

Parenting Styles as a Gateway for Girls Education Accomplishment: A Case Study of Female African and Asian Students in a Chinese University

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Abstract: This study investigated the relationship between parenting styles and educational achievement with respect to intrinsic motivation to achieve. A total of 38 female students from Africa and Asia in a Chinese university filled in a self-reported questionnaire and six among them were interviewed to examine their perceptions on parenting styles as impelling factor of intrinsic motivation. The results revealed that authoritarian parenting style is exercised mostly in Africa and Asia; however mothers were perceived more authoritative and authoritarian whilst fathers were authoritative and permissive. Authoritarian typology was found to have a positive association with intrinsic motivation ($r = .434$, $p = .007$); but not with permissive ($r = .019$, $p = .909$), and authoritative ($r = -.032$, $p = .847$). Punishment, negligence and autonomy from parenting styles were echoed as intrinsic motivation drives henceforth internal satisfaction, perceived to be a key towards education accomplishment. The study concluded that one reason for denying girls and women their right to education which is rarely articulated in our society is the fear of “losing” them. Thus; the perception that educational victory of women will give them power that might cloud their “traditional identity” of serving as family caretakers; however, their contribution in the wellbeing of the society -from few who had an opportunity to access and survives- is profoundly commendable.

1. Introduction

Parenting or child rearing has attracted many researchers due to its important role on child development. Studies elucidate that child’s future is shaped by the parenting styles applied through parental expectations [1, 2]. These expectations are contended to influence intrinsic motivation to achieve [3]. Children who are intrinsically motivated to learn appreciate learning opportunities and find learning meaningful or relevant to meeting psychological needs such as gaining competence, connecting with others, expressing themselves, seeing the splendor in knowledge or pursuing their interests [3, 4]. Although, the effects of parenting styles on students’ psychological outcomes are well documented worldwide, nevertheless it was revealed that parents across cultures have different socialization and education goals for boys and girls [1, 5], which likely influence their parenting styles [5, 6]. Along this, a key feature of masculine structures is the social conviction that men are the heads of families hence, parents prefer to invest more in a son’s education, because they are considered most likely to provide some return on their investment. According to Jabeen [7], women suffer additional constraints due to their restricted mobility, lack of control over resources, limited sovereignty and decision-making, and a low level of awareness of their civil rights. She announces that, there is minimal questioning of the role of the family, community, society, school, education department, and other institutions, in promoting and sustaining stereotyped roles and images of girls and women.

Given that education is a human right; regrettably, women do not always have access to this ultimate right hence reduces their chance to accomplish educational pursuits. In much Africa and Asia women still carry a large liability of the domestic, social, and community development culpabilities [7-9]. Women from both continents have been perceived as housekeepers henceforth

challenge their education accomplishments. Instituting on such background, limited number of women have made their way to the top. Studies illustrated that, girls dropout occurs during adolescence age due to their vulnerability in this critical period simultaneously, parents are undergoing nurturing trials, as children are demanding self-independence and decision making[10]. With the dearth of research on Asian and African familial relationships and their connections to students' educational outcomes, the current study sought to assess African and Asian female student's perception of their parents' parenting styles and practices to ascertain the set of connections between this perception and academic motivational constructs of intrinsic motivation.

2. Theoretical Underpinning and Literature

2.1. Parenting Styles and Intrinsic Motivation

According to Baumrind [11-13], parenting styles consist of two scopes; Demandingness -refers to the extent to which parents show control, maturity demands and supervision in their parenting; responsiveness- refers to the extent to which parents show affective warmth, acceptance and involvement. These dimensions were further classified into four styles including uninvolved [2], however, the current focus of this work is mainly on three styles explicitly, authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. Parenting styles may develop external influence as parents would have set certain goals for their children to achieve and provide a direction on how to accomplish and the degree of accomplishment.

