

What Parenting Style Should We Use?

A study on the relationship of parenting styles in academics and career outlook

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Background

Parenting Style

- Developmental psychologists often categorize parenting into three categories, based on the demands parents put on children and the responsiveness of the parents.

Authoritative ⁵	Permissive ⁵	Authoritarian ⁴
- High levels of nurturance - Involved in kid's activities - Encourage autonomy	- Do not make many demands - Portray non-controlling behavior - Rarely use punishment	- Demanding but not responsive - Labeled as strict

Academic Achievement:

- Children ages 4-15 whose parents used an authoritative parenting styles were more motivated and achievement oriented.⁵
- Children shown love from parents have higher academic abilities.⁵
- Child's parents who had an authoritative style had higher GPA than those with permissive and authoritarian.²

Parental Involvement:

- Mothers are more influential than fathers.³
- Academic performance is affected by parental involvement.³
- Fathers are often less involved in child's elementary years.²

Career Interest:

- Family has a high impact on career selection.³
- Authoritative parents have greater influence on professional preference.⁶

Method

Participants:

- 133 participants: 29 males, 95 females

Procedure:

- Measure parenting style: Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)¹
- Career interests: self-assessment questionnaire
- GPA: academic performance

Hypothesis 1: Students who experience authoritative parenting will show higher academic achievement in college than students who experience other parenting styles.

Result: This hypothesis was not supported.

- The more authoritative a mother was the lower the student's GPA, $r(81) = -.25, p = .02$.
- No statistically significant correlation between authoritarianism and GPA for fathers, $r(64) = -.02, p = .88$.

Hypothesis 2: Mothers will have a more significant impact than fathers on career outlook and parental involvement in school.

Result: This hypothesis was not supported.

- Mothers ($M = 21.42, SD = 4.75$) seemed to have a marginally lower impact on career outlook than fathers ($M = 22.09, SD = 5.83$), but no statistically significant difference was found between the two groups, $t(72) = -0.98, p = .33$.
- Difference between mothers and fathers being involved in academics $t(73) = -3.46, p = .001$. Mothers ($M = 5.46, SD = 1.81$) were found to have less of an impact than fathers ($M = 6.78, SD = 3.29$) with academic involvement.

Hypothesis 3: Students who experience an authoritative parenting style will have a higher chance of going into the same field as that parent.

Result: This hypothesis was not supported.

- Going the same field as mother was not statistically significant $r(87) = .05, p = .68$.
- No significant correlation between children going into the same field as father $r(70) = -.23, p = .06$.

Hypothesis 4: Students will report that mothers have more of an authoritative parenting style than fathers.

Result: This hypothesis was not supported. Mothers showed less authoritative style than fathers.

- Mothers ($M = 20.86, SD = 6.69$) showed a less authoritative style than fathers ($M = 23.14, SD = 7.94$), $t(83) = -2.39, p = .02$.

Conclusion

In summary, the results to this study were surprising as they conflicted with past research. Past research suggested that authoritative parenting styles were the most effective in enhancing academic performance. In this study, authoritative parenting did not relate to higher academic performance. Past research also suggest mother show more of an authoritative style than fathers. Again, in this study fathers had a more authoritative style than mothers. Students we who were a part of this study did not go into the same field(s) as their parents. Interestingly enough, in this study taken by Northwestern students, most reported their parents as having a permissive parenting style.

This conflicts with much of past research.

Future Direction

In the future, it would be beneficial to have parents fill out the PAQ as students might have a different view of their parents' style. Having parents provide an assessment may better capture the true parenting style the child experienced. Future research could also look at the employment of mothers and fathers.

Further, future research could investigate the differences in parents supporting their children in school. Lastly, it would be important to look further in different cultural understandings of parenting styles.

Sources

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