

Developing a Culturally Sensitive Parenting Style Measure

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The significance of parenting on child development has been recognized as early as the 17th century. Baumrind recognized authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles in 1971. After the recognition of responsiveness and demanding dimensions of parenting, a 4th entity called neglectful parenting also emerged. The implications of parenting style on child development have been well documented. Developing tools to assess parenting style is a challenge due to the socio-economic and cultural influences on it. The instruments developed taking these facts into consideration would help educators and researchers to assess parenting style. The objective of this study was to explore items available in the literature to determine parenting style and to evaluate their suitability to be used among Sinhala speaking parents of preschool-aged children in Sri Lanka considering expert opinion. Out of 54 instruments published from 1941 to 2017, 19 were parent-reported questionnaires and 35 were child-reported questionnaires. Out of them, Parenting practices questionnaire, Parent as Social Context Questionnaire, Preschool Parenting Measure and Parenting Style Four Factor Questionnaire were selected because of their reported validity as parent-report questionnaires. These instruments consisted of 134 items and they have been recognized either as parenting styles or as core features of parenting. After the elimination of duplicates, there were 74 items that could possibly be adopted to develop a parenting style survey tool. These items were submitted to a 4-member panel of experts in the field of pediatrics and education with the request to comment on the suitability of those items to assess parenting style in Sri Lanka. However, the panel stressed the need to develop authentic and culturally sensitive items suitable for Sri Lanka. In conclusion, in spite of the availability of internationally recognized tools for the assessment of parenting style, the consensus was to develop a culturally sensitive locally validated tool. Available literature could be used in developing a guide for Focus Group Discussions and In-depth interviews.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Parenting measures, Sinhala speaking, Preschool-aged children

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