



The Effect of Different Paternal Parenting Styles have on Daughter's Gender Identity and Gender Role Attitudes Formation

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Abstract. In this study, we investigated the effect of paternal parenting on daughter's gender identity formation and development applying qualitative interview. For the 16 female participants, we found a positive correlation between paternal parenting autonomy and daughters' gender identity and bio-sex inconsistency ($r = 0.3233$). For those female participants who described to perceive a strict paternal parenting, the disadvantages of being a girl is mainly coming from family pressure as a source, while female participants who believed that paternal parenting gave them a lower demandingness and that they had a higher level of personal autonomy, most of the disadvantages described by female participants came from the pressure of sexism on the social level or troubles. Specifically, those daughters with strict paternal parenting usually negatively evaluates femininity and has certain exclusions.

Keywords: paternal parenting styles, gender identity, father-daughter relationship, qualitative analysis, interview

1. Introduction

As children go through many stages in their development process, parental presence plays a decisive role in most of them. Parenting covers the upbringing of children by both parents. Sometimes both parents share the same parenting styles, but differences between paternal and maternal parenting styles still exist. With their own characteristics, the influence of parenting styles have on children's external development has been investigated extensively from various aspects, such as academic performance, substance usage, social activities, etc. To put more focus on the effect of parenting styles have on internal development children, the investigating range of identity formation has narrowed down to gender identity specifically.

In contemporary society, gender has become plural with people's open and inclusive attitude and self-sustained exploration. On the road of forming a complete personality, the identity of one's own gender plays a decisive role, and the concept of gender identity is extended. The formation of self-identity begins in early childhood and is a lengthy process.

Noticing the sex differences in parent-child relationships, both parent sex and child sex contribute to form four dyads of relationships which are very much distinct: mother-son, mother-daughter, father-son, and father-daughter are distinct (Russell & Saebel, 1997)¹. Father's impact on daughter's development in various aspects including personality has been recognized to constantly increase compared to other kinds of family intimate relationship (Biller & Weiss, 1970)². As fathers are perceived to be more authoritative towards girls than boys in child rearing (Shalini & Acharya, 2013)³, this dyad of relationship is being extensively focused. Further, the social oppression of women makes gender identity of female more unstable and a better value for investigation. Since most of the qualitative study about parenting styles and children gender identity is about mother-son, the parent-child relationship being studied in this paper will instead focus on the female gender identity in father-daughter considering its importance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gender identity

Identity is an individual's sense of self, usually being defined by a set of physical, psychological, interpersonal characteristics, and affiliations of social roles that cannot be shared with others (American Psychological Association, 2014)⁴. Identity formation is extremely critical for individuals in human development. Each person's identity is not single but multi-aspect, consisting various categories such as religious identity, ethnic identity, or gender identity. Gender identity falls into such big category and is a fundamental kind of identity. It describes an individual's psychological perception of being male, female, neither, both, or somewhere in between the spectrum (Rokach & Patel, 2021)⁵.

Gender identity isn't a sole concept, but reflects on an individual's behavioral performance (Butler, 1990)⁶. Psychologists identify masculine and feminine traits as two dimensions in the model of gender identity. They believe that these traits can exist in one individual simultaneously with varying degrees for each dimension (Gill et al., 1987)⁷. The gender schema theory (Bem, 1981)⁸ claims that individual becomes gendered and display traits and behaviors consistent with their gender identity to transmitted to other members under societal influence. Theory argues that gender identity is consistent with what is acquired and manifested externally, as gender-linked information can be passes in the form of schemata.

