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Comparative Parenting Styles' Effects on Early Childhood Development in Different Areas

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the effects of different parenting styles on developing early childhood understanding in the cognitive, emotional, and social domains. As regards the parenting styles themselves, they include authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. These will greatly determine a child's academic ability to form relationships with others or how the child feels. Based on Diana Baumrind's development model, this study aims to determine the benefits and disadvantages of each parenting style by longitudinal data and psychological theory. Authoritative parenting, which characterizes parental discipline alongside their affectionate nature toward children, will produce excellent developmental outcomes. The authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful ones will also bring about some limitations in the end, such as diminished self-esteem, impulsivity, or social deficiencies. In this regard, the understanding thus provided would translate into practice contexts applicable to parents, educators, and policymakers toward better practices in raising children or supporting family resilience across diverse economic contexts.

KEYWORDS: Parenting Styles, Child Development, Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, Neglectful, Early Childhood

INTRODUCTION

We all understand that circumstantial factors do make a difference. Factors like Parenting style and the types of interactions the child has in the early years play a key role in a child's academic performance, social relations, and the relationship between the parent and child. It must be noted that irrespective of the child's gender, the early years are critical because the child is fragile and moldable, and the characteristics, behaviors, traits, and moral values embedded by the parent go a long way in determining how the child develops and grows. As research has shown, child development is influenced by the behaviours and types of support that parents extend to their children. It was Professor Diana Baumrind who first described the term parenting style & grouped it into three distinct categories: Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Permissive, uninvolved parenting, or Neglectful (which was later discovered). All these, however, have varied dimensions of responsiveness and control, all of which can have a negative or a positive influence on the cognitive, social, or emotional development of a child. (Baumrind, 887). Authoritative parents are less responsive but combine discipline techniques with nurturing techniques. Parents who employ an authoritarian style, characterized by high demands and low responsiveness, are likely to have children with self-esteem problems and social anxiety. "The permissive parent attempts to behave in a nonpunitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner toward the child's impulses, desires, and actions. Neglectful parenting, also known as uninvolved parenting, is characterized by a lack of responsiveness to a child's needs, minimal emotional involvement, and limited supervision or guidance. The historical shifts in child rearing methods influenced by psychoanalytic theories" (Baumrind, 888).

However, these parenting patterns do not only have consequences in the home environment- they also affect the child's schooling, social relationships, and sometimes even the quality of the relationship with the parent. "Authoritative parenting is associated with higher self-esteem and subjective well-being, and lower odds of smoking, getting involved in fights, or having friends who use drugs (Chan and Koo, 396). Baldwin (1948) found that high control with democracy held constant covaried negatively with prosocial as well as antisocial assertive behaviour (Baumrind, 898). Siegel and Kohn (1959) demonstrated that the presence of a permissive adult increased the incidence of aggression shown by nursery school boys (Baumrind, 900)

Parents with authoritarian figures foster their children's behaviour where children are overly trusting of adults who conform to the social rules and give a lot of weight to certain adults' authority.

Children with authoritative parents tend to be more responsible, more self-confident, and more socially competent and, therefore, are more likely to develop relationships with peers and perform well academically. On the other hand, those brought up under authoritarian or permissive parenting styles are detached from interpersonal attachments and lack the desire to do well academically. Children who experience neglectful parenting often struggle with poor academic performance. Without parental involvement in their educational journey, these children may lack the motivation, discipline, and organizational skills needed to succeed in school.

Based on the assessments of three longitudinal studies concerning low-income families, several neglectful behaviours were found to occur over time. Various economics-based hardships, including lack of employment, inadequate housing, and lack of basic needs, were considered important risks alongside aspects of parental well-being, depression, and ill-health. Parenting stress & disengagement from children were also found to increase the chances of neglect. (Slack et al.)

It is necessary to study the impact of parenting on child development since parenting is among the most important forces that form a child's psychological, emotional, and social development. This understanding can help explain how a child's early experiences – say, his or her school performance, social skills, or family relations are likely to be in the future. This particular area of research is important for several reasons: it can help parents learn effective child-rearing practices to develop suitable strategies to empower families at risk. Child and family development, in general, is society's development.

