

A Quantitative Study of Relationship between Parenting Style and Adolescent's Self-esteem

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Abstract. As most studies on the relationship between parenting style and the self-esteem are done in the Western context and culture, this study tries to explore the relationship between the parenting style and the self-esteem of a group of adolescents in a National-type Chinese school (SMJK) in Penang. That is to explore the effects of Malaysian parenting styles towards the adolescents' self-esteem. Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) scale were distributed to 500 students from a national type secondary school, age 13-17 to obtain their perception of their parent's type of parenting style and their own level of self-esteem. The data obtained was further analyzed using SPSS to find out the correlations of self-esteem with various parenting styles. The SPSS results support the hypothesis of the study, that is parenting style does have correlation with self-esteem of students though the degree of correlation is rather small but statistically significant in this study. The adolescents' level of self-esteem is negatively influenced by their perceived parent's Authoritative or Permissive parenting style. Whereas, self-esteem is positively influenced by Authoritarian parenting style. Though the study results support the four hypotheses of the study, some of the hypothesis testing results are found to be different from previous studies found in literature. Other variables may have contributed to the study result. Future study in this area may need to isolate the influences in order to get a better picture of the relation of parenting style and self-esteem.

Keywords: Parenting styles, authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, self-esteem

Introduction

"Tiger mom" or tiger parenting is a term coined by Amy Chua in her memoir, "Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother" (Chua, 2011). The concept of *tiger mom* reflected the attitude of Chinese mothers who pushes their children to excel in their studies causing them to be affected socially, emotionally and psychologically. According to Santrock (2017), the *tiger mom* concept represents the authoritarian parenting style.

Literature Review

Diana Baumrind describes three parenting styles that affect the behavior of children (Santrock, 2017). They are Authoritarian parenting, Authoritative parenting and Permissive parenting. Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded Baumrind's parenting explanation based on the dimensions of parenting behavior of demandingness and responsiveness. Demandingness refers to the parents' control, supervision and maturity demands of their children's behavior, whereas responsiveness is the degree of the

parents' acceptance, warmth and involvement towards their children's emotional and developmental needs.

Authoritarian parents are high on demandingness and low on responsiveness. They have high expectations, follow strictly to the rules and expect their children to follow their directions and respect them. The parents will have boundaries on the rules and limitations with their children, with minimal room for negotiations. There will be consequences of punishments if the rules are not followed. The children are required to comply and conform to their parents' rules and respect for authority. Often, these children will either end up being a conformist, lack of independence or they will be rebellious and resentful towards their parents.

Authoritative parenting style which is high on demandingness and responsiveness constantly encourages children to be independent but places limitations and controls on their actions. There is an extensive level of verbal communication whereby the children are able to negotiate with their parents. The parents are warm and nurturing towards the child, showing pleasure, love and support in response towards the child's behavior and at the same time with

defined rules. The children are required to follow the rules set by their parents but the parents are open for discussions and take into consideration of their children's opinions. Normally the children will be more independent, achievement oriented, and able to make decisions based on their reasoning.

Permissive parents are low on demandingness but high on responsiveness. The parents focus on the nurturing their children and responding to their children's needs. They also encourage their children to make their own decision and autonomy. In the spectrum of permissive parenting, on one end children will be independent and make their own decision and would prefer the autonomy given to them. On another end, children will have less or no rules and regulations in their lives and tend to be detached from their parents. Permissive parenting is normally affectionate but this can cause the failure to regulate their children's behavior and eventually leading to low self-esteem.

Self-Esteem

According to Hooks (2002), self-esteem is the personal evaluation of oneself in the areas of confidence in one's ability to think, cope with life challenges, and feel successful, happy and valued; which leads to positive or negative self-esteem. Self-esteem plays an important role in an individual's healthy development of life. Susan Harter (1993) identified that one of the important domains contributing to adolescents' self-esteem is parental support, besides peer support, scholastic competence, physical ability, peer likability and athletic competence.

Relationship between self-esteem and parenting style

Study by Peterson, Cobas, Bush, Supple & Wilson (2005) examined the influence of parental support towards the adolescent's self-esteem. Results indicated that Chinese adolescents were responsive towards parents who supervise, rational and supportive as well as maternal monitoring predicts the self-esteem of the adolescents. Previous studies also indicated that parenting styles are related to self-esteem (e.g. Growe, 1980; Herz & Gullone, 1999; Zakeria & Karimpourb, 2011; Driscoll, 2013).

