

**Prevalence of parenting styles during the early childhood years:
Does parents' socioeconomic status matter?**

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Abstract

This paper explores the prevalence of parenting styles during early childhood in Bhutan. The study included 433 parents, selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire, and statistical techniques like descriptive analysis and one-way ANOVA were employed. The findings revealed that the most prevalent parenting style was authoritative, but aspects of authoritarian and permissive styles were also present. Furthermore, significant differences in parenting styles were observed based on parents' socio-economic status. Authoritative parenting varied based on education qualification, while it did not differ by income and marital status. The authoritarian style differed based on both education qualification and income level, but not marital status. Permissive parenting did not show significant differences based on these factors. These results contribute to understanding parenting practices in Bhutan, highlighting the dominance of authoritative parenting known to promote positive cognitive, emotional, and social development in children. The findings emphasize the importance of considering contextual influences when designing interventions and support systems to encourage healthy parenting practices.

Keywords: *Parenting styles, Authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style, parents' socioeconomic status*

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Introduction

Many Studies have showed the association between parents' socioeconomic status and parenting style across the world (Baumrind,1995; Bluestone, & Tamis-LeMonda, C.S, 1999), but how such association exist in Bhutanese context have not been studied. The importance of education during the early childhood years has been clearly reflected in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring access to quality early childhood care and development by 2030 by all its member nations (United nations, 2020). Accordingly, early childhood care and development has been given outmost educational priority by the Royal Government of Bhutan. Early Childhood Education in Bhutan was started in 2004 with the aim to provide quality education through a healthy, happy, and ready to learn approach. Since then, the number of Early Childhood Care and Development centers (ECCD) have been increasing with 495 ECCD centers currently established guided by well written ECCD policy guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2018). This indicates that like in any western society, the Bhutanese government regards education during the early childhood years as an important approach in the long-term achievement of the education goal of preparing children for future schooling and life as a learner. The overall goal of education is to bring holistic development in the child, so that they become competent and ready to learn during the formal schooling. To make them competent, their education during the early years becomes the shared responsibility of both parents and educational institutions. More specifically, parents are seen to act as a key mentor in a child's life, playing a major role in their upbringing. Consequently, parenting has become an essential tool as it has the capacity to make a child develop positively or negatively in the community where he or she lives (Bradley & Caldwell, 1995). Parenting is a complex task as it encompasses several behaviors that influence a child's outcomes. So, it has been defined in many ways, such as trying to control and socialize with child (Baumrind, 1991), parent-child interaction and communication (Duncan, Coatsworth, & Greenberg, 2009; Nadeem, Romo, Sigman, Lefkowitz, & Au, 2007) and parent-child relationship such as caring (Davis-Sowers, 2012). These attributes stress that specific behaviors are needed to apply that may have a positive impact on the child. Empirical studies have shown that parenting style greatly impacts the child where parenting styles lead to negative emotions and problematic behaviors (Sarwar, 2016; Williams, Degnan, Perez-Edgar, Henderson, Rubin, Pine, Steinberg & Fox, 2009), cognitive ability (Larson, Russ, Nelson, Olson,

& Halfon, 2015), issues with social competence (Tong, Shinohara, Sugisawa, Tanaka, Maruyama, Sawada, Ishi & Anme, 2009) and problems with academic achievement (Cortázar, 2015) towards the later years of child's life. But, parenting during the early childhood years is not an easy task as parents may be aspiration for their children, so, belonging to a different socioeconomic background from that which they desired for their child. Studies conducted in other parts of the world indicate that the parents' socioeconomic background influences their style of parenting (Bøe, Sivertsen, Heiervang, Goodman, Lundervold & Hysing, 2014; Winter, Morawska, & Sanders, 2012). However, studies are yet to determine if such influence exists in Bhutanese context. For that reason, this study was carried out to mainly answer the following two important research questions.

1. Which form of parenting style is more prevalent among the Bhutanese parents of this study?
2. Are there differences in parenting style practices during the early childhood years by parent's socioeconomic background?

