



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE
ARTS & HUMANITIES

Volume 12 Issue 14 Version 1.0 Year 2012

Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)

Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

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By Cai-Lian Tam, Amanda Chong, Amudha Kadirvelu & Yoon-Ting Khoo

Monash University

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Keywords : parenting style, self-efficacy.

GJHSS-A Classification : FOR Code : 940105



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Parenting Styles and Self-Efficacy of Adolescents: Malaysian Scenario

Cai-Lian Tam^α, Amanda Chong^σ, Amudha Kadirvelu^ρ & Yoon-Ting Khoo^ω

Abstract - Parenting styles and its impact on adolescents' psychosocial development has been an area of interest in the field of psychology. Previous studies have revealed that parenting styles are correlated with adolescents' self-esteem, drug and alcohol use, delinquency and academic performance. This study aimed to investigate the effect of parenting styles namely authoritative, authoritarian and permissive on adolescents' self-efficacy level. A hundred and twenty students served as participants for this study. The mean age for the entire sample was 18.441 and had an equal number of males and females. A single survey was administered and data on perceived parenting styles and ratings on self-efficacy were collected. Correlation was carried out and results indicated that authoritative parenting style is highly associated with self-efficacy. Regression result showed that authoritative parenting style contributes 12.8% towards student's self-efficacy. However, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles do not produce any significant relationship when associated with self-efficacy. T-test comparison revealed a significant difference of self-efficacy among the males and females. The male students demonstrated higher level of self-efficacy as compared to the females. This study is significant because it allows helping professionals to gain a better understanding on the relationship between parenting styles and self-efficacy.

Keywords : parenting style, self-efficacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence has been known to be a rather challenging developmental stage in the human lifespan for adolescents as well as their parents. Adolescents are differentiated from other human developmental stages such as infancy and childhood in

terms of their strong sense to exercise their autonomy. Adolescents might begin to question the legitimacy of parental authority and parental supervision [1]. Adolescents are particularly prone to defiant behavior towards authority due to the need to be autonomous. Moreover, as adolescent's transition from children to adults, they go through different domain of issues and concerns. Adolescents are faced with the pressure of excelling in school and making future career decision. It is also not uncommon for the family, school and society to impose higher expectation on adolescents [1].

Nordin [2] found that adolescents make up half of the entire Malaysian population and it is particularly important due to the fact that Malaysia is a developing country. Nordin further [2] suggested that adolescents are one of the great assets for the country as they are the future leaders and have the potential to bring Malaysia to better heights. Nurturing and educating adolescents to live their life functionally and effectively has never been so crucial for Malaysia. Parental authority, involvement and parenting styles received by adolescents throughout their life have known to have influenced adolescents' psychosocial competency. This area has evoked lot of interest over the past few decades [3] [4] [5] [6] [7].

Coping with life's challenges are crucial for adolescents because failure to do so could lead to negative outcomes such as being defiant towards parental authority, engagement in risky behavior (e.g. reckless driving, unprotected sex), drug and alcohol use and lack of self-confidence. Adolescents' self beliefs in restraining themselves from engaging in misconduct are determined by their level of self-efficacy. The ability to exercise self-efficacy not only affects adolescents' behavior but also has a major influence on their overall well-being. Self-efficacy allows adolescents to engage in tasks that they believe they can succeed and keeps them motivated. According to Bradley and Corwyn [8] experiences of children in their environment particularly home are associated with a broad domain of their development such as social behavior and self-efficacy. Parents consistently play an important role in adolescents' life. Thus, it is important to examine the type of parenting style and its effect on adolescents' self efficacy in order to gain valuable insights that would help to nurture self sufficient future adults.

Author α : C. L. Tam is with the Jeffery Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Monash University, Bandar Sunway, Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, 46150, Malaysia.

E-mail : tam.cai.lian@monash.edu

Author σ : S. M. A. Chong is with the Jeffery Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Monash University, Bandar Sunway, Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, 46150, Malaysia.

