

Impact of Parents' Authoritative Style on Personality Traits of Children: A Case Study of Elementary Class Students in Pakistan

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Abstract

The study was carried out to determine the effects of authoritative parenthood on the personality traits of elementary school children including all the five traits namely agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and openness. The study is significant as it gives parents a chance to evaluate their parenting style and comprehend its positive and negative effects on children's personality traits. It was an Ex Post Facto study in which data was collected about the cases of elementary class children in Pakistan. A multistage random sample of 30 elementary schools, three hundred cases (children and their parents) and 90 teachers was chosen. Two questionnaires were used in the study; questionnaire A to evaluate the parenting styles of the parents which was adopted from Robinsons Parenting style questionnaire. It included 5 items on only authoritative parenting style to evaluate parent's level of authoritative. And questionnaire B, adopted from the Big Five Inventory questionnaire to assess the personalities of the children. It included 25 items on all five personality traits. Cronbach's Alpha value of the total parenting style questionnaire was 0.95 and Cronbach's Alpha value of the total personality style tool used in this study was 0.84. Data was collected by the researchers during parent-teacher meetings and meetings with teachers in the selected schools. Percentage of frequencies, mean score, standard deviation, ANOVA statistics and correlation values were calculated using SPSS. Results indicated highly significant and positive relationship between authoritative parenting style and the four personality traits i.e. agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness but a significant and negative relationship with neuroticism. Moreover, a highly significant impact of parenting authoritative level on children personality traits was explored. Therefore, it is recommended that parents should practice authoritative parenting style to raise strong and healthy individuals and refrain the negativism in the personality of children.

Keywords: Authoritative parenting, personality traits, elementary education, neuroticism

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Introduction

Psychologists have long been suggesting that family processes play an integral part in child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Belsky, Steinberg & Draper, 1991; Schermerhorn & Cummings, 2008; Runco, 2014). These psychologists indicate that parenting style which includes parent-child interaction, parent-child joint activities, parents' involvement in children' education are significant in socialization and children's functioning. Parenting style is defined as overall climate of parent-child interactions. It is an affective medium that sets the tone for the parents' interactions with the children (Joseph & John, 2008; Hirata & Kamakura, 2017). Parenting style is a determinant factor in child development. A tremendous amount of research has been done on the effects of parenting styles since 1966 when Baumrind first published her three prototypes of parenting styles. Baumrind (1991) categorized three different parenting styles according to demandingness and responsiveness namely authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting style. Further, Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded Baumrind's research and divided permissive parenting style into two different styles namely indulgent (permissive) parenting style and neglectful (uninvolved) parenting style.

Literature Review

This paper discusses authoritative parenting style. Authoritative parents are demanding and responsive. This parenting style is characterized by three components: warmth, control and democracy (Kashahu, Osmanaga, & Bushati, 2014). These parents have a warm and comfortable relationship with their children and are emotionally supportive (Winsler, Madigan & Aquilino, 2005). These parents set high standards and clear expectations for their children giving them proper freedom to make choices and decisions but keeping an eye on what their children are doing. These parents are more open to communication with children and like to communicate the reasons for their rules and expectations with them (Rodrigo, Byrne & Rodriguez, 2013). If children are unable to meet those expectations, these parents are more loving, nurturing and forgiving rather than punishing. Positive outcomes can be seen on the children very early in their lives whose parents practice this parenting style. Their children turn out to be more self-competent, morally and emotionally developed (Rodrigo, Byrne & Rodriguez, 2013). Parenting practices also have great influence on the outgoing and social nature of the children (Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Batenhorst & Wilkinson, 2010). A research showed that authoritative parenting style is positively related to children's extrovert and social behaviors (Chen, Dong & Zhou, 1997).