Authoritarian

An authoritarian parent tries to direct, manage, and rate the behavioural attitudes of the child in the performance of a norm or an ideal, in most cases, an ideal based on religious principles and which has been implemented by someone superior. They believe that self-will is a negative trait and self-will resistance should be employed whenever the child's actions or beliefs go against what they perceive as proper behaviour. They accept the need to restrict a child's freedom of choice and provide them with clear rules or expectations to teach the child discipline and help them to become appreciative of what manual labour involves. They place so much value on the maintenance of order and the traditional hierarchy that it becomes a goal on its own. They do not promote arguing and discussions as they believe that the child should listen to their instructions on what is moral and what is immoral. (Baumrind, 891) Several hundred years ago, when Catholicism was actively spreading, an authoritarian mother usually believed that she did not train her child for personal desires but rather to do the Will of God. [Susannah Wesley, quoted in Gesell] Since self-will has been identified as the cause of every sin and suffering, there is no gloomy future for those who indulge, even in childhood, such tendencies; on the contrary, all those things that control and suppress self-will enhance their happiness and godliness in the future. It is all about the merits of Heaven and Hell. Accordingly, the mother who makes every effort to conquer this impulse in her offspring collaborates with God, enabled in the process of creating and rescuing a lost soul. Such a parent who permits it to work for the devil makes religion impossible, has apathy towards salvation, and does everything possible to ensure that the child is lost, both physically and spiritually, for eternity. (Baumrind, 890)

Authoritative

Authoritative or active parent tries to organize the child's activities in a logical and issue-centered way. In this setting, verbal exchange is encouraged, the child is explained why a specific rule exists, and his/her non-compliance is debated. The authoritative parent cherishes both autonomous self-will and predetermined discipline. They carry out strict control when parent-child norms are under threat but do not restrict the child's limits. They enforce their perspective as it still recognizes the uniqueness and special interests of the child.

An authoritative parent respects what a child is now but also has expectations for conduct in the future. Theories are applied with the use of reason, power, and adjustments to the regime and reinforcements to accomplish the given purpose, and ignoring does not include the wishes of the group or the single child. "Inconsistent verbal skills development is encouraged through having a close yet overbearing somewhat relationship with one's mother, on the other hand, allowing the child an inordinate amount of freedom towards nonverbal skills development has been shown to yield positive results". (Baumrind, 902). In many situations, the adoption of a flexible, warm, authoritative parenting style is most beneficial for a child's social, intellectual, moral, and emotional growth. Authoritative parenting, where parents balance demandingness and responsiveness, is linked with higher social competencies in children. If accompanied by respect and warmth, it may teach the child how to express aggression in self-serving and prosocial causes and to accept the partially unpleasant consequences of such actions.

Permissive

The permissive parent tries to accept, contain, and foster the child's urges, wishes, and actions without punishment of any kind. They include the child in discussions of the family policies and help them understand the family's rules. There are very few expectations for the child regarding the upkeep of the home or keeping the environment orderly. They offer themselves as a tool the child can use at their comfort level, and not as one whose intensively perfect behaviour they wish to imitate, or more so, as an idol whose role is to control or modify the child's present or future actions. They try to allow the child the freedom to manage his activities and inhibit the use of active control, nor do they promote compliance with any rules that are not self-made.

Children in permissive/indulgent households may lack the direction and guidance necessary to develop appropriate morals and goals. "Self-play and even social play with other children are capable of creating anxiety towards functioning and competence in one because of the ideation which is produced by the culture of an adult's circle. [Italics Neil] argues that the opposite, ultimate control, is allowing the young child to moderate his behaviour without restriction and without worries about letting out urges or about the consequences of his sloppiness.