However, the results from these studies are not consistent, with some indicating the positive relationship between the parenting styles and self-esteem and some do not. Driscoll (2013) discovered that authoritarian parenting styles will produce children with lower self-esteem than authoritative parenting style. A study on Spanish adolescents by Martinez and Garcia (2007), indicated that children of permissive parents had higher self-esteem compared to authoritative parenting style. In a subsequent study conducted on a group of Brazilian adolescents, Martinez and Garcia (2008) discovered that Brazilian authoritative parenting style produced adolescents with high self-esteem compared to permissive parenting

style. The adolescents of permissive parents had a higher self-esteem compared to authoritarian parents.

Another study in India by Sharma and Pandey (2015) indicated there is no significant difference between permissive and authoritative parenting style on adolescents' self-esteem. However, these two parenting styles produce a higher level of self-esteem in comparison to the authoritarian parenting style.

Chang (2007) looked into the comparison of culture in the parenting style between the Caucasian Americans and the Asian Americans and its effect on adolescents' self-esteem or self-concept. Her results revealed that authoritarian parenting style has negative effects with self-esteem and most Asian American parents will apply the authoritarian parenting style, with the parents trying to impose their values and rules on their children.

Keshavarz and Baharuddin (2009) explored the parenting styles which are influenced by the culture context. They concluded that Malaysia as a collectivist society, the parents will tend to adopt the authoritarian parenting style for their children, which may not necessary have a negative effect on their children's self-esteem.

As most studies are done in the Western context and culture, in this study, we would like to explore the relationship between the parenting style and the self-esteem of a group of adolescents in a Chinese government school (SMJK) in Penang, looking at the effects of Malaysian parenting styles towards the adolescents' self-esteem. The current research also focuses on parental practices carried out by mother or father if mother is not available. The following hypotheses were made based on the study. H-1: Parenting style does have a relationship with the self-esteem of the students. H-2: Authoritative parenting style will have a relationship with the self-esteem of the students. H-3: Authoritarian parenting style will have a relationship with the self-esteem of the students. H-4: Permissive parenting style will have a relationship with the self-esteem of the students.

Method

Quantitative method emphasizes on using statistical analysis of data collected from inventories to predict or explain a phenomenon. This study focuses on testing the relationship between parenting style and self-esteem. There are two inventories selected to perform the test on the two variables in the study. The first variable is parenting style which is tested by using Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and the second variable is self-esteem which is tested by using Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) scale.

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) is a questionnaire established in order to measure parenting styles introduced by Baumrind's (Buri, 1991). According to Baumrind, there are three types of parenting styles which refer to permissive, authoritarian and authoritative type of parenting style.

To measure these three types of parenting styles, the questionnaire is designed as phenomenological appraisal which answered by the child on the 30 items designed in the questionnaire. The result of the questionnaire is in reference to one of the parent, either the mother or father. Each parenting style contains 10 items in the questionnaire and thus contributes to a total of 30 items in the questionnaire. 5-point Likert-scales are applied for each of the item in the questionnaire, which are ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither Disagree nor Agree (3), Agree (4) to Strongly Agree (5). The parenting style of the particular parent is then defined by the highest score gained among the three parenting styles by looking at the total accumulated from the results for items set under each parenting style.

Buri (1991) tested the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Since each parent was tested on three types of parenting styles, there are in total of six parenting styles tested in the paper. To test the reliability, there was two methods applied, test-retest method and internal consistency reliability.

In terms of validity, the outcome stated in Buri (1991) shows that PAQ is a valid tool to measure and identify parenting style for each parent. Therefore, it is reliable and high in validity to apply this inventory for the purpose of this study.

RSE is a globally applied unidimensional inventory (Heatherton et al., 2003). It applies self-report measurement for self-esteem and is able to cater varying populations without having any discrimination. It is high in reliability (alpha .92) even with only a total of 10 items in the inventory (Heatherton et al., 2003). In terms of validity, this inventory is designed to specifically test the level of self-esteem and thus suits the purpose of this study.

This inventory applies Likert-type response format, engaging 4- point scales ranging from Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree to Strongly Agree. There are 5 reversed questions out of 10 questions and the scores are calculated by getting the total from the respective scale. The higher the RSE scores, the higher the level of self-esteem. The calculation of scores involves score of 0 for Strongly Disagree while score of 3 for Strongly Agree which contributes to the lowest scores of 0 and the highest scores of 30.

The study was done at SMJK Phor Thay to 19 classes ranging from Form 1 to Form 5 with a total of 516 copies of test questionnaires (PAQ & RSE) administered. For each administration, the objective and questions were explained to the students. Once done, the questionnaires were collected from the students. The administration time for both questionnaires was 30 minutes for all students. Convenience sampling was used as classes were selected based on the availability of every 30 minutes time slot. Out of the 516 questionnaires collected, 504 questionnaires were accepted and keyed into SPSS for analysis after screening the quality of participants' responses.

