

Paternal and maternal parenting styles psychology essay



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Research has documented that quality of parenting is related to the well-being of the children. Past research tended to focus more on maternal parenting and its impact on their children outcomes. In recent years, paternal parenting styles have become a popular interest of study among scholars (Jacobs & Kelley, 2006; Schwartz & Finley, 2006; Shears & Robinson, 2005). Researchers are interested to investigate more in-depth regarding parenting practices used by fathers and how it correlates to the adjustments of their children.

In spite of the profusion of research examining relationships on either mothers or fathers parenting styles and child outcomes, relatively few studies examine the combination of paternal and maternal behaviors have on their children. Researchers often measure the parenting style of mothers and assume that fathers parent in the similar way. However, it is likely that this assumption may be incorrect. Some recent study discovered that mothers and fathers may differ in the way of their parenting practices (McKinney & Renk, 2008; Simons & Conger, 2007). Undoubtedly, understanding parenting in the context of each parent-child dyad is important for promoting positive child adjustment, given that mothers and fathers likely play unique roles in the lives of their children. On the other hand, combinations of mother-father parenting should not be undermined.

Knowing that paternal role on parenting the children is getting more attention in family studies, mothers remain the primary caregiver in most families. Nonetheless, most of the modern families nowadays, both parents share the responsibility of parenting the child. In Malaysia, the numbers of dual-career family is increasing. According to the (Department of Statistics, <https://assignbuster.com/paternal-and-maternal-parenting-styles-psychology-essay/>

2009), number of employed person consists of 45. 5% female. The statistic shown has not included those who have not registered as employees or working from home. It is believed that more than 45. 5% of the females have been employed or having their own career. The trend of the current society which promoting gender equality may has led to the growth of working mothers. Thus, sharing task between both male and female parents is expected.

In support of these unique interactions, research has documented that mothers and fathers may adopt different parenting styles. Conventionally, mothers tend to provide more warmth and support and generally have closer relationships with their children than fathers do (Repinski & Shonk, 2002). However, the coexistence of fathers and mothers in parenting was under studied. Most researchers these years have switch focus from maternal study to paternal study, but combination of both parental behaviors is still remained questionable. The goal of this study is to examine how parenting of both mothers and fathers predict adolescent outcomes in the domains of social emotional adjustment.

Combinations of mothers' and fathers' parenting styles were referred as ' family parenting styles' by Simons & Conger (2007). There were 16 family parenting styles created in their study using the fourfold typology suggested by Maccoby & Martin (1983), i. e. authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and uninvolved. Combining the four parenting styles yield a typology of 16 combinations as shown below:

Mother authoritative/father authoritative

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Mother authoritative/father authoritarian

Mother authoritative/father indulgent

Mother authoritative/father uninvolved

Mother authoritarian/father authoritative

Mother authoritarian/father authoritarian

Mother authoritarian/father indulgent

Mother authoritarian/father uninvolved

Mother indulgent/father authoritative

Mother indulgent/father authoritarian

Mother indulgent/father indulgent

Mother indulgent/father uninvolved

Mother uninvolved/father authoritative

Mother uninvolved/father authoritarian

Mother uninvolved/father indulgent

Mother uninvolved/father uninvolved

Researchers tend to categorise parenting styles according to their consistency. For example, Dornbush, Ritter, Liedrman, Roberts, & Fraleigh (1987) use the term ' pure authoritative families' to describe both mothers

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and fathers who scored high on authoritative and low on the others parenting styles. While other combinations were not given emphasis. In a novel study, McKinney & Renk (2008) analysed parenting behaviors through two perspectives which were congruent or incongruent parenting styles. For example, authoritative mother and uninvolved father was labelled as incongruent family parenting style. In the present study, besides examining how paternal and maternal independently influence the child outcome, the differences across combinations of various parenting styles will also be studied. The 16 family parenting styles as suggested by Simons et al. (2007) will be used without further coded into broader categories, which might be overrepresented various family parenting styles.

