Parenting Attitude and Style and Its Effect on Children's School Achievements

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Abstract

The paper reviewed empirical studies on children's school achievements. The contributions of parenting attitude and style were examined in relation to children's school achievement. A strong relationship between children's school achievement and parenting attitude and style was reported in the paper. Findings from the review revealed that authoritative parenting styles were associated with higher levels of children's school achievement, though findings remain inconsistent across cultures and societies. Future studies may explore some of the salient issues underlying the inconsistencies reported in the study, particularly the contradictory results between Asian and European American school children.

Keywords: Parenting Attitude, Parenting Style, Children's school Achievements, Parent child relationship, Parenting effect

1. Introduction

The construct parenting style has been largely influenced by Baumrind's (1971) conceptualization of authoritarian, permissive and authoritative parenting styles which encompassesed various characteristics such as maturity, communication styles, nurturance, warmth and involvement (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Authoritarian parenting style suggested that children are expected to be submissive to their parent's demands, while parents were expected to be strict, directive, and emotionally detached. Permissive parenting style like the name implies connotes less parental restrictions or limits on the child. The implication of this is that children are expected to regulate their own activities. Authoritative parenting style similar to authoritarian parenting entailed clear and firm direction to children. However, the difference between the two similar parenting styles lies in moderating discipline with warmth, reason, and flexibility as ensued by authoritative parenting. From the different types of parenting style, Asian parents studies have shown exhibit authoritarian parenting style (Kawamura, Frost, & Marmatz, 2002; Pong, Hao, & Gardner, 2005).

In line with the above, recent developments in the field of parenting and family studies have led to the renewed interest in the relationship between children's school achievements and parenting style. These developments have heightened the need for the study on children's school achievements. Since the family is the first window of the child, parenting style and its influence on children could greatly affect their understanding, attitude and school achievements. Accordingly, there are several research works done on parent-child relationship and children's school achievements (Prindle & Resinski, 1989; Van Meter, 1994). Parental responsibilities start as soon as the child was born. These responsibilities suggest that the socialization process of a child was bidirectional in nature. The implication was that parents convey socialization messages to their children, while children vary in their level of acceptance, receptivity and internalization of these messages (Grusec et al., 2000). Socialization means the acquisition of education, experience, attitudes and behaviors that are required for a successful adaptation to the society and the family (Ladd & Pettit, 2002).

In the view of Park, Kim, Chiang and M. Ju (2010) Asian American parents who adhere to traditional Asian values may utilize parenting behaviors that are incongruent with their children's level of acculturation known as the process of adaption to the attitudes, values, and behaviors of the dominant culture of the host country (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986) while enculturation referred to the degree to which individuals adhered to their cultures

(Kim, 2008). In a further explanation on why Asian children performed better academically Park, et al (2010) argued that traditional Asian parents may reinforce the value of "filial piety" commonly known as unquestioning obedience to parents. The concept suggested that children should prioritize family obligations over personal interests. However, Park, et al (2010) revealed that for acculturated children, parental behaviors may conflict with children's need for autonomy, a development emphasized in the United States (Erikson, 1959).

Parenting is one of the complex tasks every parent hopes to succeed in. For all social and educational development, the family and parenting style plays an important role. Moreover, parenting forms the basis of a family environment because without parental education, it was not possible for parents to fulfill their roles and duties in the family and the society. Leung (1988) study on the importance of parenting on children's psychosocial development, acknowledged that parenting was a very complex and challenging phenomenon which was very difficult to understand and define. Parents need to educate themselves for their children to become good citizens in the future. So, parents required help to develop their parenting skills.