Result

The alpha reliability coefficients computed for each subscale are as follows: For the Permissive, alpha reliability coefficient = .668. For the Authoritarian, alpha reliability coefficient = .685. For the Authoritative, alpha reliability coefficient = .778. For overall PAQ, the alpha reliability coefficient = .579. And for the RSE, the alpha reliability coefficient = .772

The alpha values for the various parenting styles were lower than those stated in 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. Many methodologists recommend a minimum alpha coefficient between 0.65 and 0.8 (or higher in many cases) (Goforth, 2015). Thus, except the coefficient for overall PAQ which is .579, the rest are within the recommended range. For this academic exercise, it can be safely assumed the sample data is reasonably "good" enough for statistical analysis.

Table 1: Percentage by Gender

		Freq uenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
V	Male	252	50.0	50.0	50.0
ali	Female	252	50.0	50.0	100.0
d	Total	504	100.0	100.0	

From a total of 504 respondents, 252 are male and 252 are female.

Table 2: Percentage by Form

		Freq uenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
V	F1	137	27.2	27.2	27.2
ali	F2	90	17.9	17.9	45.0
d	F3	47	9.3	9.3	54.4
	F4	53	10.5	10.5	64.9
	F5	177	35.1	35.1	100.0
	Total	504	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 2, majority of respondents are from Form 5, followed by Form 1 and Form 2. As explained earlier, the sampling method was convenience sampling. On that day, it so happened that more teachers teaching Form 5 were away on courses or in meeting.

Table 3: Type of Parenting Styles

		Freq uenc y	Perce nt	Valid Perce nt	Cumul ative Perce nt
Valid	Authoritarian	91	18.1	18.1	18.1
	Authoritative	319	63.3	63.3	81.3
	Permissive	94	18.7	18.7	100.0
	Total	504	100.0	100.0	

From Table 3, it is shown that 18.1% of the students perceived their parents as Authoritarian, 63.3% as Authoritative and 18.7% as Permissive.

Descriptive statistics was computed for each item in PAQ and RSE scales. No abnormality was observed.

Table 4: Correlations of Self-Esteem with Various Parenting Styles

		Self-Esteem	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative	PAQ Total
Self-Esteem	Pearson	1	-.153*	.090*	-.195*	-.170*
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.043	.000	.000

The result signifies that parenting styles does have correlation with self-esteem of students with Pearson correlation of -.170; Authoritative parenting style does have correlation with self-esteem of students with Pearson correlation of -.195; Authoritarian parenting style does have correlation with self-esteem of students with Pearson correlation of .090 and; Permissive parenting style does have correlation with self-esteem of students with Pearson correlation of -.153

Discussion

All the four hypotheses involved computation of Pearson correlation as shown in Table 5 above. Discussion will be done on each hypothesis.

Hypothesis H-1. The SPSS results support the hypothesis of the study, that is parenting style is significantly correlated with self-esteem of students though the degree of correlation is rather small. The adolescents' level of self-esteem is negatively influenced by their perceived parent's parenting style.

This result is different when compared to previous studies where self-esteem is formed since childhood and it will change based on the past experience with parents (Kwan, 2004). According to Hong, Long, and Rahman (2015), the positive response from the parents will form the positive self-esteem of adolescents. Children feel more confident towards his or her success when his or her parent shows concern. However, adolescents feel shame or low confident whenever they feel controlled by their parents. Furthermore, parents who engaged in more caring behaviors will influence their children to have higher self-esteem and parents who are more overprotective will influence their children to have implicit self-esteem. In this study, the relationship between parenting styles and the self-esteem of adolescents is weak. Driscoll (2013) pointed out challenges such as age, changes in parenting styles and others will influence the result.

Age may be one of the factors that influence the self-esteem of the adolescent. According to Driscoll

(2013), self-esteem was found to be lowest at age 14 and many of the participants in this study are around this age group. The low self-esteem is due to the intense changes one going through. Adolescents at this age start their secondary school study and experience puberty period at the same time, which cause them to experience internal changes within their body as well as external changes in terms of their relationships with their family and friends.

Importance of the parenting styles over time was discussed by Wentzel (1994). During the secondary school period, parents may only focus on one of the three parenting styles and that parenting style may change according to the situations. For example, when there is a need to focus on children's discipline or education, most parents tend to subscribe more to authoritarian style, and be less responsiveness. The importance of parenting styles will decrease as the child enters late adolescence and early adulthood (Wentzel,1994) (as cited in Driscoll, 2013). In this study, data is collected from Form 1 to Form 5 students. Due to the mixed age group data, the correlation computed may not show a big value. Therefore, parenting styles may appear to not have strong influence on the students' self-esteem.