As gender is not just an objective property of individual and corresponds with their biological sex, an individual's identity is consistent with their biological sex most of the time. But, the situation isn't always unchangeable. When a person is having biological sex of male but identifies self as female, such situation (or vice versa situation) is being described as transgenderism (Lehmiller, 2018)⁹. Biological sex and gender identity comes together in an individual and both constrain ones cognition and behavior. To consider the external manifestation of one's internal gender identity, the concept of gender role refers to the pattern of behavior, personality traits, and attitudes that define masculinity or femininity in a particular culture (American Psychological Association,

2014)¹⁰. Previous study has researched about gender identity of women and their expected gender roles. Women suffer from a lot of gender stereotypes in a patriarchal society, denying their personal abilities and oppressing their self-confidence. Such social situation makes it easier for women's gender identity to conflict with their other identities, such as in the field of STEM work (Good et al., 2012)¹¹. Traditional society has certain expected attitudes for women's gender roles and definition for femininity, that successful performance of women gender role requires women to be nurturing, attractive, and passive (Wood, 1993)¹².

2.2. Parenting style and paternal parenting

Parenting style is a term describing strategies parents adopted when nurturing their children, representing broad patterns of nurturing methods. Different parents will have different parenting practices in their child rearing according to their own experience, personality, or environment; some of which come from the influence of their own original family, that some parents may adopt the same kind of parenting styles from their own parents (Santrock, 2009)¹³. Different practices can then be classified into broader patterns, forming several major types of parenting styles. Baumrind devoted into the study parenting styles typology and categorized the patterns into three primary parenting styles (Baumrind, 1971)¹⁴: Authoritative parenting style, Authoritarian parenting style, Permissive parenting style. Authoritative is a type with high demandingness and high responsiveness; this type of parent is often being described as democratic, they set the rules and have high expectations but also have enough interaction and warmth with their children. Authoritarian parenting style is a type with high demandingness but low responsiveness, that parents have strict requirements for their children, and children need to comply unconditionally. They raise more like managers and lack intimacy with their children. Conversely, permissive parenting style has low demandingness but high responsiveness, that parents provide children enough amount of emotional support just like what friends do, but without rigid demands. With the continuous research on parenting style, Maccoby completes four parenting styles (Maccoby, 1983)¹⁵, i.e. adding the uninvolved parenting style with both low demandingness and low responsiveness.

Subsequently, two dimensions to more clearly guide parenting styles typology were developed by Baumrind (1991)¹⁶: responsiveness and demandingness. The two dimension levels can vary and be combined with each other, forming four types of parenting styles that could fall into the four quadrants. Aspects of demandingness include the extent of parents' maturity demands, provide supervision, and enact disciplinary efforts when needed; while responsiveness include parents' sensitivity and supportive of their children (Baumrind, 1991)¹⁷. The dimension of children autonomy is referring the the extent the children can act on their free will under the rearing of parents. Related to autonomy, Baumrind investigated a relationship between parenting styles and children autonomy (2005)¹⁸, that stricter parenting of no matter paternal or maternal leaves children with less space for autonomy development. Piko and Balázs in their study (2012)¹⁹ researched a population of Hungarian adolescents that authoritative parents with high demandingness provides protection against adolescent substance use of alcohol and smoking. Parental demandingness was also being reported to influence depression

among children through increasing rumination (Lo et al., 2020)²⁰. Being proposed first in Baumrind's longitudinal study (1967)²¹, pre-school children with authoritative parents' high demandingness scored higher in mature, independent, prosocial, active, and achievement-oriented than other types. And the type of pre-school children with permissive parents' low demandingness performed worst on self-reliance, self-control, and competence. Massive research studies also support there is a positive relationship between high demandingness of authoritative parenting and academic achievements (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg et al., 1989)^{22 23}.

The parenting styles of both the caregivers (usually the father and mother) in the same family are not necessarily the same type. A study by Winsler et al. involved 56 parents of 28 preschool children to investigate perceived similarities and differences between mothers and fathers' parenting styles in the same family; the results showed that the parenting styles used by the father and mother in the same family were only moderately similar. Fathers usually perceive their own parenting to be more authoritarian, but less authoritative and permissive than their spouses (Winsler et al., 2005)²⁴. View paternal and maternal parenting separately, paternal parenting has a significant impact on the development of children in many aspects. A research among Filipino college freshmen showcases that authoritarian paternal parenting style can be one predictive determinants of offspring career choice (Datu, 2012)²⁵. Authoritative paternal parenting style was being identified to be significantly correlated with offsprings' emotional intelligence (Shalini & Acharya, 2013)²⁶ and high self-efficacy (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2012)²⁷.