2. Literature Review

Parenting style is one of the variables that have been studied extensively in human development (Baldwin, Mclntyre, & Hardaway, 2007). It is considered an important determinant of several aspects of children's outcome (Gadeyne, Ghesquiere, & Onghena, 2004). The notion have been related to children and adolescent academic achievement (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991), optimism (Baldwin, Mclntyre, & Hardaway, 2007), confidence (Strage & Brandt, 1999), motivation (Gonzalez & Wolters, 2006), externalizing problem behaviour and attention problems (Gadeyne, Ghesquiere, & Onghena, 2004). Parenting style depends on the behaviour and attitude of parents. Parenting style is a psychological construct which represented standard strategies parents use in raising their children. The term is a complex activity that includes many specific behaviors that work individually and collectively to influence the child.   Two major variables identified by Baumrind (1971) centered on parenting styles and child outcomes. One of them was the responsiveness of parents to their child's needs in a reasonable, nurturing and supportive way. Parenting style captures two important elements of parenting: parental responsiveness and parental demand (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

In spite of the agreement on the effects of parenting practices on child's development, many questions about the construct parenting style remain unanswered. Particular pressing issues were the variability in the effects of parenting style as a function of a child's cultural background and the processes through which parenting style influences a child's development, and operationalization of parenting. Drawing on historical review, the authors presented a model that integrated two traditions in socialization research. The study of specific parenting practices coupled with that of global parental characteristics. Many authors proposed that parenting style was best conceptualized as a context that moderates the influence of specific parenting practices on the child. It was argued that only by maintaining the distinction between parenting style and parenting practice can researchers address questions and concerns on socialization.

A strong relationship between parental involvement and children's school achievements has been reported in the literature. Research has shown that the relationship between parenting style and academic achievement found that psychosocial maturity (expansion of social knowledge and wellbeing) mediated this relationship. In other words, authoritative parenting impacts psychosocial maturity, which in turn, influences how students perform in school. Conversely, psychosocial maturity was measured by self-reliance (control over life), work orientation (students work skills & work goals), and self identity (self esteem & life goals). Each of these variables, both separately and collectively correlated with higher grades.

Parental involvement has emerged as one of today's most important topics in educational circles. Today, researchers have shown the impact of parental involvement and its effects on specific aspects of parenting (Jeynes, 2000). In a meta-analysis containing 21 studies, the impact of parental involvement on the academic achievement of minority children was significant for all marginal groups. For all the groups, parental involvement as a whole, affected all the academic variables by at least two tenths of a standard deviation unit. However, the results indicated that parental involvement affected the academic achievement of minority students (Jeynes, 2003).

Prior studies have noted the importance of parenting styles and academic achievement in schools. For example Leung, Lau and Lam (1998) study on the relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement in Hong Kong, the United States and Australia revealed that Australian parents were lower than both Chinese and American parents in academic authoritarianism. Chinese parents were higher in general authoritarianism, but lower in academic and general authoritativeness. All groups, academic achievement was negatively related to academic authoritarianism, but showed no relationship with academic authoritativeness. Academic achievement

was positively related to general authoritarianism in Hong Kong and among children from the United States and Australia whose parents did not have any college education. Academic achievement was positively related to general authoritativeness only among the two English-speaking groups. In addition, appropriate forms of parental control related positively with parental hostility, while maladaptive forms of parent-child interaction related negatively to classroom-specific measures of social responsibility (Feldman & Wentzel, 1990).

In another study by Cohen, Deborah, Rice and Janet (1997) on children in grade 8-9 and their parents (aged 26–45 yrs), parenting styles were associated with academic achievement. Ratings of parenting styles from 386 matched parent-child pairs were analyzed for parent and student classification of parents as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or mixed parenting styles. Agreement on parenting styles between parents and their children was poor. Students perceived their parents as less authoritative, less permissive and more authoritarian than parents considered them self. High grades were associated with children and parents perception of higher authoritativeness, low permissiveness, and low authoritarianism. Results provided further evidence that parenting styles and adolescents' perceptions were associated with children's achievement. Child perception was strongly associated with grades than was parent perception.

