

Title	The Effect of Psychosocial Factors on Drug Dependence
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Abstract	This paper is concerned with a comparative study of psychosocial factors, namely, perceived parenting styles and resistance to peer group pressure non-drug user group and non-drug user group. The different types of parenting in these two groups were identified by using a perceived parenting style scale. The results indicated majority of the drug users were children of authoritarian fathers, neglectful fathers and permissive indulgent mothers. Comparing to drug users, majority of the non-drug users were children of authoritative parents. Besides, the present study pointed out that the drug users were more vulnerable to peer group pressure than the non-drug users when their level of resistance to peer group pressure was assessed by the resistance to peer group pressure scale.
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# **The Effect of Psychosocial Factors on Drug Dependence**

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## **Introduction**

The present study is concerned with investigating on the role of psychosocial factors, namely, parenting style, and resistance to peer group pressure and which plays in drug dependence.

According to Diana Baumrind (1979) and recent developmentalists, there are four major different types of parenting, Authoritarian parenting, Authoritative parenting, Neglectful parenting, and Indulgent parenting. Authoritarian parents set strict rules and rely on punishment. They also resort to physical discipline.

Authoritative parents tend to be warm and loving, and at the same time insist that their children behave appropriately. They encourage independence within well defined limits, show a willingness to explain the reasons for their rules and permit their children to express verbal disagreement with them. Permissive-indifferent or neglectful parents set few rules and rarely punish misbehavior. In other words, these parents are uninvolved in the child's life.

Permissive-indulgent parents are highly involved with their children but place few demands or controls on them. Permissiveness is undesirable because children will be less likely to adopt standards of behavior. Permissive-indulgent parenting is associated with children's social incompetence, especially lack of self-control.

Therefore, the first purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the effect of parenting style on drug users and non-drug users. Not only parents, but also social support play roles in preventing adolescent drug abuse (Cohen, Brook and Kandel, 1991; Conger, Conger and Simons, 1992; Dishion, 1992; Pentz, 1994; Tildesley and Duncan, 1994). A developmental model of adolescent drug abuse has been proposed by Judith Brook and her colleagues (Brook and others, 1990). They believe that the initial step in adolescent drug abuse is laid down in the childhood years, when children fail to receive nurturance from their parents and grow up in conflict-ridden families. These children fail to internalize their parents' personality, attitudes, and behavior, and later carry this absence of parental ties into adolescence.

The present study also assumes that the children of authoritarian or permissive home will not be happy in home and to find the peer group as a place where they are accepted, in turn, they will conform the peer group pressure and be less resistant to peer group pressure. Based on this assumption, the second purpose of the present study is to examine the levels of resistance to peer group pressure of drug users and to compare with those of non-drug users.

### **Identifying the Drug Users' Perceived Parenting Styles and Comparing them with Non-Drug User's Perceived Parenting Styles**

The first purpose of the present study is to identify the different parenting styles practiced by drug users' fathers and mothers as well as non-drug users' fathers and mothers and to compare with each others. In order to do so, a scale with eight items which can identify four different types of parenting style, namely, authoritarian, authoritative, neglectful, and permissive was constructed in Burmese, on the basis of the Baumrind (1979).

Each item includes four statements relevant to such four types of parenting. The scale was constructed in form of forced-choice technique. Of four statements included in each item of the scale, a respondent has to choose the statement he agrees most.

### **Participants**

Participants were a group of 50 drug users. Thirty two of them were recruited by the help of Voluntary Social Worker Association and Social

Rehabilitation Centre, Mandalay. They were registered as drug users who took the medical treatment in Drug Treatment Hospital, Mandalay, were rehabilitated in the Social Rehabilitation Centre in Mandalay, and now back to home. Another eighteen of them were patients who have been registered as drug users and currently taking medical treatment in Drug Treatment Hospital, Mandalay.

Another group of 100 participants was recruited from community as a comparison group.

### **Procedure**

A group of 12 voluntary social workers from the Voluntary Social Worker Association was trained how to interview the drug users and how to administer the Perceived Parenting Style Scale and the peer group pressure scale to the drug users who were back to home from the Social Rehabilitation Centre, Mandalay. Then, the voluntary social worker traced to follow the drug users who were in home and administered the Perceived Parenting Style Scale to them. The patients who were in the Drug treatment Hospital, Mandalay were interviewed and administered the Perceived Parenting Style Scale by the researcher, too. Similarly, the above three scales were administered to the participants in normal group, either.

### **Results and Discussion**

The results of the present study showed that drug users were individuals who came from home where most of their fathers (50%) are authoritarian parents, neglectful parents (24%) and most of their mothers (54%) are indulgent parents. A few percent of drug users' parents (8% of fathers and 16% of mothers) practiced a authoritative parenting style.

In contrast, the present study indicates that most of the fathers (75%) as well as the mothers (80%) of non-drug users were authoritative parents. See in Fig. I to 4. The present study concludes that most of the drug users were children of authoritarian and neglectful fathers and indulgent mothers and the type of parenting plays an important role in the issue of drug dependence.