E-mail : amanda.chong@monash.edu

Author ρ : A. Kadirvelu is with the Jeffery Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Monash University, Bandar Sunway, Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, 46150, Malaysia.

E-mail : amudha.kadirvelu@monash.edu

Author ω : Y. T. Khoo is with School of Health and Natural Sciences, Sunway University, Bandar Sunway, Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, 46150, Malaysia.

Parenting style is a pattern of attitudes that parents exhibit toward the upbringing of their children [9]. Baumrind [10] [11] identified two broad dimensions of parenting styles: demandingness which relates to the amount of parental control exerted over children's activities and behavior, and responsiveness that is determined by the amount of warmth and nurturance displayed by parents towards their children. Baumrind then used these dimensions to identify three parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive.

II. TYPES OF PARENTING STYLES

Three parenting styles were identified throughout the present research. First, the authoritarian parenting style in which, the parents are strict and demanding, make most of the decisions for their children and expect them to be followed without any questions. This is the most basic and traditional parenting technique where the families are adult centered [12].

The second style is authoritative parenting where parents love and discipline the children. There can be an open dialogue between parents and children and the children will not be punished for voicing out their views or opinions. Authoritative style emphasizes on positive encouragement for constructive behavior and punishment for negative behavior [12].

In the permissive parenting, parents implement little rules and allow the children to make their own decisions. It is also known as the "democratic" parenting style. Families are child centered and the children are in touch with their center-of-growth, and are more creative and spontaneous in their characteristics [12].

III. SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is defined as a person's confidence and belief that he or she is able to achieve something that has significant effect over their lives. It also has major effect over a person's self esteem and ability to compete with other individuals. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes which includes cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes [13].

Bradley and Corwyn [8] proposed that environment stimulates or encourages one's behavior such as self-efficacy. Bandura [14] explains that self-efficacy plays an important role in determining one's capacities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments. It influences the choices people make, courses of action they pursue, amount of stress and anxiety that one experiences as he or she is involved in the activity. A strong sense of efficacy encourages people to do well in many ways. They can approach difficult tasks as challenges and

maintain strong commitment [15]. If they face failure, they will attribute it to insufficient efforts and lack of knowledge. On the other hand, people with low self-efficacy always assume that tasks are tough and avoid indulging in it. They have little or no idea on how to resolve it by using the best choice.

IV. PARENTAL AUTHORITY AND SELF-EFFICACY

According to Buri et al.[3], parental authority could be considered as a reliable mean to measure the practice of permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. Baumrind [16] [17] suggested that permissive parents are characterized by displaying non-controlling behaviours and making limited command towards children's behaviour. In other words, permissive parents focus on freedom over control. On the contrary, authoritarian parents show high level of command and impose power when interacting with children. Authoritarian parents focus on control but not freedom. While permissive parents and authoritarian parents appear to be opposite in terms of imposing control on their children, authoritative parents exhibit nurturing behaviour and direct their children's behaviour through reasoning.

a) *Permissive Parenting Style and Self-efficacy*

Adalbjarnardottir and Hafsteinsson [4] found that adolescents who perceived their parents as neglectful used more licit and illicit drugs compared to adolescents who perceived their parents as authoritative. They conducted the research in a sample of 347 Iceland adolescents. Children raised by permissive parents have been found to be more prone to delinquent behaviour, display poorer academic competence and achievement, and overall lower levels of psychological functioning [5].

