



Overprotective Parenting and Child Development: A Research Study

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Abstract

Underprepared children are the main disadvantage of an overprotective parenting approach. This type of parent expects the worst to happen to their kids and is terrified of everything. There is no such thing as "bad" parenting, and parents can be incredibly devoted to their kids. They worry that their young child may develop into a destructive or unmanageable adult. Therefore parents use different methods of parenting but due to lack of parenting knowledge, parents unknowingly adopts ways which damages child to such extent that it leads to social anxiety, low self-esteem, low confidence, low academic performance and even delinquency at later age. This study is focused to examine the over-protective dimension of child rearing and its impact on children of the ages 3-12 years. It was examined that mothers who were working showed negative association of over-protection levels with impact on children whereas overprotection levels were high with full time mothers.

Keywords: - Over-protective parenting, Child development.

Introduction

Being a protective parent is good for a child's initial stages of development as it ensures safety and helps in building trust in child. For a parent, it is very important to keep an eye on child's activities so that he or she doesn't get harm physically. Parent's first concern is to protect their children from falling in infancy to peer group selection in adolescent. This time span from infancy to adolescence is very delicate phase for both parent and child. Parenting in this period left great impact on children and their behavioral pattern for life time. Parents in order to teach their children to socialize adopt different methods for rearing. Some methods are very helpful for the positive growth of the children such as disciplinary, normal and esteem building methods which helps to develop confidence, high self-esteem, and positive behavior among children. On the other hand few methods destroys the development of child such as overprotection, harsh, ridicule and rejection practices which lowers the confidence, self-esteem, academic performance and higher level of aggression among children. Unaware of the consequences of these methods, some parents use overprotective methods in parenting which is harmful in future for a child. Child development is influenced by both parental behavior and parent-child interactions within an open family and community structure (Kyriazos & Stalikas, 2018). In low-risk circumstances, overprotective parenting may have a negative impact on children's and youth's psychosocial development. Although understudied, a variety of literary genres can be used to make educated guesses about the causes of overprotective parenting and its effects on kids (Michael Ungar, 2009).

Over-protectiveness according to Baumrind's definition can be seen in Authoritarian and permissive styles of parenting. In Authoritarian style, parents are responsive and at the same time they don't allow children to deal with any hurdle. In permissive styles, parents are more responsive towards their children but expects very less from the child in return (Romani, 2023).

Overprotective parenting can take many forms. Some parents protect their children so much so that they don't experience failure in their early lives. Parents under this category often try to do each and every thing such as cleaning their children's room, keeping their children's stuff on place, doing child's homework to make the child among good ones in class etc. Such parents try to do everything to protect their children from failure. Tim Elmore, a leadership specialist, claims that when we rescue our kids too soon and give them too much "assistance," we take away their ability to deal with difficulties and find solutions on their own. They are unable to mature into responsible adults as a result (Trautner, 2017).

Another form of over protectiveness is not letting the child to do anything on his own. Parents often keep an eye on their children which is good, but anything which is going extreme is harmful. Here parents took all the decisions of their child without considering child's interest and opinions because parents think that they know better. But excessive care and protection stops the child from experiencing the small hurdles in the development which resulted in lower confidence among children in later stages of life.

Hypersensitiveness is again very common form of overprotective parenting. Parents who always keep on reminding their children about safety and danger during every activity, they always intervene if their child do not treated as per their wishes are the few characteristics of hypersensitive parents. Overprotective parents are also reactive in the sense that they react immediately when their child face any problem and don't give space to the children to cope up with problems by their own. (Pamela Li, 2023).

One of the longitudinal research study done to examine the relation between social anxiety and overprotective parenting studied that parent-child relationship plays the crucial role in the holistic development of a child. The study was done on 923 students and it was concluded that children whose parents were found low in warmth and have high levels of overprotection experience social anxiety frequently (Relationships et al., 2014)

Effects of Overprotective Parenting

Overprotective methods of child rearing just not vanish as child grows but it leaves very remarkable signs on the child's behavior. Being overprotective towards the children specially during the age of 3-12 years proves to be harmful for the children.

One of the very common but harmful effects of overprotective parenting is worry and anxiety among children. Parents often were found in stress towards the conception of any discomfort or threat to their children. This form of negative stress leads to not letting a child to enjoy his or her own little experience which leads to social anxiety and worry among children at later stages of development.

Second effect of overprotective parenting is lack of coping skills in a child. Over protectiveness results in lack of confidence in child and it will further harm (Pamela Li, 2023). Parental involvement is good for the academic performance of child but monitoring or watching a child all the time is over-protectiveness due to which at every step, a child needs assistance and could not feel confident to perform activities.

Parent tries their best to make their kids academically good, at the same time because of the parents only; a child gets academically weak which is an effect of over-protection. Due to over-protectiveness, parents often do the child's homework to make him or her feel good but this practice of doing homework and project work stops the child's potential and also stops a child from making mistakes which is very important in a child development (Romani, 2023)

The effect of over-protective parenting is the lack of happiness in a child. Due to anxiety and low confidence in a child, it is very difficult for him to cope up with situation which resulted in unhappiness (Team, 2023). Children brought up with over-protectiveness lacks the skill of decision making which is observable in adulthood when these children cannot take the important decisions of their life as adults.

Studied the 'effects of overprotective parenting on academic self esteem 'where the researcher studied the parent-child and teacher-child relationship. The study was done on preschool aged children. It was concluded that parental overprotection is negatively related to children's academic self-esteem (Valdez, 2016).

Methodology

The present paper tries to examine the effects of over-protectiveness of parents on child development. Children from 3-12years of age were selected for the study as samples and 400 mothers were respondents. Regular interval marking method has been used for selecting the samples. Structured interview schedule and observation were the tools for data collection. Child rearing practices inventory was used as a tool to collect data for seven dimensions of child rearing practices including over-protectiveness. Chi-square was used to statistically understand the significant relation between overprotection and child development.

Results

It was observed that among 400 mothers, 254 mothers who were working showed negative relation with overprotection and child development whereas, 146 mothers who were full time mothers showed positive relation with overprotection and child development. At 0.5% of significance level with 4 degrees of freedom, for working mothers the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the table value. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and it is accepted that there is an impact on children of overprotection. Compared with working mother, Full time mothers at 0.5% of significance showed positive relations with medium and high levels of overprotection.

Table 1. Relationship between over-protection levels and impact on children.

Working condition	Over-protection Level	Impact on Children			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Working Mothers	Low	0	0	11	11
	Medium	104	16	0	120
	High	123	0	0	123
Total		227	16	11	254
Full time mothers	Low	0	0	1	1
	Medium	0	23	49	72
	High	64	9	0	73
Total		64	32	50	146
Grand Total		291	48	61	400

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to understand the effects of over-protective methods of parenting on child development. From the study it has been proved through statistical analysis that there are a lot of mothers who unknowingly practices over-protective methods of parenting to make their child socially and academically good. But in order to make their child fit in society, parents adopts unhealthy measures which should be avoided for happy and healthy growth of a child. It was hypothesized that there is no significant relation between overprotection levels of mothers and its impact on children. Statistically null hypothesis is rejected and it is proved that there is a significant relationship between the two. (Valdez, 2016) found similar negative association between low impact on child development with high over-protection levels. Due to lack of parental knowledge on methods of parenting, there should be awareness programme for the parents and parents to be so that better and well confident child can be raised.

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