Deci & Ryan described cognitive evaluation theory that provides understanding of how extrinsic motivation affects intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation often refers to motivation of students "to know", to be oriented "toward accomplishment" and "experience stimulation" while learning. Under definite conditions rewards are used to enrich performance with a high degree of intrinsic entreaty, thus; the person's perception on the reasons of performing such task swings from their own benefits to their accomplishment for someone else hence moderates intrinsic motivation, even after the extrinsic motivation being detached. [14, 15]. Additionally, Deci and Ryan [4] theorize that independent intrinsically enthused behaviors are intentional and focused toward achieving a goal or sustaining a psychological need, whereas controlled extrinsically motivated behaviors are regulated toward obedience by forces outside of the person, not by personal choice.

A wide array of research illuminate that the authoritative parenting style is the most auspicious for the educational achievement of the children [16, 17]. This style of rearing is marked by high levels of nurturance, involvement, compassion, rational, and reinforcement of self-sufficiency [2, 18]. Authoritative parents enforce rules while considering the child an integral part of decision making. Many studies have consistently linked the non-coercive and democratic characteristics of this parenting to its superiority in fostering intrinsic motivation and higher academic performance [19, 20]. Permissive parenting was found to be related to extrinsic motivation, lack of self-reliance, reduced determination on learning tasks, lack of self-discipline, and school misconduct [21]. Permissive parents are characterized by making few demands and demonstrating non-controlling behaviors. Children raised under permissive parents may not be subjected to punishment, have few or no chores, and receive minimal guidelines about academic studies from their parents.

Studies on parenting styles conducted in most of western countries revealed that authoritative is foremost practiced as compared to permissive and authoritarian [1, 22]. Dissimilar to Asia, parenting roles in some investigated African countries described male parents as "bread-winners" and mothers as "children care-takers." These research findings indicate that fathers are mostly neglectful and permissive due to their roles and intoxication unlike mothers who are authoritative and authoritarian playing both female and male parenting

2.2. Cultural Grounds of Parenting Styles

Different cultures and geographical location constitute new ways of bringing up children, however, may retain the same characteristics as revealed by theorists. Studies have suggested that Asian parents as more authoritarian and less permissive than white American families and that they set high

academic expectations for their children [23, 24]. In many Asian families, getting grade of “A” from studies means average and “B” means failure. They believe that, A’s can be attained through hard work, not just because one is clever. Thus, the “tiger mother” approach (authoritarian parenting style) may be one way to groom children through strict discipline with distinctions of “Do’s” and “Don’ts.” With family and high ethnic prospects, they further complement children’s academic achievement.

Studies conducted in African countries (South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Cameroon) to investigate their parenting styles and findings indicated that, mothers are the mostly relied as children’s caretaker whilst fathers are addressed as bread-winners, whose responsibilities are to provide for their families [9, 25-27]. In Baumrind’s [13] typologies of parenting, mothers personify both authoritative and permissive style of parenting; adopt a more liberal approach to the upbringing of children whilst, fathers are authoritarian. This may designate that mothers parenting style influences more children’s behavior as compared to fathers’

3. Present Study

Parenting literature reveals several shortcomings in the research of parenting styles and psychological outcomes in a cultural context however there is a dearth of empirical studies mainly on parenting styles and Motivation theory (intrinsic-achieve). The present study has integrated motivation and parenting models to reveal adaptive structures of bringing up children particularly girls that can contribute positively to their educational achievements. Also studies on African and Asia parenting styles mainly investigated toddlers and adolescents whereas it has been illustrated that, girls dropout occurs during adolescence age due to their vulnerability in this critical period. Simultaneously, parents are experiencing nurturing trials, as children are demanding self-independence and decision making [10]. Contrarily in this study, adult and educated women were sampled with an impression that they were mature enough to reflect on their adolescence and perceive the way they were raised up with no prejudice.

For the objectives of study to be achieved, three questions were developed. What is the nature and distribution of parenting styles dominating the families of the sample considered under study? What is the relationship between parenting typologies and intrinsic motivation? In what ways does parenting styles influence educational achievements?

