

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES AT UNIVERSITY PUTRA MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and academic performance among undergraduates at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). This study also investigated the relationship between academic performances and undergraduates' social demographic factors (ethnic group and socioeconomic status). This is a cross sectional survey research, which involved 302 undergraduates from Faculty of Educational Studies at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) selected through cluster sampling method. The instrument of Parenting Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) from Buri (1991) was used to measure undergraduates perceived of parenting style. The collected data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 17.0. The findings showed there was a significant negative relationship between authoritarian parenting style and undergraduates' academic performance, but no significant relationship between academic performance and the other two parenting style, which were authoritative and permissive parenting style. Chi-square test of independent shows that there was no significant difference in parenting styles among the undergraduates in term of ethnic group as well as socioeconomic status (SES). The present study generally told us every member in a family can be influenced interdependently. This study showed that authoritarian parenting style is negatively related with academic performance. Hence, this study provides and suggests some implication for the family, tertiary education institution and educators.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Academic Performances, University undergraduates, Socio-demographic factors.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 17th century, the philosophers started to debate how parental values, goals, skills and attitudes are passed from one generation to another generation. Parenting as stated by Brooks (2010) is a lifelong process. This process begins with the child lives at home, and will continue as the parent getting older and children become parents. Most people have the same perception that parents play important role since their children born in this world, majority of people view that parenting is not a simple job. However, parents always wish they can succeed in this particular task (Habibah & Tan, 2009).

Bigner (2006) indicated parent-child relationship changes significantly as children attained adult age. During this period, parents' role may change to less active compare to the early life stage of their children. For example, children who reach adolescent age wish to have own clothing choices rather than chosen by parents, because clothes represent their unique identity (Martin & Colbert, 1997). Next, in the interview

session conducted by Nirmala and Baki (2009), adolescence said they get much affection during early childhood period. However, when they reach to adolescent stage, parents did not hug or kiss them anymore. Although children will be independence as getting adult, however they still stay connected with parents for emotional warmth and sometime probably material supports (Brooks, 2010). Generally, parental impact is perceived as important aspects in terms of student's performance (Berger, 2006 as cited in Wolfolk, 2008). Based on study, psychosocial development and social class were claimed related with student's performance (Steinberg and colleagues, 1989 as cited in Silva et al., 2007). Moreover, Noller and Callan (1991) also indicated family background could influence young children academic performance.

1.1 Problem Statement

This study is important, because, there is of strong phenomenon emphasizing academic performance of youth in Malaysia (McBride-Chang & Chang, 1998). Furthermore, according to Bigner (2006), some parents may lack of guidance in parenting skill and thought that parent-child relationship is unnecessary undergoes scientific study. Hence, lack of parenting skill could lead to situation whereby many parents see their children changing to noncompliant, oppositional and resistant towards parental standard from adolescent stage onwards. Furthermore, conflicts may happen as parent tend to put pressure on their children to conform with own standard (Santrock, 2008).

On the other hand, previous studies have indicated authoritative parenting style associated with better academic achievement in the western country, especially on Caucasian sample (Garcia & Gracia, 2009). Meanwhile, authoritarian parenting style was found to be poor predictive for academic performance in Europe-American sample. Moreover, authoritarian parenting style also related to the development of maladaptive behavior, adjustment problems (Eisenberg & Muphy, 1995), anxiety, fear, frustration, low self-esteem and pessimistic (Lempers, Clark-Lempers, & Simons, 1989). However, the above phenomenon did not occur in Asiatic collectivistic culture such as Chinese, and African-American (Eisenberg & Muphy, 1995; Cohen & Rice, 1997 cited in Farhana, Muhammad & Tahir, 2011). Based on those studies, Chinese and African-American children who have authoritarian parent tend to shown good performance and get the desired academic outcome. Researcher explained this phenomenon is related with culture value, whereby, elder people always perceive as more superior than children in those society context.

Due to the inconsistent of the finding from previous research, it is relevant for present study to investigate the relationship between parenting style and academic performance. Moreover, present study also examine the difference exist in social demographic background, such as ethnic group and socioeconomic status, in order to create better understanding. With these, researcher formed the research objectives and research questions as listed in following section.

1.2 Research Objectives

Below are the research objectives.