Literature Review

The importance of parenting style has been greatly recognized all over the world. It is suggested that parenting style impacts on the overall development of the child, but more contextual factors like parent's socioeconomic status and cultural background needs to be understood to examine how parenting approaches vary from parent to parent or region to region (Ulferts, 2020). In many industrialized countries, it has been found that there is a general shift in parenting style from authoritarian to authoritative among the highly educated parents and those on a high income (Bray & Dawes, 2016; Trifan, Stattin & Tilton-Weaver, 2014). However, we do not know if such a transition to a more authoritative parenting style is seen among Bhutanese parents. Parenting styles is described as a humanistic pattern based approaches of incorporated parenting practices, however, researchers remarks that Parenting style differs from parenting practice as parenting style basically features parent-child interaction across settings and situations, while, parenting practices are explicit to particular contextualized situation (Baumrind, 1971; Darling & Steinberg, 1993), In this paper, we take it to mean an approach taken by parents to guide their children through any one of the three approaches namely authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 2005). This approach is commonly known as Baumrind's theory of parenting styles (Baumrind, 1971, 1995). The authoritarian

parenting style is characterized by corporal oppression, verbal hostility and non-reasoning/punitive dimensions and Authoritative parenting style has relationship, regulation, and autonomy-granting dimensions, while permissive parenting style is often referred to as indulgent parenting that discards the concept of keeping their children under control (Baumrind,1971). Baumrind (1995) argues that parenting styles exist on a continuum, and its practices can vary within each style. Nevertheless, he explains that cultural and contextual factors can influence parenting styles and its outcomes. Each of these styles have been well researched. It has been suggested that adoption of any one of the parenting styles mentioned above has either positive or negative impact on the overall development of a child from the early years to adolescence. For example, a study conducted by Sarwar in 2016 on the influence of Parenting Style on Children's Behavior found that parents with authoritarian parenting styles tend to lead to the child becoming violent, while an authoritative parenting style is seen as more effective. Similarly, parent's inductive reasoning, warmth and punitive styles toward children were found to correlate significantly with children's social behaviors such as aggressive, prosocial behavior and shyness (Saltali, 2018). Like in western society, In Bhutan, Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centers provide learning opportunities for 3 - 5-year-olds through centre-based programmes and taking on many of the roles of parenting. It may appear, the role of parents in children's lives is more very limited, though, no studies have been conducted so far on prevalence of parenting style during the child's early years in Bhutan. Though parenting style plays a crucial role by and large in child's development, it appears to be somewhat determined by the parent's socio-economic environment. It has been found that parents with high socioeconomic status are likely to be more reactive to their children's needs and demands of their children than families with low socioeconomic background (Tazouti, & Jarlégan, 2014). This difference may be evident in the case of Bhutan where there is marked differences in literacy rate between urban and rural areas with 81.7% and 58.3% respectively (National Statistical Bureau, 2017). Further, according to the National Statistical Bureau, 2017 estimated that about 8.2% of the Bhutanese populations are poor with rural population areas poverty of 11.9% being significantly higher than in urban areas (0.8%). The country's employment rate is 95.0% and an unemployment rate stands at 5.0% with higher unemployment rate for females (6.0%) than that of males (4.1%). It is also revealed that Unemployment is more prevalent in urban areas with 10.1%, which is four-times higher than that of rural areas (2.7%). Among the 20 dzongkhags, (which are like states or territories and hold many

administrative commercial and other functions) Thimphu has the highest unemployment rate with 12.3%, followed by Paro (9.4%), Chhukha (5.8%) and Punakha (5.2%) (National Statistical Bureau of Bhutan, 2020). Thus, it is imperative to explore how parenting styles differ in the context where socioeconomic background matters like in any other societies.

Research Methodology

This study employed quantitative approaches to answer the stated research questions. The population of the study consisted of parents whose children were in the three-to-eight-year-old age range. A total of 433 parents were selected using a purposive sampling method. The research instrument consisted of two parts; part I consisted of demographic details (table 1) including parents' education level, income level, marital status (Married, widowed, divorced, & unmarried [refers to parents who never married but adopted child] and employment status as shown in table 1. Part II consisted of parenting style survey questionnaires adopted from Robinson, Mandlco, Olsen, and Hart (2001).