The choice of self-regulation is simply to allow the baby freedom to be without anybody nagging, threatening, or enforcing rules regarding his psych and somatic activities. This means the baby eats when it feels hungry; it learns to be tidy only when it feels like doing so; it is never yelled at or beaten; it instead is loved and shielded." (Baumrind 899)

There may be good reasons for parents concerned with their children's freedom to use direct methods of influence, which include cognitive appeal and power, rather than indirect methods such as nurturance withdrawal or guilt induction.

Neglectful

Neglectful parenting, also known as uninvolved parenting, is a style that is marked by failure in meeting the child's emotional or developmental needs. As per the parents in this category, there is often a lack of concern, very little control is exercised, and emotional assistance is not present, nor are there any clearly defined limits. Very many reasons may be put forward to explain this style of child-rearing including instances like the stress parents might be dealing with, mental disorders, drug abuse or lack of knowledge on parenting, among others. Studies have shown that children who survive such parents suffer most to be like low self-worth, below average educational attainment, problems in interacting with others and high tendencies to engage in risky behaviours. These effects emphasize the impact of parents on the emotional, social, and intellectual growth of a child.

Neglect is the type of maltreatment most strongly associated with delays in expressive, receptive, and overall language development.³⁵ Slow language development plays a role in behavioral difficulties across the lifespan, with approximately 70% of children with language impairments exhibiting comorbid behavior problems.³⁶ Children who are unable to communicate effectively may not have the necessary skills to negotiate or resolve conflict and may have difficulties understanding and relating to others. (Spratt et al., 7)

IMPACTS OF PARENTING STYLES ON A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

A child's emotional, social, and cognitive development depends on the parenting styles, which also have positive and negative effects. Authoritative parenting is viewed as the best style or approach towards parenting as it combines warmth and responsiveness with demandingness and discipline.

This nurtures children with great self-regard, emotional well-being, and excellent interpersonal skills because they are appreciated and supported in learning how to be accountable for their actions. They also tend to excel in academics where guidance and freedom are provided. However, sometimes, the limitations of this parenting style are high, which can lead to pressure on the child or parental pressure where the child over-dependes on their parents for affirmation.

As discussed, the authoritarian style is largely high demandingness and low responsiveness and emotional warmth with strict regulations, therefore, it can have both beneficial and adverse consequences. Positive consequences in children brought up in such settings include internalization of good discipline, responsibility, and respect for those in authority. Then again, emotional support deprivation often dampens their self-worth, leading to social insecurities, low self-confidence, and speech difficulties. In this sense, children will obey the rules, but their compliance will not come from a genuine inner understanding of the motives behind the regulations, but rather, out of fear. As a result, such children are expected to show less individuality and creativity. (Baumrind, 902) Moreover, the use of authoritarian control has been shown to create more anxious, depressed, or rebellious children who feel very restrained.

Permissive parenting, which is high in responsiveness but low in expectations or disciplinary action, tends to create a very close parent-child relationship, usually accompanied by bonding. This loving style places no restrictions on children's creative impulses and emotional freedom as they are free to be themselves. When there are no boundaries, it is difficult for children to be self-regulating and responsible for their behavior. Children who are brought up by permissive parents tend to have impulsivity, a sense of entitlement, and disrespect for rules or authority figures. They most likely will not excel in academic performance as they are not driven and disciplined enough.

Lastly, some parents are Neglectful; a combination of low responsiveness and low involvement gives one of the worst outcomes in a child's upbringing. The children raised in these conditions have a deep sense of unlovability, vacancy, and unworthiness, all because of a lack of assistance and guidance in emotion. Children raised in this type of household may be socially deficient because they have not been taught how to build and sustain social bonds. They typically perform poorly in school as there is no parental support or supervision. In addition, these children are more likely to engage in dangerous activities, including drug use and criminal activities, as they are not provided with a system that encourages good behaviour and morals.

PUNISHMENT HAS INEVITABLY HARMFUL SIDE EFFECTS ON CHILD BEHAVIOR

Punishment may very well help in achieving specific objectives where these may be applied in home settings. It is suppressive of those particular types of unacceptable responses found that they will still require continued reinforcement. Parents usually want to be limiting in terms of suppressing particular responses at certain places and during selected times. They are willing and ready to continue this aversive stimulus process for as long as it takes to get the objectives accomplished.