Permissive parenting has also been found to be related to low self-esteem, less persistence on learning tasks, low patience for frustration, and intrinsic/extrinsic motivational orientation [6] [18]. According to Boon [19], permissive parenting, high self-handicapping, low mastery goals and self-efficacy are notably associated to low achievement whereas higher achievement is linked to authoritative parenting style.

b) *Authoritarian Parenting Style and Self-efficacy*

Buri et al. [3] investigated the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem. Questionnaires were administered to 230 students. Their findings showed that most of the participants who judged both of their parents as authoritarian scored low in self-esteem level. On the contrary, participants who perceived both of their parents as authoritative have high self-esteem. In a study by Qazi [20] that examined the correlation between parenting styles, locus of control and generalized self-efficacy, it was found that authoritative parenting style had a positive correlation with generalized self-efficacy whereas authoritarian and

permissive parenting styles showed no association with self-efficacy.

c) *Authoritative Parenting Style and Self-efficacy*

Turner, Chandler and Heffer [7] conducted a research to explore the relation between parenting styles, self-efficacy, achievement motivation and academic performance in undergraduate students. Their study in 264 college students suggested that perceived authoritative parenting styles significantly related to college students' academic performance. Moreover, the results showed that authoritative parenting styles and academic self-efficacy were significant predictors of academic performance. In other words, authoritative parenting styles and academic self-efficacy are two of the contributing factors for academic performance. Furthermore, adolescents who viewed their parents as authoritative were reported less likely to have tried alcohol compared to adolescents who viewed their parents as authoritarian and neglectful [4].

V. GENDER AND SELF-EFFICACY

Sylvia-Bobiak and Caldwell [21] studied 874 undergraduate students to explore the complex relationship between social cognitive constructs, gender, and active leisure among university students. Results of their study indicated that males have higher active leisure efficacy and higher physical activity self-efficacy compared to the females [22]. This data concurred with the results of studies by Milligan et al. [23] and Netz and Raviv [24] among Australian males and females. Besides that, Clement [25] claimed in her research that women display lower self-efficacy expectations compared to males with regards to traditionally male occupations.

A recent study by Schmitt [26] examined the relationship between gender, emotional stability and self-efficacy among 891 college students. The results showed significant relationship between gender and the level of self-efficacy. The results also specifically suggested that female college students demonstrate lower level of emotional stability and self-efficacy compared to males. Furthermore, the results revealed that self-efficacy is significantly related to academic performance.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

This study is important because it would increase awareness among the community that parenting styles are related to adolescent's self-efficacy. The findings of this study will also increase awareness among parents on the importance of practicing favourable parenting styles. Insights on the relationship between parenting styles and self-efficacy of adolescents would assist professionals including psychotherapists and family and marriage therapists in the delivery of effective support and care to their clients.

Moreover, this study is highly relevant for Malaysia considering adolescents make up 50% of the Malaysian population.

VII. OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the literature of past studies on the relationship between parenting styles and self-efficacy level, we hypothesize that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between parental authority and adolescents' self-efficacy; the higher the level of parental authority, the higher the level of adolescent's self-efficacy.

H2: There is a negative relationship between permissive parenting style and adolescents' self-efficacy; the higher the level of permissive parenting style, the lower the level of adolescent's self-efficacy.

H3: There is a negative relationship between authoritarian parenting style and adolescents' self-efficacy; the higher the level of authoritarian parenting style, the lower the level of adolescent's self-efficacy.

H4: There is a positive relationship between authoritative parenting style and adolescents' self-efficacy; the higher the level of authoritative parenting style, the higher the level of adolescent's self-efficacy.

H5: Male participants would outperform female participants in their level of self-efficacy.

VIII. METHODOLOGY

a) *Subjects*

The study sample consisted of 120 students from Sunway (pre-) University College, Secondary school of Batu Lapan, and St. Xavier High School, Penang. There were 60 males and 60 females aged between 16-21 years (mean age - 18.441) and were from different races: Malays (N=2, 1.7%), Chinese (N=89, 74.2%), Indians (N=23, 19.2%), and others (N=6, 5.0%).

b) *Procedure*

A single survey questionnaire was used to obtain information from the study participants. To start with, lecturers and teachers of the college and high schools were approached to obtain permission for questionnaire administration during class time. After the permission was granted, a brief explanation about the aims of the study was given to the students. After obtaining consent from the participants thirty minutes were given to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires and consent forms were written in English.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section gathered demographic information including age, gender, and race of the subjects. The second section was divided into two parts: Part A contained 30-items related to parenting style and part B contained 30-items related to self-efficacy.

