

Do parenting styles
across cultures affect
how we are?



Abstract:

This research is aiming to inspect how parenting styles can have an influence the temperament of an individual in relation to different cultures and inter-cultures. The participant used for this interview is an 18 year old male, whom is a student at the University of Lincoln studying Law. The participant was of Somali origin, born in Finland and brought up in Finland and America, then moved to Britain. This is being achieved through interviewing the individual retrospectively, questioning how he was brought up by his parents, how he would approach parenting, and whether or not he wanted his parents to change their parenting style.

Introduction:

Parenting is in imperative society, in order to have an ordered society, there needs to be an appropriate form of socialisation at an early stage. If an infant isn't socialised appropriately but rather socialised to deviate, then this individual in the future will (theoretically) deviate more from society and will, as a consequence, need to be dealt with appropriately through the justice system. This research inspects a teenager who has given a retrospective account of how he was brought up by his parents and the implications that his parents, as a result, made on his temperament. According to Bowlby's Internal Working Model (Bowlby, 1965), If a child is securely attached to parents, they will have a positive outlook of life and their temperament also be positive - in theory. However, if the child is neglected and is insecurely attached, they will consequently have low self-esteem, and have a negative personal view of society. An explanation for this may be the Cycle of Abuse. The cycle of abuse states that if a child is being treated negatively by their

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parent(s), they are being treated this way because their parent(s) may have been mistreated when they were younger.

In the past there have been studies which observed the strength of the parenting styles (see Ainsworth, 1978; Grossman, 1981), and many have yielded results which highlight the importance of parenting styles. The findings of The Strange Situation (Ainsworth, 1978.) show three different types of attachments, and each of those attachments are due to the parenting style exerted by the parents. Bowlby's theory of Attachment - which is mentioned in his Maternal Deprivation Hypothesis (1969), states that a strong attachment between the caregiver (according to Bowlby - the mother) and the child is created by interaction. This is encoded within our genetic blueprint and is activated when anxiety is amid a situation. When the infant is feeling the effects of anxiety, he/she starts to give gestures to their mother (i. e. crying) naturally, and similarly, the mother (by nature) will respond to the cry of her child by making he/she feel assured and feel safe. This early process which starts bonding the two together is only influenced exclusively by genetics and its evolutionary links (Bowlby, 1969). During adolescence, the individual develops their own schema in which they start to take on environmental influences. As a result, their temperament will be affected. If a child doesn't have a secured attachment with their mother, they could be maternally deprived, which could possibly lead to being an affectionless psychopath (Bowlby, 1969).

This research aims to look the parenting style affecting the temperament of a Muslim, multinational from African origin. Interviewing the participant alone can be seen as a cross cultural investigation as he is linked to <https://assignbuster.com/do-parenting-styles-across-cultures-affect-how-we-are/>

conflicting cultures (strict Islamic culture, and more liberal western cultures). The reason for asking the “ child” and not the parent is because even though I could have interviewed the parents, I would have been given a bias opinion. Asking the “ child” how he has been affected by their parenting style seems more objective and ecologically valid.

Method:

Participant:

The participant I used was a student from the University of Lincoln who was a first year student studying Law. The participant was of Somali origin, but he was born and raised in Europe and America. This participant was even more interesting to interview as his parents’ parenting style was very much conservative and not as “ loose” as British, American and Finnish Parents (some, not all). In the “ Personal Reflection” section, there will be ideas and possible explanations as to why this participants’ parents’ parenting style is more conservative and less liberal.

Interview setting:

The interview took place on university campus in a café to make the atmosphere feel casual and more “ natural” than a typical interview which is much more formal.

Interview schedule:

The questions asked in the interview are in appendix one. These questions aim to look at the individuals’ views on parenting, how he was brought up,

and how he would have liked to be brought up. This research inspects a teenager who has given a retrospective account of how he was brought up by his parents and the implications that his parents, as a result, made on his temperament.

Procedure:

I organised over the phone to meet up for the interview with the respondent. At the start of the interview I told the respondent that I was grateful for him being able to being interviewed for my report. I gave the respondent a mini-statement at the beginning of the interview in relation to ethical guidelines, a pseudonym given in order to maintain confidentiality. The interview had a structure but it was not a structured interview in the sense that the questions being asked were not close-ended questions. This was advantageous as the participant was able to elaborate on what he stated, furthermore, it allows me to get a more in depth analysis of how exactly his temperament has been influenced by his parents (see Appendix 2 for transcript). The interview lasted for roughly 5 minutes. At the end of the interview, I thanked the participant for being interviewed. In addition, I debriefed the participant after the interview on the aim of this research and what past research on parenting styles and attachment. (Ainsworth, 1978; Grossman, Grossman, Huber, Watner, 1981.).

Results:

It's clear that from what the participant has stated that his parents used a mix of authoritarian and authoritative/democratic parenting styles. What this means is that his parents were strict, but they explained right from wrong. If

his parents were just authoritarians, then he would have had low self-esteem and low confidence - both of which don't seem recognisable from this person. So therefore it would be sensible to say that his parents were mind-minded - the parent(s) being on the same psychological level as their child.

From looking at what the participant has said, it's clear that there is a very strong connection between himself and his mother. And the basis of that connection is his parents' parenting style. Religion played a major role in the participants' upbringing; by being educated on religion and his parents depicting the conventional parenting style relative to the teachings of the religion. Because this individual was born and partially raised in Finland, we must look at studies that have been conducted in Finland. However, due to the lack of studies carried out in Finland, we must look at the closest country within the Scandinavian Peninsula region; Sweden. From the meta-analysis of Van Ijzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988), Sweden has a secured attachment rate of 74%, which is very high, putting it alongside the UK, relative to the sample used. Because it's difficult to look at the secured attachment rate of one particular country, we would have to look at the results of America, United Kingdom, and Sweden. All results from all three different countries must be taken into consideration when trying to analyse the results of this participant.