Other parenting styles include Authoritarian, Permissive and Neglectful parenting styles. Authoritarian parents are demanding but non-responsive. According to Rosli (2009), authoritarian parents are very controlling and restrictive. They set rules and expectations for their children to follow and command them to achieve those goals like a higher authority. This type of parents does not favor communication with children

resulting in a very bound environment. Authoritarian parents tend to suppress the talents and abilities of their children because of strict parental control and values (Rodrigo, Byrne & Rodriguez, 2013).

Permissive parents are undemanding but responsive. They are carefree and less concerned parents. Moreover, they are very lenient and give freedom and independence to their children. They do not set any mature rules and expectations for their children. These parents present themselves as are source for their children to use as they like, instead of becoming an ideal for them. They do not like the concept of punishment.

Neglectful parents are almost not involved in the lives of their children. They are undemanding and unresponsive. Neglectful parents do not have any demands and expectations from their children. They only satisfy the basic needs of their children i.e. food, clothes, shelter but almost completely unaware of what is happening in their lives. They do not offer any kind of love, affection and care to their children. In extreme cases, neglectful parents might neglect the basic requirements of their children also (Munyi, 2013).

Personality has been developed from various different point of views and different levels of abstractions and breadth (John, Hampson & Goldberg, 1991). Personality is a stable, organized collection of psychological traits and mechanisms in the human being that influences his or her interactions with and modifications to the psychological, social and physical environment surrounding them (Larsen & Buss, 2018). A personality trait is a characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling, or behaving that tends to be steady over time and over different related situations.

The Big Five Personality traits theory includes Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness. These are a set of five trait dimensions designed by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa in 1987 (Soto, 2018). They have tried to outline all the essential traits that make up a person's personality. Agreeableness refers to the amount of forgiveness, warmth and sympathy in a person. Conscientiousness refers to how much a person is organized and efficient. Extraversion represents a person's level of social engagement, assertiveness and energy. Openness, also called openness to experience, shows a person's level of curiosity and imagination whereas neuroticism refers to emotionally stability. Individuals with high neuroticism tend to experience more anxiety, sadness, mood swings and depression while who experience less neuroticism are more emotionally stable and remain calm.

A child spends most of the time with his parents so his personality makeup at this tender age depends largely on the nature and quality interactions with parenting style of the parents. Much of what occurs between parents and a child transforms a biological organism into a human being and encounter him with new experiences and responsibilities (Runco, 2014). It depends merely on the practices of the parents that how a child turned out to be in the future.

Some parents like to create a very strict and restricted environment around their children while others like to create a very friendly, loving or lenient environment for their children. Neither of the extremities are good for children upbringing. Authoritative parenting style is seen have to effective and healthy outcomes of personalities of children (Rosli, 2014; Rego, 2015). Thus, this paper was planned to find out the effects of this parenting style on personality development of children. The title of this study is "The Effects of Authoritative Parenting Style on the Personality Development of Children". The objectives of the study were;

1. To identify the level of authoritativeness in parenting style of elementary school children's parents.
2. To evaluate the effects of authoritative parenting style on the personality traits of elementary school children.
3. To analyze the relationship between parents' authoritativeness and personality traits of elementary school children.

Research Questions

In this study, following research questions were considered.

What is the level of authoritativeness in parenting style of elementary school's children's parents? What are the effects of authoritative parenting style on the personality traits of elementary school children? What is the relationship between parents' authoritativeness and personality traits of elementary school children?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no difference in parents regarding level of authoritativeness with their children studying at elementary level.
2. Parents' level of authoritativeness has no significant effect on personality traits of elementary school children.
3. Parents' level of authoritativeness has no significant relationship with the personality traits of elementary school children.

Significance of the Study

The study will certainly have a significant impact on future parenting generations. It will help parents to understand whether authoritative parenting technique is best to follow? This study will be very helpful for the parents to decide what level of authoritative parenting style they should adopt keeping its consequences in mind. This study will also inform parents that by adopting this parenting style, they can raise strong children with healthy personalities who are more agreeable, conscientious, open to experience, pro-social and more emotionally stable.