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)

The Parental Authority Questionnaire [PAQ] [27] was designed to measure parental authority, or disciplinary practices, from the child's point of view of any age. This instrument is divided into three subscales: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. Our study subjects were asked to rate their response on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). PAQ had good internal consistency with alpha between .74 and .87 for the subscales and two-week test-retest reliability ranged between .77 and .92

Self-Efficacy Scale (SES)

The Self-Efficacy Scale [SES] [28] was designed to measure general levels of belief in one's own competence. Subjects were asked to rate their response on a 5-point scale (1 = Disagree strongly, 5 = Agree strongly). This instrument is divided into two subscales: general self-efficacy and social self-efficacy. The SES had good internal consistency, with alpha of .86 for the general subscale and .71 for the social subscale.

IX. RESULTS

a) Correlation

A correlation was done between Parental Authority and Self-Efficacy. The results were significant with a low degree of correlation between PAQ and SES ($r = .228, p < .05$). See Table 1.

Table 1 : Correlation Between Parental Authority And Self-Efficacy

Parental Authority Self-Efficacy	.228*
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* $p < .05$

Between parenting style (permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative) and self-efficacy, the correlation was low. However, the correlations between permissive parenting style and self-efficacy was $r = .098, p > .05$; between authoritarian parenting style and self-efficacy was $r = -.087, p > .05$, while the correlation was $r = .357, p < .01$ between authoritative parenting style and self-efficacy. See Table 2 (a), 2 (b) and 2 (c).

Table 2.1 : Correlation Between Permissive Parenting Styles And Self-Efficacy.

Self-Efficacy Permissive Parenting Style	.098
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$p > .05$

Table 2.2 : Correlation Between Authoritarian Parenting Styles And Self-Efficacy.

Self-Efficacy Authoritarian Parenting Style	-.087
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$p > .05$

Table 2.3 : Correlation Between Authoritative Parenting Styles And Self-Efficacy.

Self-Efficacy Authoritative Parenting Style	.357**
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** $p < .01$

Regression

Table 3 : Summary of Ordinary Least Squares Multiple Regression Analysis for Parenting Styles Predicting Self-Efficacy (N=120).

	B	SE B	β
Self-Efficacy			
Permissive	.009	.163	.005
Authoritarian	-.012	.140	-.008
Authoritative	.585	.150	.354**

Note: $R^2 = .128 [F(3,116) = 5.658, p < .01]$. ** $p < .01$

Regression analysis was done to determine the contribution of the three types of parenting style towards self-efficacy. The results showed that parenting style contributes 12.8% towards children's self-efficacy and, it is unlikely to have been caused by sampling error; F

(3,116) = 5.658, $p < .01$. From the results, permissive parents had a regression coefficient of .009; the t-value was .053 and associated with a probability of 0.05. Authoritarian parents had a regression coefficient of -.012, the t-value was -.085 with an associated

probability of $p > .05$. It is likely that the regression coefficients for these two variables were caused by sampling error. However, the regression coefficient of authoritative parents was .585 ($t = 3.905$, $p < .01$) indicating sampling error could be unlikely. In conclusion, this study strongly suggests that only authoritative parenting style plays an important role in children's self-efficacy (See Table 3).

TWO GROUP COMPARISON: T-TEST

Table 4 : T-Test for Male and Female In Self-Efficacy Scale(Ses)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male	80.733	10.746
Female	75.550	9.071

** $p < .01$

Mean differences in self-efficacy between male and female students were assessed through t-Test. Results indicated a significant difference between the two groups [$t(118) = 2.855$, $p < .01$] (See Table 4).

X. DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of different parenting styles on self-efficacy of adolescents. This research revealed that there was a general relationship between parental authority and self-efficacy. The authoritative parenting style was significantly associated with self-efficacy while authoritarian parenting style and permissive parenting style were not correlated with self-efficacy. More specifically, children with authoritative parents would have higher level of self-efficacy. In addition, present study revealed that there was a significant difference between genders in terms of self-efficacy where male students outperformed the female students.

a) Parental Authority, Permissive Parenting Style and Self-efficacy

Results of this study showed that there is a significant correlation between parental authority and self-efficacy, thus supporting the first hypothesis.

However, no relationship was noted between permissive parenting style and self-efficacy, rejecting the second hypothesis. This finding is consistent with a previous study by Qazi [20] found that reported permissive parenting style is not correlated with adolescents' self-efficacy level. Baumrind[17] suggested that permissive parents' exhibit low level of demandingness and tend to provide limited supervision. These results imply that permissive parenting style is not favorable to foster self-efficacy among adolescents.

b) Authoritarian Parenting Style and Self-efficacy

In this study, significant relationship was not observed between authoritarian parenting style and self-efficacy, thus rejecting the third hypothesis. This study revealed that in order to maximize children's self-efficacy, parents should practice authoritative parenting style by setting ground rules as well as allowing the children to have their own autonomy and freedom to voice out opinions instead of the old-fashioned authoritarian parenting style. This would enable the children to have some room to develop their own thinking, opinions and judgments at their own pace.

c) Authoritative Parenting Style and Self-efficacy

Result of the present research showed significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and self-efficacy, supporting the forth hypothesis. These results support the views by Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan [29], where authoritative parenting is related to positive perceptions, academic and socio-emotional child outcomes. In addition, results of this study also indicate that authoritative parenting style is the most effective style that results in children scoring high on measures of competence and self-perception [10] [11][5].

Authoritative style has constantly been found to be correlated with positive self-perceptions while authoritarian style has repeatedly been found to be correlated with negative self-perceptions [3] [30] [5][31].

d) Gender and Self-efficacy

In this study, females were found to have lower level of self-efficacy compared to the males, supporting the fifth hypothesis. This finding concurs with previous reports [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [32] that have shown that males are more confident than females. In addition, it has been reported that male students at high school and college tend to be more confident than female students in certain academic areas including science and mathematics [33] [34] [35] [36] [37].

Malaysia is an Asian multi-racial country that predominantly consists of Malays, Chinese and Indians. Malaysian families practice eastern cultural values. Traditional eastern cultures tend to view males as the bread winner in the household and view females as the caregiver to the next generation. This cultural value might have an impact on parents' behavior and hence might raise males and females differently. The results obtained from this study may be a reflection of the eastern cultural values.

e) Recommendation for Future Research

In this study, all measures were based on self-reported questionnaires and the assessment of parenting styles was based on the perspectives of early adults only. Future studies could involve parents' perspectives on parenting style characteristics besides

adolescents' perspectives. Another limitation of the study is that the questionnaires were distributed to students within a specific age range instead of including other age groups. It is possible that some parents exercise different style of parenting at different times depending on the age their children.

f) *Implication of Research*

It is challenging to sustain effective parenting styles, and parents often report that living with teenagers is stressful. Although adolescents often resist, parental monitoring of the adolescent's daily life still consistently predicts the favorable adjustment. For example, parental monitoring is linked to positive outcomes that include reduction in sexual activity and delinquency. In addition, ideal parenting style would improve school performance and mental health status of their children [38].

The findings from this study, in conjunction with reports from previous studies on the effect of parenting styles on adolescent's competence could provide valuable insights to the professionals with regards to parental influence on adolescents' self-efficacy. Moreover, the findings of this study will increase awareness in the community in promoting favorable parenting styles. New parents who are unsure about which parenting styles to adopt can gain some insights from this study. This study could also aid in the development of favorable parenting or intervention programs that aim to develop self-efficient future generation.

In conclusion, there is a significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and subjects' level of self-efficacy. Authoritative parenting style indeed plays a vital role in children's level of self-efficacy compared to authoritarian and permissive parenting style. In addition, there were significant gender differences in the level of self-efficacy where males tend to have higher self-efficacy compared to females.

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