3.1. Design and Sample

This study is a Comparative -mixed method design which parallels the multiplicities of cases with regard to specific issues[28]; thus, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved/neglectful compared based on intrinsic motivation and educational achievement to both African and Asian samples. The population under consideration was all female international students from Asian and African studying at Normal University X. A stratified convenience sample of 43 participants was obtained from faculty strata established to widen opportunity of participation in this study. According to their reports, the participants had resided with their parents during their adolescent period; however, adopted students and those who were raised with single and stepparents (total of 5 students) were excluded from the sample. The remained 38 participants’ distribution was 25 (65.8%) for Asian and 17(34.2%) for African, where; 74% of them aged 30 years old and below, whilst 26% aged above 30 years. The sample included Muslim (39.5%), Christian (23.7%), Buddhism (18.4), Non-believers (15.8%) and other religion (2.6%). They were pursuing undergraduate (36.8%), Masters 34.2%), and PhD (29%) from six majors, thus Natural science comprise 7.9%, Life science 10.5%, Education 36.8%, Social studies 21.1%, Language (15.8%) and Environmental science 7.9% respectively.

Six interviewees; three from each continent were purposively sampled after initial quantitative data analysis. These participants were among thirteen (13) who volunteered for the interview by leaving their contacts on the questionnaire administered to them. However, those selected had unique information desired by the researcher.

3.2. Instruments

A Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) which was constructed by Buri [29] with 30 items and three subscales, based on parental authority prototypes divided into permissive (Cronbach alpha .62), authoritarian (Cronbach alpha .64), and authoritative styles (Cronbach alpha .61).were adopted to examine parenting styles among the participants. It consisted of ten permissive statements, for example, “my father seldom gives me expectations and guidelines for my behavior”; ten authoritarian statements, for example “my father gets very upset if I try to disagree with him”; and ten authoritative statements, for example, “if my father makes a decision in the family that hurts me, he is willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if he had made a mistake.” scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. It also has 8- parenting styles influence on educational attainment; four questions for each parent; measured with a 5-level Likert scale, from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. These statements are based on Baumrind’s definitions of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parental prototypes. In this study, the participants were asked to refer to their late adolescence period. Each item is stated from the perspective of an individual appraising the type of authority exercised by each of his or her parents.

Additionally, Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-C 28) [30] was used to measure intrinsic motivation. This scale has a 7-factor structure: intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation to accomplish, intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation; identification, interjected regulation, external regulation and a-motivation. For the purpose of this paper only one intrinsic motivation subscale thus “towards accomplishment” was adopted and adapted with Cronbach alpha coefficient .69. Since the scale was originally developed for high school students, slight adaptations for university students were made to the survey’s phrasing. For example, the high school participants were asked, “Why do you want to attend college?” With changes, the participants were asked, “Why did you attend college?” Questions were followed by 5-point Likert-type scales, (1 = not at all true through 5= ‘very true’), such as, “Because this level of education was my goal when I was growing up” Items were aggregated by creating a mean score for intrinsic (5 items) and extrinsic (7 items). Examples of each sub-construct are intrinsic (“it is important for me that I have achieved this goal.”); extrinsic (“I feel I have achieved my parent’s goal for me”). An internal consistency estimate of reliability was computed for the motivation scales. The coefficient alpha was .90, indicating it was satisfactorily reliable

Qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews which were semi-structured, conducted individually for one hour. The leading question was “Please describe your parent’s conducts during your adolescence. The respondents agreed in recording the interview conversation. Participants were nicknamed A1, A2 and A3 for Asian interviewees, and B1, B2 and B3 for African interviewees.

3.3. Analysis

Descriptive analyses were conducted to uncover dominated parenting styles among African and Asian. Inferential analyses; Correlation, T test were conducted explore the significant relationship and differences between parenting styles and intrinsic motivation among Asians and Africans. Also Colaizzi [31] framework was adhered to during analysis of qualitative data and emerged themes under parenting styles and practices were: punishment, negligence and assistance whilst satisfaction, autonomy and confusion were under intrinsic motivation respectively. These themes were triangulated with quantitative results to stress on the study findings.