Table 1

Demographic Details of Parents

Parents Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
PhD	4	.9
Master's degree	26	6.0
Bachelor's degree	104	24.0
Diploma Degree	36	8.3
High School (7 th Grade-12 th Grade)	197	45.5
Primary School (preprimary -6 th Grade)	35	8.1
Illiterate/no education level	31	7.2
Total	433	100.0
Parents Income Level	Frequency	Percent
High income	26	6.0
Middle Income	261	60.3
Low Income	146	33.7
Total	433	100.0
Parents' Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	393	90.8
Widowed	5	1.2
Divorced	30	6.9
Unmarried	5	1.2
Total	433	100.0

The data was collected through self-administered survey questionnaires on a five-point likert scale (1 = never, 2 = once in a while, 3 = about half of the time, 4 = very often, and 5 = always) as well as through an online instrument, a Google form. In the descriptive analysis, means and standard deviation were analyzed to find out the prevalence of parenting styles during the early childhood years. Means were categorized as low; 1.00-2.33, moderate; 2.34–3.67, and high; 3.68–5.00 (Ramli, Omar, Bolong, D’Silva, & Shaffrill, 2013). One-way Annova was carried out to explore the types of parenting styles prevalent among parents during the early childhood years and see whether there is any difference in parenting styles based on each parent’s socioeconomic status.

Result Analysis & Findings

The result findings are discussed under the following research questions.

1. Which form of parenting style is more prevalent among the Bhutanese parents of this study?

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics on Authoritative Parenting Style (N=433)

Authoritative Parenting Style	M	S.D	Level
I encourage my child to talk about the child’s trouble	4.01	1.15	high
I am responsive to my child’s feelings or needs	4.69	.63	high
I give comfort and understanding when my child is upset	4.64	.70	high
I give praise when my child is good	4.60	.74	high
I have warm and intimate times together with my child	4.57	.71	high
I give my child reasons why rules should be obeyed	4.54	.74	high
I explain to my child the consequences of his or her actions/behavior	4.52	.77	high
I emphasize the reasons for rules	4.23	.89	high
I explain to my child how we feel about the child’s good and bad behavior	4.36	.86	high
I help my child to understand the impact of his or her behavior by encouraging child to talk about their action	4.26	.87	high
I show respect for my child’s opinions by encouraging my child to express them	4.41	.84	high

I take into account my child's preferences in making plans for the family	3.91	1.08	high
I take my child's desire into account before asking my child to do something	4.02	1.0	high
I encourage my child to freely express even when disagreeing with me	4.13	1.03	high
I allow my child to give input into family rules	3.98	1.10	high
Authoritative Parenting Style	4.32	.53	high

The data in table 2 showed that the overall mean for authoritative parenting style was high ($M = 4.32$, $SD = .53$). All the indicators measuring parents' authoritative parenting style were shown to be at a high level with the highest mean score ($M = 4.69$, $SD = .63$) for "I am responsive to my child's feelings or needs" and the lowest ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.08$) for "I take into account my child's preferences in making plans for the family."

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of Authoritarian Parenting Style

Authoritarian Parenting Style	M	S.D	Level
I spank when my child is disobedient	2.85	1.36	mod
I slap my child when my child misbehaves	2.23	1.25	low
I grab my child when being disobedient	2.27	1.28	low
I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child	1.96	1.15	low
I explode in anger towards my child	2.02	1.03	low
I yell or shout when my child misbehaves	2.73	1.22	mod
I scold and criticize to make my child improve	2.40	1.34	mod
I scold and criticize when my child's behavior doesn't meet my expectations	2.13	1.19	low
When my child asks why he/she has to conform, I state, "Because I said so or I am the parent."	2.38	1.37	mod
I punish my child by putting my child somewhere alone with little if any explanation	1.36	.89	low
I use threats as a punishment with little or no justification	1.48	.88	low
I punish by taking privileges away from my child with little if any explanations	1.67	1.08	low
Authoritarian Parenting Style	2.12	.77	low

The analyses in table 3 indicate that the prevalence of authoritarian parenting styles was found to be low ($M = 2.12$, $SD = .77$). Of the 12 items measuring authoritative parenting styles, four measures were shown to be moderate while eight measures were indicated at a low level. The highest mean ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.36$) amongst the items was "I spank when my child is disobedient", followed by "I yell or shout when my child misbehaves" ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 1.22$). The lowest mean score among the 12 items was "I punish my child by putting him/her somewhere alone with little if any explanation" ($M = 1.36$, $SD = .89$), followed by "I use threats as a punishment with little or no justification" ($M = 1.48$, $SD = .88$).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Permissive parenting style (N=433)

Permissive Parenting Style	M	S.D	level
I spoil my child	1.29	.65	low
I give in to my child if he or she causes a commotion about something	2.10	1.16	low
When I tell my child I will punish them I do not actually punish them	2.70	1.35	mod
I threaten my child with punishment more often than actually giving it	1.96	1.18	low
I find it difficult to discipline my child	1.94	1.19	low
Permissive Parenting Style	1.10	.64	low

Overall, the prevalence of permissive parenting styles was found to be low ($M = 1.10$, $SD = .64$). Of the five items measuring permissive parenting style, one item, "when I tell my child I will punish them, I do not actually punish them," was indicated as moderate ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.35$). The lowest mean ($M = 1.29$, $SD = .65$) was for the item "I spoil my child."