1. To determine the relationship between parenting styles and academic performance among FPP undergraduates?
2. To investigate the relationship between academic performance and socioeconomic status among the FPP undergraduates?
3. To investigate the difference in parenting style among the Faculty of Educational Studies (FPP) undergraduates in terms of the social demographic aspects (ethnic group, socioeconomic status).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study that related with parenting styles had become major interest topic since late of twentieth century (George, 2004). Theories such as Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory and Ecological Theory could be related with parent-child interaction. By reviewing the changes occur on parent-child relationship across different period, scholars revealed that traditional concept of parent-child relationship is unidirectional nature; whereas, present time it is describe as change to bidirectional which means each person has influence on the relationship (Bigner, 2010).

Based on the previous research, different types of parenting style were indicated correlate with children outcome such as social, emotional and cognitive development (Tiller et al., 2003). Past researches also indicate that socioeconomic status and ethnicity were related with parenting style (Early & Eccles, 1995; Le, et al., 2008); socioeconomic status was related with academic performance (Considine & Zappala, 2002; Titus, 2006); and parenting style was related with academic performance (Garg et al., 2005; Nirmala & Baki,

2009; Elham et al., 2012).

Parenting style which characterized by warm, supportive and acceptance tend to associated with higher academic performance, in contrast, parenting style such as authoritarian style which involved high level of control and low level of acceptance tend to associated with lower academic performance (Park & Bauer, 2002). The early study from Dornbusch and colleagues (1987) indicated that parenting practices had influence on school academic performance during adolescence and younger children age. According to authors, authoritative parenting is positively correlated with adolescent school performance, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting is negatively correlated with school performance

Next, Ang and Goh (2006) commented that by the preceding review, one would expect that authoritarian parenting style has a significant impact on school-related outcomes. The study from Elham and colleagues (2012) aimed to find out the relation between different parenting style and academic performance in Iran. Researchers used stratified sampling technique to select 382 students who age from 13 to 18 from twelve high schools. This study stated various factors such as family structure and family functioning did show relation with academic performance.

The study found that authoritarian parenting style did no shown any significant correlation with academic achievement, whereas authoritative parenting style has positive correlation with academic achievement, while permissive parenting style had negative correlation with academic achievement. According to researchers, permissive parents do not stated clear rules and expectation to their children; moreover their children tend to given little concern of behaviors, hence it may the consequent that lead to lower academic achievement. Besides that, reasons for authoritative parent shown positive correlation with academic achievement included gives encouragements, emotional supports as well as explain the consequences of their children's action such as telling their children the need for education in order to succeed in future.

Le, Chao, Hill, Murry, and Pinderhughes (2008) indicated that individual from the same ethnic group may employ parenting practice that based on their culture background, and reflect their regular history background. While, different cultural background may label the parent and child interaction differently. In other words, behavior that views as normal within the cultural could view as improper by peoples from other culture (Somayeh, Keshavarz & Rozumah, 2009).

According to Ang and Goh (2006), authoritative parenting style always related with beneficial effect for Caucasian samples. However, this phenomenon was not always being showed in Asian, because the perceptions regarding authoritarian parenting style such as strictness to child could possible had different meaning for Asians. For instant Asian might perceive authoritarian parenting style as caring and concern towards children. Meanwhile, European Americans might view authoritarian parenting style as controlling and dictatorial. Hence, parenting can be varying considerably from one context to another, and parent-child interaction within a particular cultural context can be rather consistent (Somayeh, Keshavarz & Rozumah, 2009).

Next, McBride-Chang and Chang (2008) stated authoritative parenting style tends to showed negative relation with adolescent's autonomy in Hong Kong. Chinese parents have been found to be more authoritarian and less authoritative in child-rearing (Chao, 1994; Leung, Lau, & Lam, 1998). The result shown both authoritarian and authoritative parenting style was relevant in parent-child interaction in Chinese cultural as Chinese population parenting style was not similar as western country.

Researcher claimed that Chinese parenting practices are more likely still influence by the traditional values, which derived from Confucian tradition. For example, Chinese families have a thought of "if you want to train a child, the child must fear you", hence they seldom show affection and praising their children as worry that their children might be spoiled (Chao, 1994; Leung, Lau, & Lam, 1998). However, this study had the limitation on small sampling size and also did not mentioned systematically regarding the validity of the instrument.