Kaisa, Hakan and Jari-erik (2000) studied the extent to which adolescents' achievement strategies were associated with parenting styles in the family. Three hundred and fifty-four 14-year-old adolescents completed the strategy and attribution questionnaire and a family parenting style inventory. Based on the adolescents' report of parenting styles, four types of families were identified.   These were authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles. The findings revealed that adolescents from authoritative families practiced adaptive achievement strategies which were characterized by low levels of failure expectations, task-irrelevant behaviour, passivity and self-enhancing attributions. Adolescents from neglectful families, in turn, applied maladaptive strategies characterized by high levels of task-irrelevant behaviours, passivity and a lack of self-enhancing attributions. Findings revealed that parenting styles influenced adolescents' academic achievement.

Chao (1994) examined inconsistencies in the literatures involving parenting style among Asians. Chinese parents has often been described as "controlling" or "authoritarian."These styles of parenting have been found to be predictive of poor school achievement among European-Americans, while it improved Chinese children's performance in schools. The study suggested that the concept of authoritative and authoritarian parenting style were somewhat ethnocentric and does not capture important features of Chinese child rearing, especially in explaining their school success. Immigrant Chinese and European-American mothers of preschool-aged children were administered standard measures of parental control and authoritative-authoritarian parenting style as well as Chinese child-rearing items involving the concept of "training." After controlling for education, and scores on standard measures, Chinese mothers were found to score significantly higher on "training" ideologies. The concept of "training" has important features, beyond authoritarian notion, that may explain Chinese school success.

Xitao and Michael (2001) found parental involvement as positively related to students' academic achievement. In line with the finding, the society in general, and educators in particular, have considered parental involvement as an important ingredient which accounted for many problems in education. However, the vast proportion of literatures in this area, is qualitative and non empirical. Among the empirical studies that have investigated the issue quantitatively inconsistencies abound. In a meta-analysis conducted to synthesize quantitative literature on the relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement a small to moderate, and practically meaningful, relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement was found. Through moderator analysis, it was revealed that parental aspiration/expectation for children's education achievement had the strongest relationship, whereas parental home supervision had the weakest relationship, with students' academic achievement. In addition, the relationship was stronger when academic achievement was represented as a global indicator (e.g., GPA) than as a subject-specific indicator (e.g., math grade).

Adolescents from neglectful families applied maladaptive strategies which were characterized by high levels of task-irrelevant behaviour, passivity and a lack of self enhancing attributions. The results provided the basis for understanding some processes by which parenting styles may influence adolescents' academic achievement and performance. McGrath, Emily, Repetti and Rena (1995) examined parents' satisfaction with their children's school performance and parents' value for their children's academic success as variables that may influence children's perceptions of academic success or failure. Parents' values (parents n=240) were assessed with a ten-item paired-comparison scale made of five value items. Children's perceptions of their academic competence (children n=179) were measured with the seven-item Perceived Competence Scale, with children's report card grades as indicators of actual academic performance.

Results of the analysis indicated that parents' satisfaction with their children's school performance was associated with children's perceptions of academic competence, which was independent of children's actual school performance. Parents who valued academic success had children who perceived themselves as academically competent. However, this general positive association masked important differences between highly competent and incompetent children in schools. Among children who were doing well in schools, having parents who placed importance on academic success was associated with low perceptions of academic competence. In the third group, having parents who placed importance on academic success was associated with higher perceptions of academic competence. In general, the data suggested that parents' attitudes toward their children's academic performance may directly, or indirectly, shape children's perceptions of their academic competence.

