaire based on indicators centered on the available literature and the recommendations given by previous studies conducted worldwide and guidelines for instrumentation. Its validity and reliability was determined before data collection. Its validity was ensured by taking opinion of experts of the relevant field. It was then pre-tested to identify its suitability, subject sensitivities, and to determine its reliability.

## Data Collection and Data Analysis

The researcher took help from the professionals working in the special education department and related field to access the targeted sample. Once identified, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents. Questionnaires were provided to the sample who consented to participate in the study. The instrument was distributed and collected back with the assistance of special education teachers and personally visiting the respondents where possible. Confidentiality, anonymity and other ethical considerations was ensured. Descriptive and inferential statistics was applied to analyze and interpret the collected data.

## Ethical Consideration

Informed consent was taken from the participants. Purpose of the study was also explained to them. Confidentiality, anonymity and other ethical considerations was ensured.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Parenting style of hearing parents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Authoritarian	43	41.3	41.3
	Authoritative	37	35.6	76.9
	Permissive	21	20.2	97.1
	Uninvolved	3	2.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0

The above table demonstrates that the most common parenting style found in hearing parents of children with normal hearing is Authoritarian with 41.3%, Authoritative stands second with 35.6%, Permissive comes afterwards with 20.2% and least common parenting style is uninvolved with 2.9%

**Table 2**  
**Parenting style of deaf parents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Authoritarian	26	25.0	25.0
	Authoritative	36	34.6	59.6
	Permissive	25	24.0	83.7
	Uninvolved	17	16.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0

The above table demonstrates that the most common parenting style observed among deaf parents of children with normal hearing is Authoritative with 33%, Authoritarian and Permissive stands second with 25%, and least common parenting style is uninvolved with 17%.

**Table 3**  
**t-test statistics on parenting style of deaf parents based on their gender**

	parents gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	deaf mothers	79	2.42	.956	.108	1.792	.076
	deaf fathers	25	2.00	1.190	.238		

Table 3 shows the t test statistics to compare mean scores of participants based on their gender. Independent sample t-test indicates ( $t = 1.792$ , sig2-tailed=.076,  $a = .05$ ) which means that there is no significant difference between parenting style of deaf parents of children with normal hearing based on their gender.

**Table 4**  
**t-test statistics on parenting style of hearing parents based on their gender**

	parents gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	hearing mothers	79	1.92	.874	.098	1.686	.095
	hearing fathers	25	1.60	.707	.141		

Table 4 shows the t test statistics to compare mean scores of participants based on their gender. Independent sample t-test indicates ( $t = 1.686$ , sig2-tailed=.095,  $a = .05$ ) which means that there is no significant difference between parenting style of hearing parents of children with normal hearing based on their gender.

**Table 5**  
**t-test scores to compare the difference between mean scores of parenting style of deaf mothers and hearing mothers**

	parents gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	deaf mothers	79	2.42	.956	.108	3.389	.001
	hearing mothers	79	1.92	.874	.098		

Table 5 shows the t test statistics of independent sample t-test ( $t = 3.389$ , sig2-tailed=.001,  $a = .05$ ) indicating a statistically significant difference between parenting style of deaf mothers and hearing mothers of children with normal hearing.

**Table 6**  
**t-test scores to compare the difference between mean scores of parenting style of deaf fathers and hearing fathers**

	parents gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	deaf fathers	25	2.00	1.190	.238	1.445	.155
	hearing fathers	25	1.60	.707	.141		

Table 6 shows the t test statistics of independent sample t-test ( $t = 1.445$ , sig2-tailed=.155,  $a = .05$ ) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between parenting style of deaf fathers and hearing fathers of children with normal hearing.

**Table 7**  
**t-test scores to compare the difference between mean scores of parenting style of deaf parents and hearing parents**

parents characteristics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t.	Sig. (2-tailed)
deaf parents	104	2.32	1.026	.101	3.614	.000
Mean hearing parents	104	1.85	.845	.083		

Table 7 shows the t test statistics of independent sample t-test ( $t = 3.614$ , sig2-tailed = .000,  $\alpha = .05$ ) indicating a statistically significant difference between parenting style of deaf and hearing parents of children with normal hearing.

## Discussion

Future of nation relies mainly on the way their youth is brought up. To create prosperity, excellence and harmony in the society, it is pivotal to provide good parenting opportunities to each and every individual of the society irrespective of having parents with or without disabilities. Where there is a lack of research on child rearing by deaf parents, studies identifying similarities and differences in parenting styles of deaf and hearing parents is even harder to find (CODA International, 2005; Redlich, 2008). This study was an effort to unveil the parenting styles of deaf and hearing parents of hearing children.