Socioeconomic status is known as the most widely used contextual variable in educational research (Sirin, 2005). Study regarding family background and students' academic performance namely "Coleman Report" was first appeared in year 1966. This particular researches as well as those following study showed that socioeconomic aspects, such as parents' economic conditions did have significant impact on student academic performance (Liu & Lu, 2008).

The study conducted by Considine and Zappala (2002) focused on educational performance of children from financial disadvantaged backgrounds. Based on the Bivariate analysis of this study, result showed that students who staying in the family that main source of income was come from employment earning, their

academic performance were 1.2 times higher than those who staying in the family that get their income from social security benefits.

Besides that, Titus (2006) aimed to identify the influence of the socioeconomic status, especially financial context on college completion. The finding showed the lower socioeconomic status students were less likely to complete their bachelor's degree compare to those from high socioeconomic status. In this research, Titus (2006) categorized socioeconomic status based on parental income, whereby, there were four quartiles from lowest to highest socioeconomic status. Based on the result, students from first and second quartile have lower chance of completing college in six years compare to those who are fourth quartile which also the highest socioeconomic status. According to Titus (2006), higher socioeconomic status tends to associated with certain norms and values. Hence these norms and values may help to increase the opportunity of college completion for students.

3. METHODOLOGY

The cross sectional survey research was used in this study, whereby researcher randomly selected the sample of undergraduates from Faculty of Educational Studies Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Researcher randomly selected 302 undergraduate from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Faculty of Educational Studies (FPP) from among 1279 as research sample by using cluster sampling method. The main instrument involved in this study is Parenting Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), participant were required to fill in their recent academic achievement based on their current cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and to fill in the social demographic factors such as social economic status based on parent's monthly income and ethnics group

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The finding from this study showed there was no significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and undergraduates' academic performance, as well as permissive parenting style and undergraduates' academic performance. However, finding showed there was a negatively significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and academic performance. This means, lower academic performance had relationship with authoritarian parenting among the undergraduates. Following, is the discussion about the finding of the parenting styles and academic performance.

The findings of this study were similar with Habibah and Tan (2009) which indicated there was no significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and academic performance. However, this finding was not in line with previous studies such as DornBusch and colleagues (1987), Garg, Levin, Urajnik and Kauppi (2005), Nirmala and Baki (2009), Elham and colleagues (2012).

For permissive parenting style, the finding of this study was in line with Garg, Levin, Urajnik and Kauppi (2005), Habibah and Tan (2009); but inconsistent with the studies from DornBusch et al. (1987), Garg, Levin, Urajnik and Kauppi (2005), Elham et al. (2012). Meanwhile, for authoritarian parenting style, the finding of this study was consistent with studies from DornBusch et al (1987), Park and Bauer (2002), Nirmala and Baki (2009); but inconsistent with the studies from Habibah and Tan (2009) and Elham et al. (2012). According to Habibah and Tan (2009), the relationship between parenting style and students' academic performance might be inconsistent when the selected subjects were aged differently. Permissive parenting did not emphasize of being ideal person to be imitated; they rather wished to be a resource for their child to utilize in learning about the world. Children with this kind of parent are expected to regulate their own activity, learn from their own mistakes, and use their experience as guide for future act Bigner (2006).

Due to these, the above characteristics may help children, because the tertiary education covers a holistic acquisition of knowledge, soft skills as well as certain essential attitude (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007 cited in Mohd Majid, Norfaryanti & Nor Azirawani, 2009). Further that, Tiller and colleagues (2003) also claimed that parenting style may have more direct impact on children social and emotional domain rather than cognitive.

Children who rise by authoritarian parent are not encourage to learn to think for themselves. Usually they are being taught to believe and accept parent's words, and perceive parent's behavior is always for child's best interest. According to author, such practice could inhibit children emotional development, and lead to children self-hatred in later life (Miller (1990) cited in Bigner (2006)). Moreover, Donbuch and colleagues (1987) stated authoritarian parent tends to show the upset and give punishment in dealing with child's poor academic performance, Meanwhile, as response to good academic performance, authoritarian parent will only tell their child do even better. Due to lack of explanation, guidance and emotional support from parent, this could

eventually lead the children slow down in develop the intrinsic motivation on academic (Nirmala & Baki, 2009).