Asked about spending or saving £10 (see appendix one) relates to seek instant gratification which correlates to a permissive parenting style. A permissive parenting style means that the parents are lenient on their children. But the participants' parents weren't lenient. Another, perhaps better explanation is from a Sociological point of view. Sugarman (1970) <https://assignbuster.com/do-parenting-styles-across-cultures-affect-how-we-are/>

stated that an individual who is from a working class background will seek instant gratification whereas someone from a middle class background will save in the money. This seems to be a better explanation than a permissive parenting style in relation to this participant. The reason being is that the permissive parenting style contradicts the other parenting styles which are heavily used. This sociological explanation of instant gratification can relate to a permissive parenting style. In British society, there seems to be a north-south split, with a high amount of working class in the north and middle class in the south. Some of these working class parents may not be perfect role models and may parent their children more leniently relative to the upper middle class whom are in the south. Of course this isn't a universal application, just a partial application.

Personal Reflection:

According Van Ijzendoorn and Kroonenberg , the geographical whereabouts should play as a factor in the parenting style. However, interviewing my participant had led me to devise that it isn't due to the fact that being raised with western values; he had been able to develop the conservative elements that trace from his African, more importantly, Islamic origin.

In this particular case, I discovered that religious teachings were predominant in his family. His family prioritised religious values above culture, tradition and education - thus it's safe to say that religion is the foundation of his life in which pillars of education, environment influences were formed. This predominant religious value has been absorbed, and which his values of everything must adhere to in order to be accepted.

Although I have used studies which have aimed to test the attachment between an infant and their mother, they're not worth ruling out just because the participant being used isn't an infant, rather an 18 year old university student. The fact that the participant's view on his relationship with his mother has stayed consistent throughout his life, it is highly plausible that the attachment that an infant has with their mother can stay the same throughout their life as long as the mother's parenting style is firstly consistent, and secondly that the child is in agreement with how they're treated. If this seems to be hard to understand, one should look at the opposite. If the infant grows up to be badly behaved, this will most likely be a consequence of bad parenting. If the parenting style used is inappropriate and bad for the infant (in the long run), then when the infant grows up, they will behave badly. To put it simply, bad parenting equates to a badly behaved child; good parenting equates to an appropriately behaved child.

Appendix 1:

Interview Questions:

What's your age?

What's your gender?

What is your cultural background?

What kind of parenting style did your parents use when you were a child?

Do you think the parenting style your parents used had influenced your temperament?

How would you describe the attachment you have with your mother?

Would you have changed your parents' parenting style? If you would, do you think your temperament would be different?

What kind of parenting style would you use when it comes to parenting children?

What social class do you derive from?

If I gave you £10 today and I told you, you can either spend it now and I'll give you another £10 next week, or you can save the £10 and you'll get another £10 then, and you'll have £20 that week, what would you do?

Appendix 2:

I: Hi there, thank you for agreeing to being interviewed. I contacted you over the phone about this interview which is about parenting styles in a cultural context. In no way are you being forced to being interviewed or answering some of the questions in the event you find them to sensitive and you do not wish to reply. You can withdraw your data at any time if you wish to do so, when I refer to your data in the report I will be referring to you as the participant, rather than using your name, due to ethical reasons. I'm recording this interview; do you have an issue with being recorded?

P: No I don't mind.

I: Firstly, How old are you?

R: 18.

I: What's your gender?

R: Male.

I: What is your cultural background?

P: I'm Somali, my parents are Somali. I was born in Finland, moved to America for a while and then came here to Britain.

I: What type of parenting style did your parents use on you when you were a child?

P: It depends, my parents were strict when it came to school work, but more lenient than other parents when it came to going out, hanging out with friends, stuff like that.

I: Do you think your parents' parenting style influenced your temperament?

P: Definitely. My mum is very strict, there are certain things she cared about like me going to mosque, me going to school, and with those things there was no compromise with them, but other things she was fine with. I guess what's important to her is now important to me.

I: Would you have changed your parents' parenting style, if you would, do you think your temperament would be different?

P: No I wouldn't, I wouldn't have everything out of control.

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I: How do you describe the attachment you have with your mum?

P: I love my mum.

I: Can you elaborate on that please? Would you say it's a strong attachment, or your dependent on her or independent?

P: Not so much dependant on her anymore but it's more like I wouldn't know what to do if she suddenly passed away, for example.

I: What kind of parenting style would you use when it comes to parenting children?

P: I don't know. If I can be as good as my mum, do as well as she did when I hopefully raise my own children, then I've done quite well.

I: Taken all of that into account, would you want to be as strict as she was or more lenient?

P: Hopefully I would be as strict as she was but, I don't know if I could. I'm only 18.

I: What social class do you derive from?

P: Working Class.

I: If I gave you £10 today and I said you can either spend it now and I'll give you another £10 next week, or you can save the £10 and you'll get another £10 then, leaving you with £20 rather than £10, which option would you opt for?

P: I'd say give me the £10 now; give me the £10 next week.

I: So you wouldn't save it?

P: Well it depends. If I needed the money for something important then I'd save it, but if it was extra money hanging around, I'll take it now.

I: Thank you for allowing me to interview you, if you change your mind about me using this data then just contact me.