1. 2 Statement of problem

Past research has shown that mothers and fathers exhibit differential parenting with their sons and daughters. In Malaysia, little has been devoted to examining the relationship of differential parenting and adjustment during adolescence, an important transitional period where individuals are moving from being adolescents to young adults. Adolescents' perceptions of the parenting styles of their mothers and fathers may either facilitate or hinder their transition to adulthood. Thereby, suggesting that this relationship should deserve further examination.

In addition, research findings may vary with regard to the relationship between the same or different parenting styles and the adjustment of adolescents. Furthermore, role theory (Gerstel & Sarkisian, 2006) may also account for differences in the parenting of sons and daughters. Mothers and fathers adopt different approaches in parenting their children. For example, <https://assignbuster.com/paternal-and-maternal-parenting-styles-psychology-essay/>

sons may be encouraged to be more independent than daughters. From the child perspective, sons tend to view their father as someone with whom they can spend leisure time and who will provide advice. Sons also view their fathers as being distant and lacking in warmth. However daughters tend to view their mothers as providing a supportive relationship and to perceive their fathers as being authority figures with whom they spend little time. Thus, study of differential or congruent paternal and maternal parenting have on their adolescent son and daughters is indeed needed.

In brief, this present study aims to identify paternal and maternal parenting styles from the child perspectives and its relationships with child social emotional behavior in Malaysia. Specifically, it will identify parental characteristics, child characteristics and contextual factors related to paternal and maternal styles. Five research questions are addressed in this study:

What are the parenting styles that mothers and fathers use from the child perspective?

To what extent paternal parenting differ or similar to maternal parenting?

How do ecological factors contribute to paternal and maternal parenting?

How do paternal and maternal styles independently contribute to child social emotional adjustments?

To what extent child social emotional adjustment differ across various family parenting styles?

1. 3 Significance of study

At the individual level, the result of the study will provide a good guidance for the adolescents. It works as a self-reflection mirror for the adolescent to understand the factors that closely related to their social emotional well-being. Thus, adolescents are able to explore their interpersonal needs and develop skills and attitudes in parent-child communication that are favourable to positive outcomes. On the other hand, the findings of the present study will leads parents to better understand the desirable parenting styles that will yield better adjustment among adolescents. Parents could make adjustments to their way of parenting in order to guide their children in coping social or emotional difficulties. On the other hand, results on parenting based on sex differences would be useful for parents in understanding their sons or daughters in perceiving parenting which in turn parent them using the ideal way.

As for educators and policy makers, results from this study may aid in developing educational programmes or teaching plans that suit students from different types of family background. Educators could utilise the findings as a basis for constructing effective teaching methods. Along with the goal of the study, it is crucial to raise awareness among the educators to eliminate negative thoughts towards children with poor adjustments.

Negative behaviours exhibited by children could be reframed within family context rather than assuming children themselves as the root cause of the negative disposition.

The study could be significant to all other individuals or personnel whose works primarily related to family, for instances, counselors, social workers, <https://assignbuster.com/paternal-and-maternal-parenting-styles-psychology-essay/>

practitioners. It serves as a guide to this group of professions to have second thought while giving advice given to parents or children for promoting the development of adolescents. Policy makers could utilise the findings from the study for the purpose of legislation for nation social policies and development for family and community.

The findings could provide insights to the body of knowledge in parenting. The study leads the way in promoting the most desirable parenting styles that involve both mothers and fathers which promote better child outcome in Malaysia.

1. 4 Objectives

The study primarily aims to examine relationship between both paternal and maternal parenting styles with child social emotional adjustment in intact families.

1. 4. 1 Specific objectives

To describe paternal and maternal parenting styles in intact families.

To explore relationships between ecological factors (parental characteristics, child characteristics, and contextual factors) and both parenting styles.

To determine relationships between paternal and maternal parenting styles and social emotional adjustment of their children in intact families.

To explore what factors uniquely contribute to both parenting styles and child social emotional adjustment.

To determine differences across 16 family parenting styles.