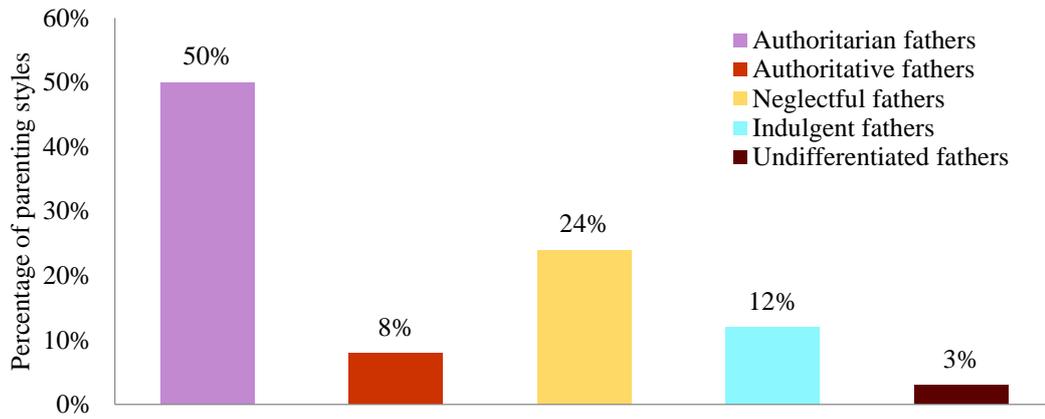


Figure 1. Percentages of fathers and their parenting styles in the drug user group

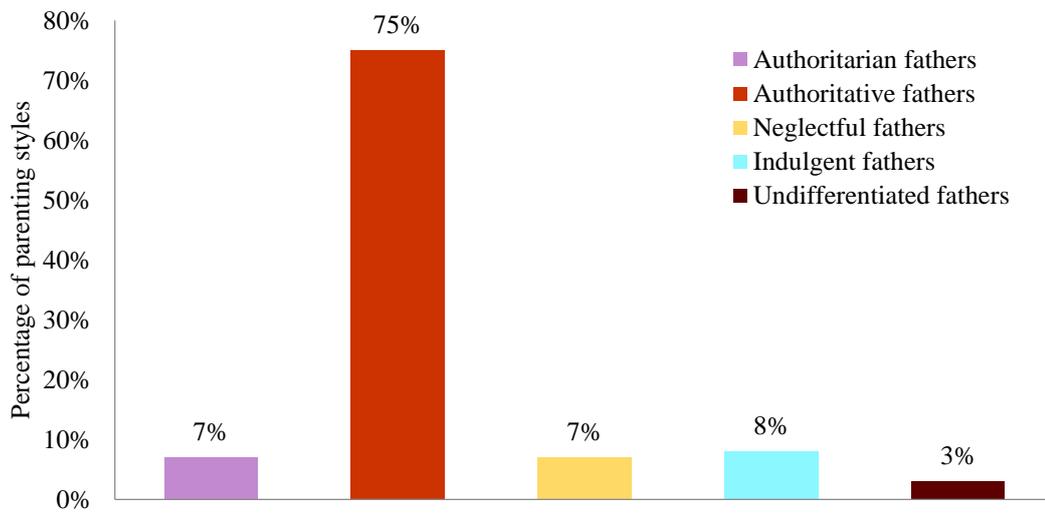


Figure 2. Percentages of fathers and their parenting styles in the non-drug user group

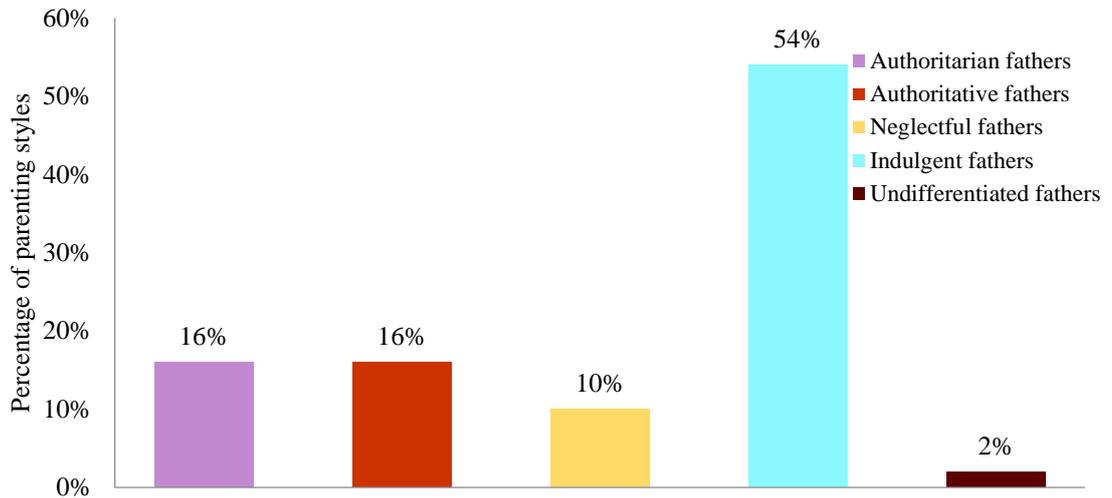


Figure 3. Percentages of mothers and their parenting styles in the drug user group