3.4. Results

3.4.1. Prevailing Parenting Styles

The overall results (Table 1) indicated that, authoritative parenting typology was the most experienced parenting style in both continents as compared to permissive and authoritarian. Mothers were perceived more authoritative than fathers (mothers; N=38, M=3.5421 fathers; N=38, M=3.3053). When parenting styles were analyzed separately in each continent, unlike the general results, Asian Fathers were perceived authoritative and permissive whilst African fathers claimed to

practice authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles; however, mother’s results remained the same.

Table 1 Parenting styles as per continents

Continet		Permissive	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Asia	Mean	3.3557	3.4583	3.0741
	N	24	24	24
	Std. Dev.	.41548	.41011	.71140
Africa	Mean	2.7328	3.3643	2.8849
	N	14	14	14
	Std. Dev.	.46908	.75024	.66861
Total	Mean	3.0630	3.4237	3.0044
	N	38	38	38
	Std. Dev	.49996	.55175	.69297

Independent t-test was conducted to investigate whether there is a significant difference on same parenting styles practices in Asia and Africa, and the results as indicated in table 2 (below) projects that, permissive parenting style practices by male parents in Asia is different from the one practiced in Africa. However, other parenting styles like authoritative and authoritarian have similar practice, e.g. mothers authoritarian parenting style in both continents have the same characteristics.

Table 2 Independent Sample test

	Levenes Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95%Confidence Of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Permissive equal var assumed	.028	.867	3.078	36	.004	.55303	.17967	.18865	.91741
Equal Var not assumed			3.066	27.000	.005	.55303	.18039		.92316

Regarding these results, an in-depth interview follow up was conducted and responses were under freedom theme. Respondents described the permissive parenting style typology as child centered and less demanding. A participant from Asia (A1) was quoted; “My father raised me to be independent so that, I would be able to take care of myself because he once told me that, at some point maybe no one will be there for me”.

Another rejoinder from Africa B1, explained how authoritarian parenting limits children’s freedom

“I cannot say he was soft, but my mother was stringent, and my father was flexible. He gave me freedom despite our religion that limits women’s freedom; however, I knew he does not want to be disappointed, unlike my mother with strict rules all the time.”

B2 explanation on Permissive parenting states;

“My parents never forced me to study hard; I grew up seeing them working hard. Therefore, my study habit looks like a replica of my parents’ working style. They are very calm and not demanding, they see my potential in my current field as I see myself.”

3.4.2. Parenting Styles and Intrinsic Motivation

Pearson’s correlational analyses were conducted to investigate the relationships between parenting styles and intrinsic motivation (Table 3). From the general perspective intrinsic motivation was found to be significantly associated with authoritarian parenting style ($r = .434, p = .007$); but not with permissive ($r = .019, p = .909$), and authoritative ($r = -.032, p = .847$) which have no significant relationship.

Table 3 Correlations

	Intrinsic	Permissive	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Intrinsic Pearson corr	1	.019	.032	.434**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.909	.847	.007
N	38	38	38	38
Permissive Pearson corr	.019	1	.597**	-.213
Sig. (2-tailed)	.909		.000	.199
N	38	38	38	38
Authoritative Pearson corr	.032	.597**	1	-.200
Sig. (2-tailed)	.847	.000		.230
N	38	38	38	38
Authoritarian Pearson corr	.434**	-.213	-.200	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.199	.230	
N	38	38	38	38

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The strongest significant relationship was between intrinsic and father authoritarian parenting style ($r = .428, p = .007$), symbolizes that, despite the fact that mothers were perceived authoritarian than fathers, they were not as demanding and strict as compared to fathers. Also qualitative data supported these statistical findings as interviewees explained that, their parents were highly expectant, and that's the reason they had to put more effort to please their parents.