2.3. The role of paternal parenting on gender identity formation

Previous studies have examined the influence of paternal parenting on children's gender identity and gender role attitude. In one study conducted by Lin and Billingham (2014)²⁸, paternal parenting authoritativeness is correlated with femininity and significantly associated with androgyny of offsprings. Also, when gender atypical behavior (GAB) i.e. behavior traditionally considered more typical for children of the opposite sex is associated with adult psychiatric symptoms, positive parenting can effectively reduce the association, whereas negative parenting can only sustain or even enhance it (Alanko et al., 2008)²⁹.

Specifically, father's influence on daughter's gender identity formation through paternal parenting has been examined to exist (Kharlamenkova, 2007)³⁰. The extent of autonomy father has given to daughter allows them to explore themselves in female development, and the presence of such paternal influence isn't negligible in females' subsequent gender identity formation (Silverman, 1997)³¹. No matter the father is present or absent, paternal parenting and the father-figures generated through parenting process have an impact on daughters' gender identity and psychosexual development (Williamson, 2004)³². The different styles that fathers use in parenting leave daughters with different impressions on the formation of their gender identity. Women with gender identity inconsistent with their biological sex have a mean negative perception of their fathers that they have less positive monitoring and moral behaviors, especially for

those transgender women who experienced uninvolved paternal parenting (Garcia et al., 2021)³³.

2.4. The present study

Based on the literature review, no study so far was found to investigate the influence of paternal parenting on daughter's gender identity formation in China specifically, which leads to the focus of research in this paper. According to all the previous study that mainly examined the influence of paternal presence on female gender identity formation and development, the effect of specifically different paternal parenting styles have on daughter's gender identity and gender role attitudes formation will be researched in this paper. Several detailed aspects will be focused in respect to paternal parenting styles:

Daughters' attitude of their own biological sex.

Daughters' gender identity and three dimensions of paternal parenting.

Daughters' gender role attitude through described femininity and lack of femininity traits.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The sample contains 16 participants selected by convenience sampling method, as the study sample is restricted in a population of high school girls in China. Participants are all biological female with mean age 17 ($\bar{x} = 17.125$), ranging from 17-18. All participant nationality is Chinese with first language mandarin.

3.2. Procedure

This research applied both quantitative data and qualitative interview to collect data of paternal parenting types, self perceived gender identity, and gender role attitude. Correspondingly, quantitative data is used to investigate about the paternal parenting types perceived by female participants. The interview collected information about the female participant's personal gender identity and gender role attitude towards femininity, and also asked about the reasons behind related to the their original family and paternal parenting.

The interview was conducted in-depth individually with each participants for 16 times between June-August, 2022. All participants provided consent knowing the main content of interview before starting. The interview was semi-structured. The interview guide was developed on the basis of literature review and discussion, and two pilot interviews were conducted before finalizing in order to ensure the interview guide is feasible. The interview final outline included three sections, each consist with several questions; the main question for each section in the interview includes:

1. Do you like your life as a girl now?

2. What is your current attitude towards your biological sex as a girl? (Explained with positive and negative aspects)
3. How do you define femininity and lack of femininity?
4. Would you consider yourself as “lack of femininity”? How do you feel about yourself?
5. Have you experienced any inconsistency between your biological sex and psychological gender identity?

3.3. Measure

To collect quantitative data about female participants' perceived paternal parenting styles, a questionnaire is applied: parenting style inventory II (PSI-II) (Darling & Toyokawa, 1997)³⁴. The questionnaire has a previous base of PSI-I (Darling & Steinberg, 1993)³⁵ and then is edited and examined by Nancy Darling and Teru Toyokawa to an improved version. The PSI-II includes three sub-scales: demandingness, responsiveness, and autonomy-granting. The questionnaire was applied to all female participants to assess the construct of parenting style independently of paternal parenting practices. The PSI-II is proper here to use as it appears to have adequate internal consistency and variability according to Darling and Toyokawa (1997)³⁶; the predictive internal consistency reliability with the alpha calculated in this research is also reaching acceptable levels ($r = 0.74$; Split half reliability $r = 0.8$).