On the other hand, identity foreclosure may occur on the individual in the case of overeager parent who persistently want their children become lawyer or doctor, as well as chosen their children future occupation. Moreover, children could face identity problem which later will affect autonomy, intimacy and achievement. In such circumstance, those who facing identity confusion may confuse about their future, their roles as an adult, as well as unsure about their own ability (Martin & Colbert, 1997).

The finding from this study showed there was no significant relationship between socioeconomic status and undergraduates' academic performance. This finding is different than the previous studies (Considine & Zappala, 2002; Titus, 2006) which indicated significant relationship between socioeconomic status and academic performance. The relationship between socioeconomic status and academic performance could be diminishing as student getting older. Furthermore, the magnitude of correlation could be reduced because lower academic achiever and lower socioeconomic status background person could leave from learning institution earlier (White 1982 cited in Sirin 2005; Considine & Zappala, 2002).

The finding from this study also showed there was no significant difference in parenting style among undergraduate in terms of ethnic group. This finding is different than the previous studies, for instant Somayah and Rozumah (2009) as well as Ang and Goh (2006). The insignificant finding could be due to other contextual factor such as living experience and culture values, instead of ethnic group alone. (Le, et al., 2008).

The differences between families from different social background had diminished over the years, and there are more similarities than differences in parenting patterns in the family of our society now days (Umberson, 1989 cited in Bigner, 2006). This could relate with changing of lifestyle and values due to the presence of contents portraying by television programs (Bigner, 2006). The changing in family institution could be related with industrialization, urbanization and globalization which believed had impact on culture and value. For instant, the position of family which very emphasize at previous year had found lapse on now days (Lukman & Zuriana, 2002 cited in Aziyah, 2008). Besides that, according to Tarmis-LeMonda and colleagues (2007), the parenting could be change across developmental time. For example, parent may shift from emphasizing on relatedness to autonomy as children develop. In other word, older children will be expected to take on family responsibility as the move beyond. Moreover, parenting also may change across setting, such as private or public setting. In this study, participants mainly are adult children who studying at higher learning institution, and staying away from family. Hence, the above aspects could take into consideration.

The finding from this study indicated there was no significant different in parenting style in terms of socioeconomic status. The findings considered not in line with the finding from previous research such as Chin and Phillips (2004), George (2004), and Early and Eccles (1995). According to Hill (2006), ethnicity and socioeconomic status can be confounded in study, because the comparison by using these variables cannot determine the output result was due to ethnic background or socioeconomic background. For instant, the study might involve few or no higher socioeconomic status from minority ethnic participants. Besides that, according to Sirin (2005), there was opportunity for students who provided the data regarding their family socioeconomic status to overestimate their family background or they might reluctant to admit their true family social status. This would indirectly limit the variability of the socioeconomic status measure in the study.

Meanwhile, present study shows the different findings than past researches as mentioned above. This could be due to several aspects. Firstly, the insignificant relationship between ethnic group and parenting style could be relate by changing of living experience, culture values (Le, et al., 2008), changing of lifestyle (Bigner, 2006), modernization (Aziyah, 2008) and developmental period of children and different setting (Tarmin-LeMonda, et al., 2007).

Researcher believes the insignificant relationship between socioeconomic status and parenting style could be explain as confounded between ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Hill, 2006), participants overestimate own family background or reluctant to admit social status (Sirin, 2005), and parental income had less influence on parenting compare with educational level and occupational status (Zervides & Knowles, 2007). Thirdly, researcher stated the significant correlation between socioeconomic status and undergraduates' academic performance could be diminish as student's age getting increase, as well learning institute did provided equalizing experience regardless of social background (White, 1982 cited in Sirin, 2005; Considine & Zappala, 2002),

The study also stated authoritarian parenting style had significantly negative correlate with academic performance because of authoritarian parenting inhibit child's emotional development (Miller, 1990 cited in Bigner, 2006), lack of explanation, guidance and emotional support could decrease child's intrinsic motivation on academic (Nirmala & Baki, 2009), and identity foreclosure may occur on the child who has overeager parent (Martin & Colbert, 1997).