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1.5 Theoretical framework

Belsky's Determinant of Parenting

In his influential paper, Belsky (1984) postulated an ecological determinant of parenting behavior model. Three domains of determinant of parenting behaviour were identified in the process model, namely: 1) personal psychological resources of parents, 2) contextual sources of stress and supports, and 3) characteristics of the child. Based on the model, Belsky suggested that parent's characteristics are the most important condition for effective parenting, followed by contextual sources of stress and support, and child's characteristics. The present study considers all the three of Belsky's ecological factors as antecedent variables that would most likely correlate to parenting behavior.

Parent's Characteristics

Developmental history was found to be crucial in shaping a person individual and psychological well-being, which in turn influences parenting behaviour. Belsky's model posits that personal maturity, psychologically well-being and growth-facilitating parenting are some of the factors that lead to positive parenting functioning. A recent investigation using a sample of depressed parents showed that parents with depressive symptoms are more likely to display inconsistent parenting behaviour (Pauli-Pott, 2008). Thus, parental psychological health is expected to contribute to the parenting behaviour.

Another factor outlined in the study is age of the parent. Past research evidenced that young parents tend to be less responsive and express less desirable child rearing. Adolescent parents and their partners were found to <https://assignbuster.com/paternal-and-maternal-parenting-styles-psychology-essay/>

face higher risk for engaging in dysfunctional parenting, including child abuse (Moore & Florsheim, 2008). It is presumed that young parents are less psychologically matured compare to older mothers.

Parents with higher educational attainment have been found to promote a supportive and better quality of parenting (Cui, Conger, Chalandra, Elder, & Glen, 2002; Murry, Simons, Cutrona, & Gibbons, 2008). However, Wen (2008) found that parental education seems less important in predicting patterns of parenting. The inconsistency of the results does not indicate that parental education has no impact on parental behaviour; rather researcher should look into other factors that contribute to the results.

Additionally, self-esteem or self-worth of parents has been consistently shown to affect level of parenting. Maternal self worth has been found to positively correlate with parental support and parental control (Gronick, Price, Beiswenger, & Sauck, 2007). An individual's self-esteem serves as one of the elements to promote better psychological well-being, in which emphasized by Belsky as an important determinant of parenting. In this regard, a mother with positive self-concept is likely to behave positively towards their children.

Contextual Factors

The second factor in Belsky's model of determinant of parenting is the contextual factor. Belsky highlighted three sources of stress and support that are influential to parental behavior: marital relationship, social network and employment. For the present study, three contextual factors included for

analysis are family size (number of children), family income and family functioning.

The number of children has been found to have negative effect on family socioeconomic and home environment (DeOliveira, Barros, daSilva, & Piccinini, 2006). Besides number of children, family income could act as another marker on parenting behaviour. Research by Solantaus, Leinonen, & Punamaki (2004) suggested that reduction in family income constitutes a risk for child mental health through increased economic pressure and negative changes in parental mental health, marital interaction, and parenting quality. Possibly better family socioeconomic status could reduce family stress and thus produce better quality of parenting.

Family functioning in this study refers to the relationships in a family and the different ways in which family members communicate with one another. Past research findings indicate that perceived family functioning has direct and indirect effects on the adjustments of children. Better family functioning is associated with children's higher self-esteem and better peer relations and mental health (Al-Krenawai & Slonim-Nevo, 2008).

Child's Characteristics

The most highlighted factor that relate to child's disposition in determining parenting behaviour discussed in Belsky's model is temperament of the child. Difficult temperament or perceived difficulty level of the child causes lesser interaction and the parents to be less responsive towards their children. Children perceived as difficult were most likely to be rejected and were particularly likely to be rejected if the mother was highly conscientious <https://assignbuster.com/paternal-and-maternal-parenting-styles-psychology-essay/>

(Neitzel & Stright, 2004). Mother's perception on whether or not the child is difficult to rear could affect quality and quantity of parenting.