Methodology of the Study

Research design of the study

This study was conducted using Ex Post Facto research design in which 2 sets of questionnaires were the tools of data collection. Data of the study was in quantitative form based on;

1. Case study of parents regarding their parenting authoritativeness and observation of impact of parents' authoritativeness on personality traits of elementary school children.
2. Report by parents about their own parenting styles on a series of questions on 5-point scale.
3. Teachers' responses regarding the personality traits of children studying under them. They rated the students' personality traits on a scale and reported responses on a checklist on the basis of their observation on the children.

Research tools of the study

Questionnaire A regarding parenting styles of parents was based on 5 constructs on authoritative style. Questionnaire B about the personality traits was adopted from The Big Five Inventory questionnaire of 25 items on 3-point scale. The 25 items covered 5 personality traits i.e. agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness & extraversion. Each personality trait related items were equal in number in the questionnaire

Sample and sampling

Sample of the study was chosen following the multistage random sampling. Sample of the study include 300 children and their parents selected from 30 schools and 90 teachers from same schools. Then 300 parents were divided into three groups according to their scores i.e. top scorers, middle scorers and low scorers. Further, 30 participants from each of the three groups were selected.

Data collection procedure

Data was collected by the researchers during meetings. After selection of children and their parents, school heads were requested to arrange meeting with parents (father or mother) in schools. Some of the parents did not attend meetings, so, they were contacted again and requested to fill the questionnaires. In case of no cooperation from parents, new children and their parents were randomly selected from the remaining students in class.

The items in the questionnaire about the students' personality traits were filled by 90 teachers (of 90 students) who rated each statement on the basis of their observation regarding the student nominated to them.

Summary of selection of sample cases (stage wise) has given in figure 1.

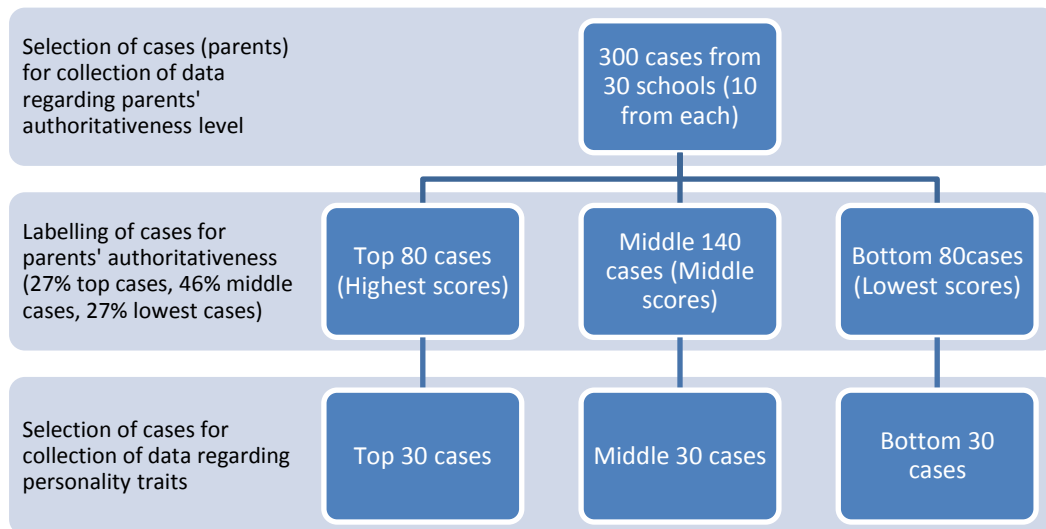


Figure 1. Sampling framework for the study

Data Analysis Procedure

Analysis of data was done on computer using SPSS. Frequency, percentages, mean comparison through ANOVA and Pearson correlation were applied on data to find the answers of the research questions.

Results and Interpretation. Results have been described in the following tables according to objectives of the study.