2. Are there differences in parenting style practices during the early childhood years by parent's socioeconomic background?

Table 5
One-Way Analysis of Variance of Authoritative Parenting Style by parents' education level

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.37	6	1.23	4.65	.000
Within Groups	112.40	426	.264		
Total	119.76	432			

One-Way Anova data analysis in the table5 indicated that there is a significant effect of parents' educational level on authoritative parenting style ($F(6,426)=4.65, p<.001$). The between group analysis of variance shows that the sum of squares for the effect of education level on parenting style is 7.37. The degree of freedom for between group analysis are 6, while the mean square is 1.23. The significant F-value suggests that there are differences in authoritative parenting style among the education groups. The p-value ($p<.001$) indicates that differences are unlikely to occur by chance alone.

Table 6
Descriptive Analysis on authoritative parenting style by Parents Education Level

Parent's Education Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
PhD	4	3.80	1.13	.57
Master's degree	26	3.97	.53	.10
Bachelor's degree	104	4.24	.50	.05
Diploma Degree	36	4.26	.46	.08
High School (VII-XII)	197	4.42	.49	.04
Primary School	35	4.35	.67	.11
Illiterate	31	4.41	.46	.08
Total	433	4.32	.53	.03
Model				
Fixed Effects			.51	.03
Random Effects				.08

Post hoc comparison using the Turkey HSD test indicated that the mean score for parents with master's degree education qualification ($M = 3.97, SD = .53$) was significantly different than that of parents with high school

education level ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .49$) and illiterate parents ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .46$). There was also a statistically significant difference between parents who had a bachelor's degree education level ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .50$) and parents with a high school education level ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .49$). However, no statistically significant difference was found between parents with a PhD, master's degree, bachelor's degree, diploma degree, and primary school level of education.

Table 7

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Authoritative Parenting Style by parents income level

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.69	2	.35	1.25	.29
Within Groups	119.07	430	.28		
Total	119.76	432			

One-Way Annova data analysis in the table 7 showed that there was no significant difference of authoritative parenting styles level based on the parent's income levels with $F(2, 430) = 1.25$, $p > .05$.

Table 8

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Authoritative Parenting Style by parents' marital status

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.04	3	.35	1.25	.29
Within Groups	118.73	429	.28		
Total	119.76	432			

One-Way Annova data analysis in table 8 showed that there was no significant difference in authoritative parenting styles level based on the parent's marital status. $F(3, 429) = 1.25$, $p > .05$.

Table 9
One-Way Analysis of Variance of Authoritarian Parenting Style by parents' education level

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.86	6	2.64		
Within Groups	241.82	426	.57	4.66	.000
Total	257.68	432			

One-Way Anova data analysis in the table9 showed that there was a significant difference of authoritarian parenting styles at the $p < .05$ level based on the parent's education levels with $F(6, 426) = 4.66, p = .000$.

Table10
Descriptive Analysis on authoritarian parenting style by Parents Education Level

Parents Education Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
PhD	4	2.94	1.45	.73
Master's degree	26	1.83	.52	.10
Bachelor's degree	104	1.91	.63	.06
Diploma Degree	36	2.00	.62	.10
High School (VII-XII)	197	2.20	.80	.06
Primary School	35	2.24	.88	.15
Illiterate	31	2.48	.86	.15
Total	433	2.12	.77	.04
Model				
Fixed Effects			.75	.04
Random Effects				.11

A post hoc comparison using the Turkey HSD test indicated that the mean score for parents with a master's degree education qualification ($M = 1.83, SD = .52$) was significantly different than for parents who are illiterate ($M = 2.48, SD = .86$). The analysis also revealed that the mean score for parents who have a bachelor's degree education level ($M = 1.91, SD = .63$) was significantly different from parents with high school educational qualifications ($M = 2.20, SD = .80$) and parents who have no education level ($M = 2.48, SD = .86$), while, no statistically significant difference was found between parents with a PhD, Master's degree, bachelor's degree, diploma degree, and primary school level of education.