In addition to child temperament or perceived level of difficulty in child rearing, there are two other child's characteristics examined in the present study. Age and gender of child could be affecting parenting behaviour. Parent-child conflict is associated with more behavioral problems for children of all ages, but it is more detrimental for adolescent child (Wen, 2008). With regard to child's gender, there are limited information on how gender influence parents' behaviour. Daughters who lived with highly involved single-fathers were found to show better outcome, in term of academic achievement, than the other groups did (Sang, Jason, & Seong, Effects of parent's gender, child's gender, and parental involvement on the academic achievement of adolescents in single parent families, 2007). However, the findings can only be generalized to the single parent families.

Maccoby and Martin typology of parenting styles

Parenting styles are a steady composite of beliefs and attitudes that provide context for parental behaviour (Sang, Daniels, & Kissinger, 2006). Parenting styles developed by Baumrind (1966) is widely accepted among the social scientists. Baumrind's typology of the three parenting styles include authoritative, authoritarian and indulgent. Authoritative parents are characterised as warm and supportive parents whereas authoritarian parents values obedience and restrict autonomy. The third parenting style, indulgent, posits a parenting style that remains responsive to child but their control of their children is weak. Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded Baumrind's

work by adding responsiveness as a second dimension. Responsiveness and demandingness together create four typology of parenting styles. Three of those are similar to Baumrind's typologies which are authoritative, authoritarian and indulgent. An addition parenting styles added to the three existing styles is uninvolved parents. These parents give children lots of freedom and very little supervision. Further discussion on the four types of parenting styles will be discussed in literature review section.

The Conceptual framework of the present study is presented in Figure 1.

Parenting style

Child social and emotional adjustment

Parental characteristics

Age

Education

Self-esteem

Child characteristics

Age

Gender

Family contexts

Number of siblings

Family income/ month

Family life adversity

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

1. 6 Definition of Terminology

Paternal parenting style

Conceptual: The way a father behaves when involving and interacting with children.

Operational: Respondent's score on quality of parenting scale based on four dimensions, i. e., warmth/support and hostility, consistent discipline and monitoring (Simons & Conger, 2007).

Maternal parenting style

Conceptual: The way a mother behaves when involving and interacting with children.

Operational: Respondent's score on quality of parenting scale based on four dimensions, i. e., warmth/support and hostility, consistent discipline and monitoring (Simons & Conger, 2007).

Child

Conceptual: Offspring of a family, which may be a son or daughter.

Operational: Secondary school students of any sex aged 13 to 17 years.

Social emotional adjustment

Conceptual: The internalization and externalization components in term of a continual interaction between a person and a situation.

Operational: Respondents' rating on 25-item Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, SDQ (Goodman, 1997) made up of five subscales, i. e. emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention , peer relationship problems and prosocial.

Intact Family

Conceptual: A nuclear family in which membership has remained constant, in the absence of divorce or other divisive factors.

Operational: Family consists of a married couple, who are the biological parents of the children and resides in Kuala Lumpur.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2. 1 Parenting Styles

Impact of parenting behaviour on children development has been extensively researched in the family sociology field. Parenting behaviours encompass a broader aspect of the upbringing patterns in child rearing process. Two broad components have been used to describe parenting behavior i. e., parental control and parental support (Wissink, Dekovi, & Meijer, 2006). The latter research on parenting mainly derived from the concept devoted by Diana Baumrind's typologies. As discuss earlier, further research by Maccoby and Martin (1983) suggested the addition of a fourth parenting style, and make up to the widely accepted parenting typologies.

The fourfold typology was formed using the two dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness. Parents who are high on both dimensions are categorized as authoritative. Authoritative parents are responsive to their children and willing to listen to questions. When children fail to meet the expectations, these parents are more nurturing and forgiving rather than punishing. However, authoritative parents also establish rules and guidelines that their children are expected to follow. The second parenting style is authoritarian where parents are high on demandingness but low in responsiveness. Children are expected to follow the strict rules established by the parents and failure to follow such rules usually results in punishment.