Level of authoritative in parenting style of parents

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics about Authoritative Parenting Style (n=300)

Levels of authoritative	Scores	<i>f</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Low	5 to 12	80	27	8.4444	2.00000
Medium	13 to 22	140	46	18.7914	2.98177
High	23 to 25	80	27	23.3750	.60326
Total	5 to 25	300	100	17.2200	6.11689

Table 1 indicates mean and SD of Authoritative parenting style of 300 cases classifying groups on the basis of rank order of parental authoritativeness in three groups i.e. low authoritativeness, medium authoritativeness and high authoritativeness. It showed the level of authoritativeness was in the total sample. Although leading parenting style was not strictly authoritative in all the parents but there was certain amount of authoritativeness in each parent. Therefore, null hypothesis “There is no difference in parents regarding level of authoritativeness with their children studying at elementary level” was rejected.

Impact of authoritative parenting style on the personality traits of children.

Regarding the objective of the study “to identify the impact level of authoritativeness on personality traits of children, 30 highest extreme scores, 30 lowest extreme scores and 30 middle cases among the distribution of 300 cases were chosen. These were labelled as low, medium and high-level groups on the basis of parents’ authoritativeness (see figure 1). Furthermore, children’ personality traits related scores were entered against each case on SPSS sheet and ANOVA test was applied on data to conclude the impact of authoritativeness on personality traits of children. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 presents results of 90 cases regarding the effect of authoritative parenting style and personality traits of children. The findings indicate that the level of parenting authoritative style has significant impact on all personality traits of children. But, high level Authoritative Parenting style highly increased agreeableness and openness and low-level Authoritative Parenting style increased only the neuroticism in children. But, medium level Authoritative Parenting notably benefited Conscientiousness and Extraversion among children.

Analysis of impact of levels of parental authoritativeness on children through ANOVA results also signified highly significant mean difference among groups regarding all personality traits. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study “parents’ level of authoritativeness has no significant effect on personality traits of elementary school children” is rejected.

However, Post hoc analysis through LSD test signified highly significant mean difference between low versus medium and low versus high levels but insignificant mean difference between medium and high levels of parental authoritativeness.

Connection between parents’ authoritativeness and personality traits of children. Regarding the search of *Connection between parents’ authoritativeness and personality traits of children*, correlation between parents’ authoritativeness and children’ personality traits scores was computed. Results have been given in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation between Authoritative Parenting Style and Personality Traits

<i>Correlation between authoritative style and personality traits of children (n=90)</i>					
Authoritativeness	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Openness
16.5667	4.7444	5.1444	4.8778	2.9000	4.7778
<i>R</i>	0.824**	0.813**	0.840**	-0.406**	0.879**
<i>P</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

r = Pearson Correlation, p = Sig. (2-tailed) 0.01 Level of Significance

Table 3 shows correlation analysis between authoritative parenting style and all the five personality traits. Answering the third research question, the analysis of the correlation shows that there was a highly significant and positive relationship between authoritative parenting style and the four personality traits i.e. agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness while there was a significant and negative relationship with neuroticism. This means that as the level of authoritativeness in the parents increased, the four traits i.e. agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness in their children was elevated. In contrast, the more the parents were authoritative, the level of neuroticism was reduced.

Discussion

The present study has explored that parents have different level of authoritativeness in their parenting. Although each parent has a certain level of authoritativeness in them but majority are above the average (see table 1). Advantages of authoritative parenting style are also described by previous researches. Undoubtedly, authoritative parents keep the best balance between responsiveness and demandingness. This type of parenting is characterized by warmth, love, affection, friendly attitude and communication. Authoritative parents demand their children to follow a certain set of rules and in the meanwhile they give them freedom and are responsive enough to understand children's problems with that set of rules (Navuluri, 2017). This type of parents favor communication with their children. Moreover, they show support and love to their children if they make any mistake. Authoritative parenting has been majorly associated with wide range of positive child outcomes which includes better academic performance, more competence, autonomy, self-esteem and moral development. Less divergence, less involvement in drug and alcohol use, less anti-social behavior, less anxiety and depression and friendlier attitude with peers are also included in the effects of authoritative parenting. Moreover, more autonomy and freedom given to children is related to more self-reliance, better problem-solving skills and improved mental and emotional health (Rodrigo, Byrne & Rodriguez, 2013). Therefore, this part of the results of this study indicates a positive characteristic of the sample studied here.