Although similar parenting is expected from deaf as well as normal hearing parents, but studies indicate that parenting behavior may differ among deaf parenting families and that of a hearing one (Klimentová, et al., 2017; Hadjikakou & Nikolarazi, 2008). The results of this research also indicate similarity with previous studies that indicate a probability of difference in parenting style of deaf and hearing parents. It was found in this study that there was statistically significant difference between parenting style of deaf and hearing parents of children with normal hearing. Although parenting style deaf fathers and hearing fathers did not differ significantly but a statistically significant difference was found in the parenting of deaf and hearing mothers of children with normal hearing. Additionally, no difference was found in the parenting of deaf mothers and deaf fathers, indicating a similarity in their approach to deal their kids. Similarly, parents were normal hearing did not differ significantly based on their gender. This may indicate a trend that the parent either mother or father have similar parenting approach when their hearing or deafness is common.

Findings of this study revealed that the most common parenting style found in hearing parents of children with normal hearing is Authoritarian with 41 percent of the respondents, while this ratio was quite less in deaf parents reflected by 25 percent of parents. Previous studies revealed that in this parenting style parents make all/most decisions of their child's life and have high expectations from children which may result in behavior problem among those children as they grow older (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022; Woolfson, & Grant, 2006).

Similar results were found for authoritative and Permissive parenting style. More than thirty percent of deaf as well as hearing parents used authoritative and more than twenty percent used permissive approach of parenting. Authoritative approach is associated with clear rules and expectation with supportive nurturing (Dehyadegary et al, 2013) that enable children to feel independent (Spera, 2005). Children raised through this parenting style tend to have better academic achievement, confidence, self-regulated and a great sense of responsibility (Chao, 2001; Park & Bauer, 2002; Querido, Warner &

Eyberg, 2002). While in permissive approach focuses on very friendly style, with no set rules from parents and all decision making by children. Too much freedom leads to issues with discipline, self-regulation, responsibility and academics (Assadi et al, 2011). On the other hand, children raised through this style are less prone to depression and have good social skills and self-esteem (APA, 2017; Park & Bauer, 2002; Querido, et al., 2002).

This study indicated great difference of hearing and deaf parents parenting regarding 'uninvolved' parenting style. Around twenty percent of the deaf parents were using this approach, whereas it was least common parenting style among hearing parents comprising only three percent. It indicates that it is very rare for hearing parents to give too much freedom to their children with no expectations, and to stay unconcerned or detached from the children psychological, educational or other needs. Previous studies indicates that children brought up through this approach have good self-reliance and independence, but with poor self-esteem and academic performance (APA, 2017; Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022; Yaffe, 2015).

## **Conclusions**

Parenting shape the way kids learn, behave, socialize, and serve the community and the country as adults (Masud, et al., 2015; Yang & Zhao, 2020). This study is distinctive in exploring parenting practices of deaf and hearing parents of children with normal hearing in our cultural context.

Results of this study discovered that there was statistically significant difference between parenting style of deaf and hearing parents of children with normal hearing. Although parenting style deaf fathers and hearing fathers did not differ significantly but parenting of deaf and hearing mothers differ significantly. No difference was found in the parenting of deaf mothers and deaf fathers, indicating a similarity in their approach to deal their kids. Similarly, parents with normal hearing did not differ significantly based on their gender. This may indicate a trend that the parent either mother or father have similar parenting approach when their hearing or deafness is common.

On the whole, it was found in this study that despite certain similarities in parenting styles (Authoritative and Permissive) of hearing and deaf parents, differences are also found in their parenting. This study indicated great variance of hearing and deaf parents parenting regarding 'Authoritarian' and 'Uninvolved' parenting style. Around twenty percent of deaf parents focused on providing basic needs to their children but stay unconcerned about their child's psychological or other needs. They provided too much freedom to their children but didn't set rules for them or had any clear expectations. In contrary, such parenting style was rarely adopted by hearing parents. The parenting style most common in hearing parents was 'Authoritarian', in which parents make all/most decisions of their child's life and have high expectations from children which may result in behavior problem among those children as they grow older (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022). This style was less common in deaf parents.

On the whole, this study revealed that despite certain similarities in parenting styles of hearing and deaf parents, differences are also found in their parenting.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that counseling services should be provided to deaf parents. As the finding indicated uninvolved parenting by some deaf parents which can result in low self esteem, relationship problems and lower academic grades of their children.

There is also a need to publicize the effect of different parenting styles for all parent either hearing, sighted or disabled. This can be achieved through different media including newspapers, TV, radio, social media and journals. This may create awareness among masses on avoiding authoritarian parenting style in which parents' high expectations, strict rules create behaviour problems and depression among children and impact their academic achievement.



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