Unlike authoritative and authoritarian parents who are high on control, indulgent and uninvolved parents are low in demandingness. Indulgent parents or sometimes known as permissive parents are generally nurturing and communicative with their children but rarely discipline their children because they have relatively low expectations. On the other hand, an uninvolved parenting style is characterized by few demands, low responsiveness and little communication. While these parents fulfil the child's basic needs, they are generally detached from their child's life.

2. 1. 1 Sex-differences in Parenting Styles

As support by extensive research, mothers and fathers may demonstrate different parenting styles when rearing their children. It is not only the sex of parents that is important but that of their child as well when examining the relationship of parenting variables and the adjustment of children. In the conventional perspective, mothers have been emphasized as their children's most important attachment figure, whereas fathers have been ignored completely or discussed with regard to their distance from and remoteness to their children.

Research on maternal and paternal parenting has demonstrated that mother provide warmer styles of parenting (McKinney & Renk, 2008) as compare to their fathers who is less involved (Williams & Kelly, 2005). The results was based on perception of the children in which children viewed mothers as a more authoritative figure and father as the authority figure in the family.

Study also found that mothers were significantly higher on parental support as well as parental control than fathers do (Laible & Carlo, 2004). A recent

study on parenting styles and health-related behavior showed no significant
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differences for maternal and paternal parenting styles using samples of samples in the childhood and adolescence stage (Lohaus, Vierhaus, & Ball, 2009). The result may indicate that fathers' role in parenting is getting equally important as mothers do. With these role transformations, it is not surprise that examination of maternal and paternal parenting has become vitally important.

Despite the fact that mothers and fathers may practice different type of parenting styles, different treatments are noted in parenting sons and daughters. Male adolescents reported to receive more permissive parenting relative to female adolescents which may indicate that sons are more capable of taking care of themselves (McKinney & Renk, 2008). Nonetheless, some research found that child gender did not seem to contribute to the styles of parenting (Laible & Carlo, 2004; Simons & Conger, 2007). This area of study deserves further study as roles of parenting towards sons and daughters continue to change over time.

2. 2 Child Social Emotional Adjustment

The concept of adjustment has been extensively research. It is a broad concept which encompassing several aspects such as social, emotional and behavioural adjustment. Children's adjustment can be measured using multiple measures includes externalizing antisocial behavior, internalizing, depressed, anxious behaviors, social and academic competence, social responsibility and self-esteem (Hetherington, 2003). Strong emphasis was given to child social emotional development over the decades (Zaslow, et al., 2006). Using 65 studies related to childoutcomes, Zaslow and others (2006) developed a list of social emotional outcome which includes emotional

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expressiveness, emotional well-being, self regulation, compliance, secure attachment, sociability, positive peer play, peer relationships and many others. Mirroring the long list of constructs, present study will utilise the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) to assess social emotional adjustment of the children. SDQ is a behavioural screening tool that sufficient to evaluate a broad aspects of social emotional adjustment which includes five dimensions: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and prosocial behaviour. SDQ has been a well-established instrument in many child care quality related study in assessing social and emotional well being.

2. 3 Parenting Styles and Child Social Emotional Behavior

Generally, positive parenting behaviour is associated with favorable outcomes of children. Past research showed that parent-adolescent relations have a significant impact on psychological well-being of adolescents regardless of gender of the parent (Video, 2005). Similarly, child attachment towards parents was found to explain a significant proportion of the variance in internalizing, externalizing, and total behavioral problems (Williams & Kelly, 2005). Numerous researches has shown that good quality parenting, such as, parental support, parental warmth, and parental acceptance promote better psychological and behavioural adjustment (Finkenauer, Engels, & Baumeister, 2005; Suchman, Rounsaville, DeCoste, & Luthar, 2007).

Late adolescents who have at least one authoritative parent showing better adjustment than those who do not have such a parent (McKinney & Renk, 2008). Simons and Conger (2007) supported this view in which their study <https://assignbuster.com/paternal-and-maternal-parenting-styles-psychology-essay/>

found that having one authoritative parent can buffer a child from the detrimental consequences associated with less optimal styles of parenting. However, the study also revealed that having two authoritative parents is associated with the most positive outcomes for adolescents. While permissive parenting styles were highly associated with child conduct problems (Driscoll, Russell, & Crockett, 2008). Reviewing the literature, authoritative parenting is remained the favourable parenting practice that yielded positive child outcome.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3. 1 Study design

The study adopts exploratory and correlational design to explore the parenting styles of both mothers and fathers, particularly in the Malaysian context, and determine its relationships to child social emotional behaviour. Comparative design will be employed in order to compare differences of child social emotional behavior across different styles of family parenting styles.