Studies reviewed cognitive and emotional disturbances in children, like the following types: hostile withdrawal, hostile acting out, dependence, personality problems, anxiety, and reduced schoolroom performance. There is some evidence that the response of paternal punitiveness to working-class families more often causes serious disturbances in the child than maternal punitiveness, and perhaps, the father's techniques for the more working-class father tend to be harsher. (Baumrind, 896) Parents can also be taught to have punishment accompanied by an explanation in which both the changeworthy act and, where possible, a more acceptable act, are stated. Putting forth the continued future effectiveness measurement of punishment as a timing of punishment concerning response.

HIGH DEMANDS PROVOKE REBELLIOUSNESS IN CHILDREN

Bandura and Walters (1959) found that higher demands were made by the parents of the least hostile or delinquent children. Parents who require their children to keep things neat and to do chores seem to create environments that are compatible with the well-being

of the children, very often involving themselves seriously in the child's welfare. Maybe this is the reason such demands are perceived by the child in the majority of studies conducted as reasonable ones and do not seem to stir rebellion. The only time parental demands trigger rebellion or antisocial aggression is when the parent is also coercive, antagonistic, and overly restrictive.

Authority that was based on rational concern for the child's welfare was accepted well by the child, while authority that was based on the adult's desire to dominate or exploit the child was rejected.

PARENTAL CONTROL GENERATES DEPENDENCE

Baldwin (1948) found that the concomitant control of democracy was negatively related to the expression of prosocial and antisocial assertive behaviour; other studies have reported quite different findings. According to Hoffman's results from 1960, there is a negative correlation between parental assertiveness and submissiveness in the child. The findings of Sears (1961) regarding early socialization and later aggression are much the same as high punishment for aggression, i.e., "reactive unqualified power assertion," does not lead to submissive behaviour. (Baumrind, 899)

CONTRADICTION BETWEEN FREEDOM AND CONTROL

It is still a highly controversial area among behavioural scientists and philosophers and is being aggressively debated. Hegel says it is the insight of necessity. By this, he meant that man freed himself from the objective world by knowing it and mastering his attitude toward its features. He has defined freedom as commensurate with power in action, not as lacunae of outside control, even as only for the very young or the incompetent.

For a human to act autonomously, he should take charge of his acts, and that involves the conviction that he is living in an orderly world that is subject to rational mastery and that he has or can develop adequate skills to manage his affairs. There may be good reasons for parents concerned with their children's freedom to use direct methods of influence that include cognitive appeal and power rather than indirect methods such as withdrawal of nurturance or induction of guilt.

The less that person is manipulated with guilt-inducing disciplinary techniques or indirect threats of loss of love, which condition the behaviour, while avoiding and bypassing his conscious will, the more capable he should become of the responsible chosen action. A condition of guilt toward a certain action will limit that individual's freedom as regards his choice of that action or his choice of an alternative action. (Hartup, 1958; Hill 1960; Mussen & Rutherford, 1963; Sears, 1961 Care withdrawal by a loving parent has been proven to be the most effective way of inventing guilt over wrongdoing and hence conditioning compliance. (Baumrind, 904)

PARENTS' PSYCHOLOGY ON PARENTING STYLES

It is argued that individual differences showing an inclination toward authoritarianism predate early adulthood and that among small children, these individual differences are expressed through greater responsiveness to cues of status and deviance when determining from whom they will learn. Studies predicted that children of parents high (vs. low) in authoritarian values should (a) be more discriminating in trusting (i.e., choosing to learn from) adults who had previously demonstrated conventional word labelling versus adults who had used blatantly nonconventional word labels and (b) give greater weight to a status-based "adults are to be trusted" heuristic in trusting an ambiguously conventional adult. (Tagar et al. 883)