The findings by Dornbusch et al. (1987) suggested that Asian Americans should have poorer academic results than European Americans schools because of the authoritarian nature of their parents. In consonance with Dornbusch et al. (1987) a recent study from Jeup (2008) found a relationship between authoritative parenting and the predictors of psychosocial maturity. Paradoxically, Asian Americans generally show better academic results than European Americans (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). In an attempt to justify the result, Steinberg, Dornbusch and Brown (1992) argued that Asian Americans, parental influence on school performance was not as important as peer influence, and that the effects of authoritarian parents outweighs positive peer influence. Turner, Chandler and Heffer (2009) indicated that authoritative parenting continues to influence academic performance of college students, by revealing that both intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy predicted academic performance

Doyle (1986) has suggested that, although most children learn classroom rules and norms, low achieving and minority students often have difficulty understanding these rules and learning context-appropriate behavior. These children's inability to learn and respond to rule systems at school may be directly related to how their parents teach them to respond to authority and their interpersonal problems. In accordance with social learning theory which postulated that children learn by observing and imitating their parent (Bandura & Walters, 1963). Barnes and Farrell found that parents who used coercive control such as yelling, screaming, shouting, slapping, and hitting had adolescents who were more likely to exhibit deviance behaviour and act out at school. Also, adolescents who reported having more house rules or higher levels of parental monitoring displayed the lowest levels of behavioral problems (drinking, illicit drug use, deviance, or misconduct at school) (Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2006).

In line with the finding, an earlier study by Dishion and Loeber (1985), revealed that low parental monitoring indirectly impacted adolescent substance abuse by increasing the likelihood of more time being spent with deviant peers. The above discovery became important because other studies conducted in the 90's equally confirm that under controlled children were more likely to use marijuana (Shedler & Block, 1990) as well as other gateway drugs (Iacono, Carlson, Taylor, Elkins, & McGue, 1999). In the assessment of parenting style, a number of instruments have featured prominently, some of these instruments include:

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ: Buri 1991) designed to measure the three different types of parenting styles: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles as defined by Baumrind (1971). The scale consists of 30 items asking the respondents to rate their mother's and father's parenting behavior on a scale of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree), with a ten items for each subscale (i.e., permissive, authoritarian, authoritative). Higher scores for each subscale represented higher endorsement of the measured parenting style.

Measure of Parental Styles (MOPS: Parker et al., 1997) is a 15-item self-report questionnaire of recalled parenting style (Parker et al., 1997). Respondents were asked to rate "how true" they judge each of the 15 items as a description of how their mother and father acted ("Overprotective of me," "Sought to make me feel guilty") until they were 16 years of age.

Permissive, Authoritarian, and Authoritative Parental Authority Prototypes (Baumrind, 1971) is a measure which consists of 60 items (30 per parent) that ask individuals how they perceived their parents' style of authority while they were growing up.

3. Conclusion

The purpose of the current paper was to review the relationship between parenting attitude and style with children's school achievements. The following conclusions can be drawn from the present review. The research findings revealed that parents have a significant influence on the school achievement of their children. Especially when they are involved in their children's education and monitor their children's after school works. Although Asians use authoritarian parenting, Baumrind (1971) argued that the style was harmful to children's self-esteem and instead favored the use of authoritative parenting style, which the scholars contended would lead children to become autonomous, achievement-oriented, and self-controlled (Park, Kim, Chiang & M. Ju, 2010). A gap

therefore exist in the literatures because despite the criticism heaped on authoritarian parenting style as practiced by Asian parents, Asian children studies have revealed were autonomous, achievement-oriented, and self-controlled. Therefore, further studies are required to discover salient issues within authoritarian parenting style practiced within the Asian context that encouraged the positive values discussed above.

Research findings illustrated that authoritative parenting styles were associated with higher levels of adolescent school achievement. Parenting attitude and style leads to children's school achievements. It was concluded that parent's attitude and style have powerful impacts on their children. Therefore, children's achievements could be reflected by their parents' attitude and style. Therefore, the imbalance among family members can create problems for them, particularly for adolescents and children. The most obvious finding to emerge from this review is that children's achievements could be reflected by their parents' attitude and style. However, more research on the topic needs to be undertaken to ascertain the association between children's school achievements, parenting attitude and style.

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