Previous studies indicate that perceived parenting style is a significant factor in determining children's global self-esteem and empathetic attitude. They also stated that children whose parents were majorly supportive, their perceptions of self and empathy level was quite high (Antonopoulou, Alexopoulos & Kassotaki, 2012). Moreover, a study done in United States say that there is a significant relation between parenting styles and pro-social behaviors of children (Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Batenhorst & Wilkinson, 2010). In addition to this, Wolfradt, Hampel and Miles (2003) researched on a normal student sample and found that parental warmth and affection had positive effects on children's coping behavior and was negatively related to anxiety in children. Another study conducted by Lim and Smith (2008) show that parenting styles which have higher levels of acceptance i.e. authoritative parenting style were related to higher levels of creativity in their children. It also told that parenting styles characterized by high levels of leniency i.e. permissive and neglectful parenting styles were related with higher levels of loneliness and no particular relationship was found between these parenting styles and children's creative personality. In the present study, table 2 displays that high and medium levels of authoritativeness in parents is directly related to all four personality traits of children i.e. agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness while low level of authoritativeness is associated to neuroticism. The findings indicated in Table 2 are in coherence with above stated literature (Wolfradt, Hampel & Miles, 2003; Lim & Smith, 2008; Carlo et. al., 2010; Antonopoulou, Alexopoulos & Kassotaki, 2012). It was also found out that there was insignificant mean difference between high and medium level of authoritativeness of parents meaning that parents who have high and medium level of authoritativeness in them tend to have almost similar impacts on personality traits of their children. Contrastingly, there was significant mean difference between high and low authoritativeness levels and medium and low authoritativeness levels showing that low level of authoritative parenting style has different impact on personality of children.

The above stated literature also affirmed that higher levels of authoritativeness are associated with increased levels of agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness in personalities of their children while they are associated with low level of neuroticism in the personalities of their children. On the other hand, low level of authoritative parenting style has increased effect on neuroticism in children. It means that parents who display less authoritativeness in their parenting style, their children tend to be more tensed or worried. The findings of this study are in coherence with the previous studies (Joseph & John, 2008; Querido, Warner & Eyberg, 2010; Munyi, 2013) stated that the higher the level of authoritativeness is in parents, stronger the personality of their children is. Their children tend to be more empathetic, compassionate, organized, sociable, welcoming and less depressed.

The study also aimed to analyze the association between authoritative parenting style and all five personality traits. One of the previous researches say that parents in general and particularly mothers can increase the sense of security and empathy in their children by having an affectionate and loving relationship that is by practicing authoritative parenting style (Jabeen, Haque & Riaz, 2013). In the past, one more study regarding agreeableness by Fang, Xiong and Guo (2003) say that by reducing parents' neglectfulness and increasing parental love, affection and emotional connection i.e. practiced by authoritative parents, a child's empathy and tenderness can be improved. A study related to conscientiousness conducted by Chan and Chan (2007) say that authoritative parenting style was significantly and positively related with learning and performance goals. According to Watabe and Hibbard (2014) in their study, previous researches show that authoritative parents who give independence and freedom to their children while placing some limits and rules of western elementary children produce positive academic outcomes. Results of another study done on American elementary schools indicate that children of authoritative parents were more academically motivated. Another study in Malaysia also show that mothers and fathers who practice authoritative parenting style have positive effects on their children's behavior and academic learning motivation and achievement (Talib, Mohamad & Mamat, 2011). Furthermore, a study exhibited on fifth and sixth grade children in public schools of Tirana showed that parents whose dominating parenting style was authoritative tends to raise children who are more successful and achievement oriented and showed high academic results (Kashahu, Osmanaga & Bushati, 2014). A study on Chinese elementary children showed that authoritative parenting practices were positively relevant to child's pro-social behavior, social adjustment and socio-metric status (Deković & Janssens, 1992; Chen, Dong & Zhou, 1997). Coplan, Arbeau and Armer (2008) found and write in their study that relation between shyness and certain indices of maladaptation (inability to adapt to environment) were weaker among children of mothers practicing authoritative parenting style. A study done by Chan (2011) on Hong Kong Chinese children reveals that maternal authoritative facilities children to adopt constructive emotion-coping strategies. Also, they revealed that sample group of children with authoritative parents obtained high scores in active problem coping behavior (Wolfradt, Hampel & Miles, 2003).