Participant A1 and B3 response indicated how the authoritarian parenting transforms their intrinsic motivation in relation to educational desires respectively. A1 reacted;

"I desired teaching profession very much but whom to tell; my father fancies chemists and that was the direction I was supposed to face. My mother use to support my father all the time, therefore, a yes from my father meant a yes to my mother. Here I am struggling with laboratory work".

"I did not get a chance to attend the university I intended to because my parents chose a different profession for me. It was hard, I knew what career I wanted; to be an accountant but my parents chose a statistic course for me. In the future I will find my way back to accounting, such a waste..." participant B3 replied.

These findings disclose that, the more they were pushed to achieve a particular goal, the more their intrinsic motivation was mended and they have to work hard to achieve their parent's expectations, regardless of their existing choice.

3.4.3. Parenting Styles as an Ingress for Girl's Access to Education

Respondents admitted that parenting assistance during adolescent age since this period has devastated their biological and mental transformation hence very critical time for future decision making. A response from A2 was as follows;

"At that age I was a fool and confused... maybe... because I did not have any future plans, actually, I could not figure it out what is good for me. My parents were there for me, guiding me, what course to take, what college to attend, and I become someone to be proud of, thanks to them."

Respondent A3 said;

"My parents were too controlling and I did not like it, whenever I did a mistake, I was punished, but at this age I understand that young people need guidance. Their support were overwhelming from home tutorials to holiday revision plans, evening preparations, supplementary books and many more... just one thing I died for, having time with my peer; I was neither allowed to play nor associate with them."

A respondent from Africa; B3 who experienced difficulties in accepting her parent's directives said;

“I was and still am very close to my mother. She was strict during my adolescent and she always insisted I have to be a teacher. I did not like it in the beginning, as a young girl, I fantasized working in the office like a secretary, however after becoming matured enough, I came to realize that my parent’s decision were meaningful and I am satisfied”

They recommended parenting support, spending more time with their children, and also to realize their abilities and assist them accordingly. Furthermore they should not treat them differently from boys, as they are the major pillars of the future families.

Respondent B2 rejoined;

“Honestly, I can say that, to achieve my educational goal was my own struggle. My parents never cared about education particularly to me as their daughter, they just believe that I will be married and leave our home rather they were happy that I am going to school. Even if I would not go to school no one will ever know. I was neglected and I suggest that parents do take their responsibilities especially their girls because it is very easy for them to give up at the adolescence period.”

Respondent A2 added;

“I am okay with the way I was raised. My parents were somewhat strict on me but not to the extent where I was not allowed to make my own decision. I want to reach greater levels of education and have a good career, not only to give myself a future but also to make my parents proud because it is the only way I can afford to pay back a little of what they have done to me”

Also, African male parents have to build a stable relationship with their girls, for this period sexual enticement is likely to draw adolescent minds away from the desired life outcome especially education. Therefore; limiting children’s freedom and exercise corporal punishment as the courses of action would not be always the wise decision, rather, keeping them informed on life realities as well as giving them extra parental care, something that most African male parents lack. African respondent, B2 was quoted as follows;

“As I told you that my parents were not concerned on my education that was not all.... They rarely talk to me about anything. At least my mother in few occasions she will discuss with me about how to be a good wife, as they believed that getting married for girls is important as compared to education; I never acquire any word from my father and we were not close....he just did not seem to exist. I envied my friends when they talk about their relationship with their fathers... and yes... I made it here as a PhD student, but it was never easy. I believe most of girls give up on the way because sometimes it becomes too much to carry; and much worse, if girls cannot access information from their parents, they will start looking in the outside world which is more dangerous.”