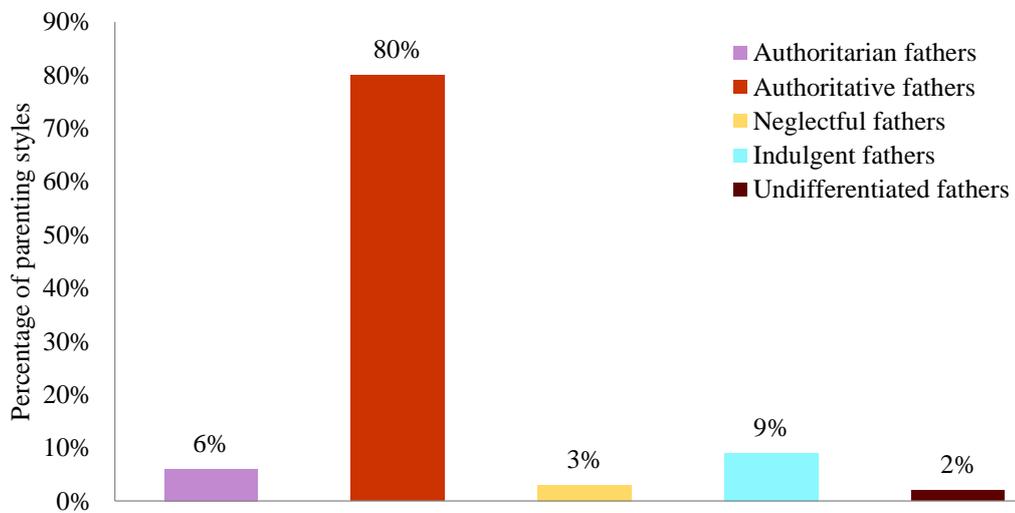


Figure 4. Percentages of fathers and their parenting styles in the non-drug user group

### **Examining the Difference in Level of Resistance to Peer Group Pressure between the Drug User Group and Non-Drug User Group**

The present study also indicated that most of the fathers of drug users were authoritarian and neglectful parents and most of the mothers of them were permissive- indulgent parents. Based on these findings, the present study assumed that having restrictive and punitive style of their fathers leads drug users to avoidance behavior. The present study hypothesized that drug users cannot resist the peer group pressure as much as non-drug users and attempted to test this hypothesis.

## Method

### Participants

Participants were the same individuals who participated in the former drug-user group and non-drug user group.

### Measures

In order to access the level of resistance to peer group pressure, a scale with 16 items was developed its Cronbach alpha value was 80. Each item has two alternatives; (a) and (b). The respondents must choose either of them.

Samples of items are:

1. (a) I feel that my parents are  
(b) conservative. (b) I feel that my parents modernize.
2. (a) I perceive that my parents modernize.  
(b) I perceive that my parents understand the nature of youth.

### Procedure

This scale was administered to the both groups of participants. The responses of them were scored and the mean of each group were calculated. Two hypotheses were specified. One is null hypothesis in which there is no difference in resistance to peer group pressure between drug user group and non-drug user group. Another one is the alternative hypothesis in which the drug users are more vulnerable to peer group pressure than the non-drug users. In order to test these hypotheses, t test is used in present study.

## Results and Discussion

According to the result, an obtained  $t_{obt}$  ( $\bar{X}_1 = 12.60$ ,  $SD_1 = 1.54$  and  $\bar{X}_2 = 5.97$ ,  $SD_2 = 2.54$ ) was 19.82 on 148df. Since the value of  $t_{obt}$  far exceeds the critical value 3.291, the null hypothesis was rejected at ( $P < 0.001$ ) and the present study concluded that there is a significant difference between the two groups in resistance to peer group pressure. In other words, non-drug users group showed higher resistance level to peer group pressure than drug users do.

## Conclusion

The present research examined psychosocial factors associated with drug dependence. The special attention of the present study focuses on the role of parenting styles and resistance to peer group pressure. According to the results, the

majority of drug users were children of authoritarian and neglectful fathers and indulgent mothers. Comparisons to drug users, the majority of non-drug users were children of both authoritative fathers and mothers. Although research in the past suggested that home life plays a very important role in personality development of children, the present study gave supplementary finding for former research and concluded that parenting styles play a very important role in drug dependence.

Moreover, the present study examined the relation between the resistance to peer group pressure and drug dependence. According to the result, there is a difference in level of resistance to peer group pressure between the drug users and non-drug users.

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