Correlation analysis in the current study showed by Table 3 found out that authoritative parenting style is significantly and positively related to agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness. As the level of authoritative in the parents increases, the level of these four traits in their children also increases. Whereas, neuroticism is significantly negatively related to authoritative parenting style meaning as the authoritative in parents increases, neuroticism in their children decreases. The findings of this study are coherent with the studies stated above (Fang, Xiong & Guo,

2003; Chan & Chan, 2007; Watabe & Hibbard, 2014). The more authoritative parenting practiced by the parents, the healthier and stronger personalities their children have. Parents who majorly adopt authoritative parenting style have children who are more kind, affectionate, goal-oriented, energetic and open to new experiences while they tend to be less worried or depressed.

It is evident from the above discussion that authoritative parenting style has positive effects on personality of elementary children. According to a number of past studies (Querido, Warner & Eyberg, 2010; Hirata & Kamakura, 2017), authoritative parenting is just the right balance between demandingness and responsiveness yielding positive effects on children. Current study also shows that parents who practice high and medium level of authoritative parenting style yields positive impact on personalities of elementary children as compared to lower level of authoritative parents. Correlation analysis further reveals that authoritative parenting style has a significant and positive relationship with agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness while it has a significant negative relationship with neuroticism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of above literature, findings and discussion, it is concluded that parents adopt different levels of authoritative parenting styles with their children. Every parent has a particular level of authoritative parenting style in dealing with children. Secondly, it is seen from results that high and medium levels of authoritative parenting style in parents have significant and positive impact on personality of their children at elementary level while low level of authoritative parenting style did not have significant positive impact. High and medium levels of authoritative parenting style in parents is significantly related to all positive traits i.e. agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and extraversion while low level of authoritative parenting style is associated with high level of neuroticism in their children. This study shows that parents who majorly practice authoritative parenting style raise strong, powerful and healthy personalities of children. Results further indicate that all four personality traits i.e. agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness have positive significant relationship with authoritative parenting style while neuroticism has significant negative relationship. More agreeableness in their children means that they are more sympathetic, affectionate and warm. Children of the parents having high and medium level of authoritative parenting style in them, have high level of conscientiousness and extraversion in their personalities meaning they are comparatively more efficient, organized, energetic and sociable. In addition, their children are more open and welcoming to new experiences, imaginative and creative. Furthermore, as seen in Table 3, authoritative parenting style has negative relationship with neuroticism meaning that

the children of parents practicing authoritative parenting style are tend to be less worried, depressed or sad. They are emotionally stronger.

In the light of results, it is suggested that authoritative parenting style has good effects on the personality development of elementary children. By following this parenting style, parents will able to raise strong, warm, efficient, sociable, emotionally stronger and creative children. These children will be more welcoming to new experiences and look forward to meet new people. They will be more friendly, efficient and goal-oriented. Thus, they will be able to develop strong and healthy mind, body and personality.

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