B3 asserted

“You know during adolescence we always want to try every idea that pops in our minds... That did not end up well with me because, trials brought errors and I was punished corporally. I was confused as I did all that to learn something, just to turn out to be unacceptable.... But that did not stop me from trying, you know children...I think children need support and to be informed”

In addition to that, parent’s collaboration is very important. Having separate decisions can cause difficulties for children to understand what decision to take. B1 added;

“In my opinion, male parents should be more close to their daughters and female parents to their sons. But also it is very confusing when your father requires you to do something and later your mother rejects the idea. In my family it happened most of the time, remember I told you my mother was very strict unlike my father; at that time it was very hard for me to make a decision, not knowing whether to listen to my mother or take my father’s advice. I think it is important and flawless to have one decision from both parents rather than individual decisions.”

3.5. Discussion

Descriptive findings specified authoritative typology as the most practiced parenting style as compared to other parenting style and with the support of qualitative data, the characteristics of these typologies possess the same characteristics as described in Baumrind typologies [11]. The results that indicates Asian fathers as authoritative, permissive and less authoritarian, conflicts with finding in many studies conducted in different countries in Asia, e.g. Hsin & Xie [23] which specified them as authoritarian.

Authoritarian parenting was found to have significant positive relationship with intrinsic motivation hence there was a strong significant implication with male parents. Authoritarian parenting which is characterized by a high level of psychological control [11] was perceived as forced autonomy as respondents signposted the feeling of being controlled, devalued and criticized. Corroborating with Deci and Ryan [14] theory, intrinsic motivation can be diminished by external influence, the findings explains difficulties that girls encounter from authoritarian parenting typology.

Since authoritarian parents are very demanding, these results mean that children have no choice than to impress their parents and attain levels of education set by their parents and were evident in qualitative data. Also these findings are explained under self-determined theory [4] that highlights child's obedience as outcome of intrinsic motivation being extrinsically enhanced by parenting styles. In this case, authoritarian parenting style exercised by male parents could be implied as a contrivance that evoke intrinsic motivation mainly by stressing the importance of external goals, such as attaining higher levels of education, explaining that they care about their children well-being. These results are aligning with those found in a research done on Palestinian-Arab female students in Israel [32] indicated that authoritarian parents have positive influence on Arab adolescents' perceived psychological well-being of intrinsic motivation.

Findings echoed that adolescents have to work hard to fulfill the education goals set by their parents as a way to please them. Thus it elucidated that, parenting styles stimulates intrinsic motivation hence impact educational achievements. Parenting practices concomitant with academic and school activities encourage children and boost their intrinsic motivation to achieve. This argument is assimilated with that of Alt and Geiger [33] in their study concerning Goal Orientations and Tendency Neutralize Academic Cheating. They found that the tendency to neutralize academic cheating was predicted by the performance goal of pleasing parents which mediated as extrinsic motivation.

Parenting ways to improve girl's access and success to education are not attached to a particular parenting style, as all participants of this study who have achieved a university level of education are from all parenting styles. The findings corroborate with those of Chan & Koo [16] that associate parenting styles with youth outcomes. Therefore, regardless of parenting style –except neglectful which develops a sense of negligence- parent should believe in their children's abilities and support them. As elaborated by Deci & Ryan [3], parenting practices and styles serve as a trigger of intrinsic motivation towards academic accomplishment. Thus depends on the degree of autonomy that children possess.

4. Conclusion

Towards unfolding the influence of parenting styles on female university students' educational attainment during their adolescence, with respect to intrinsic motivation; it was found that authoritative parenting style is mostly applied in different cultural settings and being significant in the life of young people during evolving adulthood. The findings of this study indicated that parents have a significant influence on the school achievement of their children. In terms of parenting practices, consequently, the research suggested that when parents are involved in their children's education and monitor their children's after-school activities, they facilitate their children's academic achievement and educational attainment. It is also concluded that one reason for denying girls and

women their right to education which is rarely articulated in our society is the fear of “losing” them. Thus; the perception that educational victory of women will give them power that might cloud their “traditional identity” of serving as family caretakers; however, their contribution in the wellbeing of the society -from few who had an opportunity to access and survives- is profoundly commendable. Future security and education for women largely depends upon the respect and value given to them by male members of the family unlike the existing atmosphere where preference is given to males in every sphere of life including education.

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