Hypothesis H-2. Our finding shows that authoritative parenting style does have a small yet significant and negative correlation with the self-esteem of the adolescents, supporting the H-2 hypotheses; adolescent who has an authoritative parent will have low self-esteem. Most of the researches indicated that the authoritative parenting style yields the most stable child in western cultures. However, there is a difference in cultural norms subscribed by Asian people. In the Asian culture, there will be more emphasis on parental respect than on closeness and intimacy (Chang, 2007). This result suggests that adolescents are more likely to adopt a higher level of parental respect compared to closeness and intimacy. However, more studies may need to be conducted in the Asian context to support this argument.

Hypothesis H-3. Our finding shows that authoritarian parenting style does have small yet significant and positive correlation with self-esteem of the adolescents, supporting the H-3 hypotheses. This result may appear at first to be counter-intuitive, yet it is parallel with the work of Keshavarz and Baharuddin (2009). They concluded that Malaysia as a collectivist society, parents will tend to adopt the authoritarian parenting style for their children, which may not necessary have a negative effect on their children's self-esteem.

Martinez & Garcia (2007) explains that the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem is also influenced by cultural differences. In the Asian Chinese culture, authoritarian practices tend to bring a positive impact on self-esteem because it is believed that children who have authoritarian parents will benefit from the strict discipline and it brings harmony to the family. This is parallel to the result of our

findings. It means that Asian children who are developed from authoritarian parenting style will have high self-esteem. (Hong, Long & Rahman, 2015).

Hypothesis H-4. Our finding shows that permissive parenting style does have a small and yet significant negative correlation with self-esteem of the adolescents, supporting the H-4 hypotheses. The result where adolescents with permissive parenting styles will have low self-esteem is consistent with the previous study by Hoskins (2014). Hoskins' study explains that decreases in monitoring when children transit to adolescence may contribute to negative impacts like higher frequency of substance use, school misconduct, and less interaction with others, thus, lowering the self-esteem among such children.

There are several limitations in the study that need to be addressed. Firstly, as convenience sampling is used in the study, there might be a concern where results of the study could not be generalized to the overall population as the sample obtained is not a representative of the overall population, resulting in a low external validity (Sedgwick, 2013).

Moreover, there may be an issue with the validity and reliability of the results as the language used in the questionnaire is English, which is the second language for the participants. Majority of them are Chinese with a minority of Malay and Indian participants. According to Kaplan & Saccuzzo (2017), the validity and reliability of the test could be affected by the test takers' knowledge of the language used in questionnaires and test should be given in the language that the test takers feel is his or her best. Indeed, as English is not the primary language of the participants. In the course of administering the questionnaire, some participants appear to have difficulty understanding the questions in both questionnaires and had requested for explanation and translation on the questions on the questionnaires. Hence, the test result may be affected by the interpreters' interpretation of questions (explanation) and translation of the items as the interpreter may introduce bias while explaining about the items (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2017).

Also, the researcher's translation of the items during explanations may not accurately portray the original meaning of the items. As per explained by Kaplan & Saccuzzo (2017), the validity and reliability of translation of questionnaire should be taken with caution as it may not reflect the true reliability and validity of the original questionnaire. Moreover, as there are 6 researchers administering the questionnaires, the different explanation styles and administering styles of the questionnaire may also have an effect on the accuracy of the study.

Other than that, the validity of the result of the study could also be affected by response bias of the participants as there might be a presence of social desirability responding (SDR) (Van de Mortel 2008). The desirability to present self in a favorable manner is a confounding variable that affects the results of the questionnaire (Van de Mortel, 2008). In this study, the

administrations of questionnaires were carried out in classroom settings where participants can view each other's response. Although, the researchers had instructed the participants to answer based on the participant's own perception and view, high chances are, the participants may still answer to conform to their peers or the perceived expectation of social norms (Van de Mortel, 2008). In addition, as test environment is also important for test performance and accuracy (Boynton, 2004), a classroom environment that are at times noisy, may also affect the participants concentration and response towards the questionnaires. Hence, a classroom setting may not be the best place to administer questionnaires.

Lastly, time constraint during questionnaire administration can also be a factor that influences the study. Throughout the study, all researchers only had 30 minutes in each class to administer two questionnaires with a total of 40 items to the participants. With limited time, the researchers might rush to complete the tasks on time and unintentionally pressure the participants to complete their responses on time. This could be detrimental to the study as it may lead to response burden in the participants which reduces the quality of the data obtained (Rolstad, Adler & Rydén, 2011).

Conclusion

Results from this study provided motivation for further literature review. Statistically, all the hypotheses were tested significantly though the correlation values were small. Cultural differences, changes of parenting styles over time and age of respondents may have contributed to result of the study. Future study in this area may need to isolate these influences in order to get a better picture of the relation of parenting style and self-esteem.

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