Table 11
One-Way Analysis of Variance of Authoritarian Parenting Style by parents' income level

Source	Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.00	2	4.00		
Within Groups	249.68	430	.58	6.89	.001
Total	257.68	432			

One-Way Anova data analysis in table 11 showed that there was a significant difference in authoritarian parenting styles at the $p < .05$ level based on the parents' income levels, with $F(2, 430) = 4.00, p = .001$.

Table 12
Descriptive Analysis on authoritative parenting style by Parents Education Level

Parents income level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
High income	26	1.84	.62	.12
Middle Income	261	2.05	.74	.05
Low Income	146	2.30	.83	.07
Total	433	2.12	.77	.04
Model	Fixed Effects		.76	.037
	Random Effects			.13

A post hoc comparison using the Turkey HSD test indicated that the mean score for parents with high income levels ($M = 1.84, SD = .62$) and middle-income levels ($M = 2.05, SD = .74$) was significantly different than for parents with low-income levels ($M = 2.30, SD = .83$). However, no statistically significant difference was found between parents with a high-income level and those with a middle-income level.

Table 13
One-Way Analysis of Variance of Authoritarian Parenting Style by parents' marital status

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.74	3	.91		
Within Groups	254.94	429	.59	1.538	.204
Total	257.68	432			

One-Way Anova data analysis in table13 showed that there was no significant difference in authoritarian parenting styles level based on the parent's marital status with $F(3, 429) = 1.538, p > .05$.

Table 14
One-Way Analysis of Variance of Permissive Parenting Style by parents' educational level

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.21	6	.37	.886	.505
Within Groups	176.75	426	.42		
Total	178.96	432			

One-Way Anova data analysis in table14 showed that there was no significant difference in permissive parenting styles level based on the parent's educational level with $F(6, 426) = .886, p > .05$.

Table 15
One-Way Analysis of Variance of permissive Parenting Style by parents' income level

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.22	2	1.11	2.705	.068
Within Groups	176.73	430	.41		
Total	178.96	432			

One-Way Anova data analysis in table15 showed that there was no significant difference in permissive parenting styles level based on the parent's income level with $F(2, 430) = 2.705, p > .05$.

Table 16
One-Way Analysis of Variance of Permissive Parenting Style by parents marital status

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.85	3	.62	1.492	.216
Within Groups	177.12	429	.41		
Total	178.96	432			

One-Way Annova data analysis in table16 showed that there was no significant difference in permissive parenting styles level based on the parent's marital status with $F(3, 429) = 1.492, p > .05$

Discussion

The discussion was made under the following headings.

Prevalence of parenting style during the early childhood years

The growth and development of a child depends on their early childhood experiences, particularly how they are brought up by their parents at home. Thus, parenting style plays a crucial role in a child's later years of life in terms of behavior (Paulussen-Hoogeboom, Hermanns, Peetsma, & Wittenboer, 2008, Nanthamongkolchai, Ngaosusit, & Munsawaengsub, 2007; Trinkner, Cohn, Rebellon, & Van Gundy, 2012), academic success (Kosterelioglu, 2018) and development to Adolescents years (Baumrind, Larzelere & Owens, 2010). However, research has found that parenting styles differ across societies and cultural contexts (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Stormshak et al., 2000). For instance, an authoritative parenting style was found to be more prevalent in the South African context as it is associated with acceptable behavior, decision-making, and goals and aspirations (Bi et al, 2018; Makwakwa, 2011, Moyo, 2012, Latouf, 2008). A similar conclusion was made by Park & Bauer (2002), who found that European Americans were more authoritative. Likewise, an authoritative parenting style was found to be more prevalent among Bhutanese parents during the early childhood years. Further, the parents asserted that providing support and warmth is very important and that parents must listen to their children before taking any action. This clearly affirms that parents in Bhutan are authoritative in style when parenting their children during the early years. But parenting styles and practices vary across

countries. For instance, parents in the USA and Australia took into account the child's preferences and the child's expressions or views, while parents in China and Russia didn't take those parenting styles into consideration (Robinson et al. 1996). Conversely, it doesn't mean that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were not put into practice. Besides the authoritative parenting style, the findings from this study found that Bhutanese parents moderately apply some of the parenting practices of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles to their children. In the Bhutanese context, authoritarian parenting practices such as spanking, shouting, scolding, criticizing, and not reasoning back to when a child asks a question were still used moderately. The findings from this study support the earlier findings of Ishak, Low, & Lau, (2012), who found that authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles are the most common among the parents in Malaysia. This clearly indicates that there is no absence of any of the three parenting styles in any society due to socio-cultural and economic factors.