3. 2 Location

The study will be conducted in urban and rural areas from 4 selected regions (North, Central, East, & South) of Peninsular Malaysia and West Malaysia (Sabah & Sarawak). One state will be selected for each region as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Selected state for each region**Region****State**

North

Penang

Central

Selangor

East

Kelantan

South

Melaka

West

Sabah

Sarawak

3.3 Sampling

Probability proportional to size (PPS) cluster sampling will be used to identify adolescents aged 13 to 17 years from secondary schools. According to Babbie (2008), whenever the clusters sampled are greatly differing sizes, PPS is appropriate to use. The probability that a particular sampling unit (clusters) will be selected in the sample is proportional to some known

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variable, in this study, it refers to population size. The school population of each selected state will be obtained from (BPPDP, 2009). 3000 respondents from intact family will be recruited from selected secondary schools. Using the PPS cluster sampling technique, number of clusters selected from each district in a state is proportionate to its population. In this study, one cluster is equal to one school and clusters size is 40. An estimate 75 schools will be included in this study to reach a sample size of 3000 respondents. By considering 20% of unavailability, another 15 clusters will be added to make up 3600 respondents.

3. 4 Measures and Instrumentation

Parental Characteristics: Age, education level and self-esteem

Child characteristics: Age and sex

Family Contexts: Number of siblings, monthly family income, family life adversity (Tiet, et al., 2001).

Adverse life events facing by the adolescents will be measured using the modified version of Life Events Checklist by Tiet, et al. (2001). The scale consists of 26 events related to family adversity which may experience by some people. Respondents is required to answer on ' yes' or ' no' on two dimensions, which are current experience (happened before last year) and distance experience (happened last year). All events will be summed up to create a total adversity stress score. Sample items of the scale are:

You are seriously sick or injured.

Parent(s) got into trouble with law.

Quality of Parenting Behavior: The adolescents' perception on their parents parenting quality will be assessed based on four dimensions, which are warmth or support, hostility, consistent discipline, and monitoring (Simons & Conger, 2007). Each dimension consists of four items. Both warmth/support and hostility will be rated using 7-point Likert ranged from 1, 'never' to 7, 'always'. These two dimensions constructed for responsiveness of the parents in which hostility scale will be reverse coded. Respondents' score on consistent discipline and monitoring dimensions are formed to measure demandingness of parents. Scores of perceived parents' responsiveness and demandingness will be further utilised to categorise parents into four parenting styles as discussed earlier. Parents high on both demandingness and responsiveness are authoritative parents while low score on both dimensions are uninvolved parents. Parents who score high on demandingness but low on responsiveness will be categorised as authoritarian. Indulgent parents on the other hand are those who have low demandingness and high responsiveness.

Social emotional adjustment: The social emotional behaviors of the respondents in the present study were measured using Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997). It is a behavioral screening questionnaire for children from 3 to 16 year olds. A total of 25 items are included in the questionnaires for completion by the respondents. Basically, the questionnaires measured two broad aspects of social emotional behaviours, i. e., strengths and difficulties. Five subscales included in the questionnaires were emotional symptoms, conduct problems, <https://assignbuster.com/paternal-and-maternal-parenting-styles-psychology-essay/>

hyperactivity or inattention, peer relationship problems and prosocial behaviour. The scale was rated on three-point Likert scale with 0= not true, 1= somewhat true and 2= true. For the child's strengths, score was obtained by adding up all five items in the prosocial subscale. The higher the score, the greater the child's strengths. Sample items of the strength subscale are:

considerate of other people's feelings

shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)

Meanwhile,