The pioneering Adorno et al. (1950) psychodynamic explaining hostility as repressed and projected toward strict punishment from parents at an early age has stagnated due to a loss of interest in psychodynamic perspectives and the empirical evidence base for poor validity in this explanation. This has led to later proponents (Altemeyer, 1988) framing the entire explanation in social-learning terms so that an early consistent correlation may be particularly evident between a young adult and an authoritarian parent. Research in behavioural genetics has also revealed the intrusion of the family, within which levels of authoritarianism are consistent among the adults under tests, with twin studies suggesting that the heritability of authoritarianism is considerable. (Tagar et al. 884)

Kohn (1977, p. 51) reports that lower-class parents are more likely to value 'manners' while higher-class parents are more likely to value "consideration of others". Working-class mothers are more likely to use physical punishment against persistently misbehaving children, and permissive or authoritarian parenting is more commonly found in working-class households because there are more step-or single-parent households in the working class. In this way, Kohn connects social class with values, and parenting becomes a mechanism in the reproduction of the social structure and personality. (Chan and Koo 387)

The style of upbringing is related to the outcomes of the youths in connection to subjective well-being and self-esteem, health, and risky behaviour, along with academic achievement and school attendance.

A study cross-tabulated parenting style with family structure, parents' social class, and parents' education. It can be seen that in proportion terms, authoritative parenting is more common among two-parent families (53 per cent) than among single-parent families (32 per cent) or step-families (40 per cent). Using a 7-fold version of the Goldthorpe class schema, it can be seen that authoritative parenting is more common among the salariat (classes I and II) than among other social classes. Correspondingly, permissive parenting generally becomes more common as one goes down the class hierarchy, while the association between authoritarian parenting and social class is less clear. (Chan and Koo 390)

It is found that girls are less likely than boys to report having permissive rather than authoritative parents. The parenting style of single-parent families and step-families will be more authoritarian or permissive rather than authoritative. (Chan and Koo 391).

CONCLUSION

Parenting styles play a decisive role in the formative years of a child's development, which becomes part of cognitive, emotional, and social outcomes. The categories of Diana Baumrind—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful capture the essence of how parental behaviour and interaction shape the child's character and life path. As stated in this research, early childhood is a time of extreme vulnerability and opportunity for the child.

Authoritative parenting, defined as a high-value equilibrium of nurturance, responsiveness, and control, bequeaths children with self-confidence, social competence, and general academic achievement. In contrast, it has been seen that authoritarian parenting styles, whose features are strict and lack emotional warmth, may spur generalized obedience in children but would diminish self-confidence and socialization skills. Permissive parenting is characterized by emotional warmth and acceptance but does not come to set boundaries on behaviour, thus leading to poor impulse control and discipline, as well as poor academic achievement. Neglectful parenting, marked by minimal emotional involvement and supervision, has the most detrimental effects. Hence, children residing in such types of environments are always found to be suffering from low self-esteem, social inadequacy, and reckless behaviour as a result of a lack of support and guidance during childhood development.

Moreover, it goes to show that outside factors such as socio-economic status, parental mental health, and treasured cultural norms may be crucial influences on how parenting is practised. For example, an authoritarian way of bringing up children stems from conservative hierarchies as well as expectations. On the other hand, permissive parenting may give birth to parents who tend to push children beyond their limits because of fear of overwhelming them with stressful conditions. Normally, educational neglect refers to references to a child's economic conditions or links to parental depression or even a lack of knowledge on ways of proper child-rearing. In short, the particular types of parenthood characteristics are crucial parameters that determine child development outcomes and the effectiveness of parenting. Indeed, authoritative parenting has emerged as the most favourable. There is no favourable single type of parenting; nevertheless, as no two ways of the individual would be alike, so similarly no two families could be compared, and differences in such types will be witnessed according to child and family requirements. This research makes it clear that equipping parents with the knowledge and resources to create a nurturing but structured environment is what matters, especially in the case of economically vulnerable families. Addressing societal disparities empowers families and nurtures resilient, well-rounded individuals who are prepared to contribute positively to their communities by facilitating a better understanding of the interplay between parenting practices and child development.

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