Moreover, the insignificant correlation for authoritative, permissive parenting style and academic performance was due to the parenting style that show more direct impact on children social-emotional development rather than cognitive domain (Tiller, et al., 2003), parenting influence could change from direct to indirect as child getting mature (Darling & Steinberg, 1993), and parenting practice may shift from authoritarian to democratic as children grow mature (Bigner, 2006; Brooks, 2010).

4.1 Implications of Study

The present study has contributes to the growing understanding of the impact of parenting practices on academic performance among undergraduates. The finding showed that authoritarian parenting style is negatively related with academic performance. Such finding hence provides and suggests some implication for the family, tertiary education institution and educators.

The present study generally told us every member in family living can get influenced interdependently (Martin & Colbert, 1997). The process of parenting does not end as children reach adult age; the parent-child relationship change at this stage, whereby parent may unsure of how interact with children who becoming independent adult, but still rely on parent in some aspects (Bigner, 2006). Based on Brooks (2010), some adult children may still need additional emotional supports and financial support; while some other may eagerly enter independent activities at college, and then become distressed and need additional help.

Knowing that authoritarian parenting relate with negative academic performance, hence the parent need to understand frequently use of praise may not necessary threaten parental authority and lead to child's self-contentedness. In fact, less use of praise may bring negative influence on child's motivation to improve their achievement; therefore, such perception is suggested to replace with other method. For instant, parent should show their real feelings about their children and giving more emotional support to their children (Nirmala & Baki, 2009).

Besides that, according to Miller (1990) cited in Bigner (2006) and Saat Sulaiman (2005), parents are not encourage to practice the following methods, as these could lead to negative children outcome. The fault practices that needed to avoid include: embarrassing children and spouse in front of both family member and outsider, set traps to detect children misbehavior, never show fully trusting children's words and behavior, dishonest and not genuine to children and force and direct children to achieve what parent desired.

As children reach early adult age, parent should let go some of their parenting role, and interact with their children more like an adult rather than a dependent child (Sanrock, 2008). This means, parent should no longer perceive their children as children who need to be protected and closely monitoring. In fact, early adult children should view as person who able to bear responsibility, mature and have right to regulate daily activities. However, if parent's lifestyle was interfering by children act, parent can communicate with children. For instant, parent can listen in peacefully, use mutual problem-solving strategies to provide information and work together with children in order to achieve mutually agreeable solution (Brooks, 2010).

Apart from these, this present study about parenting style can provide educator a reference of classroom teaching, because parenting style typology from Baumrind (1971) was described based on Lewin's leadership styles. Baumrind replace Lewin's leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire with authoritarian, authoritative and permissive (Dreikurs, 1995 cited in Ferguson, Hagaman, Grice and Peng, 2006). Moreover, according to Agba, Ikoh and Noah (2010), this leadership style had significant related with students' academic performance, and it is widely impact on classroom management and had great influence on the students. For instances, laissez-faire style teacher give students high level of independence, freedom and cut down own power (Koontz, 1983 cited in Agba et al., 2010). Thus, educator is suggests to imply classroom leadership style that is suitable according to the context.

5. CONCLUSION

This study had provided some recommendations to future researchers. In the future, the study can involve more universities in Malaysia in order to generalize the research finding to larger population. The future study also can collect the data regarding parenting style and parental socioeconomic status from participants as well as their parent.

Knowing that the social demographic background such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status can be confounding (Hill, 2006), for example, Le and colleague (2008) mentioned the variation of parenting practice from different ethnicity could be due to cultural values, ethnic identity, socialization, and living experience. Hence future research should control and measure these variables in detail, rather than merely focus on the participant's ethnic group. Meanwhile, in measuring socioeconomic status, researcher should use multiple components instead of just focus on traditional components of socioeconomic status, which is income (Sirin, 2005). For example, researcher can collect the data regarding "owning of certain object in family", education level and occupation of parents to reflects family socioeconomic condition (Liu & Lu, 2008).

As a conclusion, there should be an important role of parenting styles and communication as a buffer against the negative psychosocial consequences suggests a possible target of intervention efforts. Promoting parent-child communication may result in the nurturing of psychosocial resilience among the students. Parents and educators may benefit from an increased understanding that parental communication may buffer the students from the negative effects of maladaptive behaviour.

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