Parents' Socioeconomic status and Parenting styles

Parents play a pivotal role in shaping the future of a child, and parenting styles act as a tool to shape their lives. Studies carried out in other parts of the world indicated that parents with higher educational qualifications showed a positive, authoritative parenting style (Teti & Candelaria, 2002). Similarly, Kashahu et al. (2014) conducted a study in six schools in Tirna and found that parents who are educated are more likely to adopt an authoritative parenting style. In the same way, the present study found that there was a significant difference in authoritative parenting styles by parents' educational qualification. Parents with master's degree qualifications significantly differed from parents with high school education qualifications and those without any educational qualification. There was also a difference in parenting styles between parents who possessed bachelor's degree educational qualifications and parents who had only high school qualifications. In short, the study confirmed that parents with lower educational qualifications significantly differed from parents with higher educational qualifications. However, parents' practices of authoritative parenting style did not differ by the parents' income level and marital status.

Several studies have confirmed that low socioeconomic status of parents is significantly related to an authoritarian parenting style (Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999), as are parents with a low education level and a low income (September, Rich, & Roman, 2015; Shumow,

Vandell, & Posner, 1998,). Such trends were also seen among Bhutanese parents' use of parenting styles during the early childhood years. The present study indicated that there is a significant difference in parents' authoritarian parenting styles by parents' educational qualification. It indicated that parents with lower educational qualification levels (high school educational level and illiterate parents') adopt a more authoritarian parenting style than parents with higher educational qualifications (master's degree and bachelor's degree education level). Furthermore, parents with a high poverty rate exhibited more authoritarian parenting practices (McLoyd, 1990). Parents' income level was also significantly related to parents' practices of authoritarian parenting style. Parents with low-income sources opted for an authoritarian parenting style more often than higher and middle-income level parents. However, parents' practices of authoritarian parenting style did not differ by parents' marital status. Permissive parenting styles tend to be warm and nurturing but with minimal or no expectations from the child. Such a type of parenting grants limitless freedom to the child, making him or her impulsive, demanding, and lacking self-regulation (Kuppens, & Ceulemans, 2019; Leeman et al., 2014). Furthermore, permissive parenting styles were linked to either intermediate or negative outcomes for the child (Radziszewska et al., 1996; Opham et al., 2010). As a result, such parenting styles were not preferred, forcing parents to at least adopt them. This was true in the case of Bhutanese parents who viewed permissive parenting style as the least practiced style among the three, as the current study revealed that parents' practices of permissive parenting style did not differ by parents' educational qualification, income level, and marital status.

Conclusion

Parenting style has remained a very crucial element in the positive upbringing and development of a child. Though parents may come from different parts of the world, the common goal of all parents is to bring out the best in their children. Consequently, parenting style matters a lot in bringing out the best in them. However, such practices are always influenced by parental background, such as education level, income level, marital status, and employment status that vary across society and culture. The prevalence of parenting styles during the early childhood years and whether they differ by parents' socioeconomic background in the Bhutanese context. This study throws some interesting facts about change in the pattern of parenting styles among Bhutanese parents. Unlike in the past, when parents were mostly into authoritarian styles, this study revealed that modern Bhutanese parents are more authoritative in nature, but

that does not mean there is a complete absence of authoritative and permissive parenting styles. This study established that there are still some of the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles prevalent among parents during the childhood years. Moreover, parents' socioeconomic status does have some influence over the parenting style in the Bhutanese context. This suggests that parental background needs to be studied to understand the behavior of children in school or in any educational institution.

Limitations & Recommendations

The study was focused on early childhood years (0–8 years), so the finding may not generalize to other age groups that are above 8 years, as parenting styles may differ by the maturity level of a child. Second, data has been collected only from parents, which may have had some effect on reliability. Thus, future studies could include students once they reach high school or college level. This may help to determine whether parenting style changes with the transition of a child from early childhood years to adolescence. Thirdly, there is an issue of sample size as the study focuses on parents in general. It does not include and cover the mother's or father's parenting style separately. Therefore, further study could be conducted on comparing the parenting styles of a mother and father in a Bhutanese context.

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