3.4. Statistical analysis

The statistical data analysis of the quantitative scale contains 3 sub-scales: demandingness, responsiveness, and autonomy; each of which has five question items. Five options (disagree to agree) are used to answer each question item, and the five options are assigned a scale of 1-5 according to the degree of agreement, reversed items will be recoded. Thus, the total score of the participants at each sub-scale will be calculated based that all data is numeric.

For qualitative data, all participant interviews were audio recorded and transcribed into text artificially. Private information being mentioned by participants were eliminated or anonymized. Some data collected from “yes no” interview questions were coded into numeric data (where 1=Yes, 0=No). These data will be used to correlate with the scores of the quantitative questionnaire subscales respectively. Thematic analysis applied the computer software R and packages for qualitative data analysis and storage.

By accumulating the scores of the five items in each subscale (reversed item recoded), the scores of each participants on the three sub-scales (responsiveness, demandingness, and autonomy) of the questionnaire can be obtained. The highest score for a single item is 5, and each subscale has five items, so the highest score for a single subscale is 25. The higher the score, the higher the corresponding sub-scale trait in their perceived paternal parenting.

Table 1. Participant mean score of three sub-scale dimensions with median and standard deviation

	Mean (\bar{x})	SD (σ)	Median	Maximum	Minimum
Responsiveness	18.19	4.21	18.5	25	11
Autonomy	17.19	3.75	17.5	24	8
Demandingness	19.12	4.38	20.5	24	10

We then obtain the mean and standard deviation to form $\bar{x} - \sigma$ and $\bar{x} + \sigma$ as two cut off score, in order to conduct score classification into three categories: low ($x < \bar{x} - \sigma$), medium ($\bar{x} - \sigma \leq x \leq \bar{x} + \sigma$), high ($x > \bar{x} + \sigma$). Participants with their score in each sub-scale will fall into these three categories in the corresponding dimension.

4. Results

4.1. Daughters' gender identity and dimensions of paternal parenting

As the information collected from the interview whether the female participant has experienced inconsistency between psychological gender identity and biological sex has been coded into numeric data (1=Yes, 0=No), the correlation between such gender identity and three dimension score is calculated.

Table 2. Correlation between gender identity and bio-sex inconsistency and parenting dimensions

/Gender identity and biological sex inconsistency	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Responsiveness	0.115
Autonomy	0.3233
Demandingness	-0.149

Results show that there is a positive correlation between paternal parenting responsiveness and daughters' gender identity and bio-sex inconsistency ($r = 0.115$). On the other hand, demandingness works contrarily on identity formation than other dimensions that there is a negative correlation between paternal parenting demandingness and gender identity inconsistency of daughters ($r = -0.149$). Noticeably, paternal parenting autonomy and daughter gender identity inconsistency have a positive correlation existed ($r = 0.3233$). The more psychological autonomy fathers give to their daughters in parenting, the more likely for the girls to perceive self gender identity inconsistency

with their bio-sex throughout development, having more possibilities to explore themselves and finally confirming gender identities other than their biological sex.

4.2. Daughters' attitude of their own biological sex

For the 16 participants accepted interview, 15 out of 16 (93.75%) proposed a positive answer when being asked whether satisfied to current life as a girl biologically. However, this doesn't mean that they would still choose to be a girl if they have a second chance to select their biological sex on their own. 25% of the participants (4 out of 16) claimed that they would choose to be biologically male if they have a chance to choose again, the rest 75% claimed willing to stay female as their biological sex.

When asking for the Pros and Cons participants perceive in their life as a biological female in the interviewing, there isn't a great different between those who had a strict paternal parenting of high demandingness and low autonomy given and those who had a loose paternal parenting with relatively low demandingness and high autonomy given being described by themselves. The most popular mentioned key words being mentioned in advantages of being a girl includes: "can dress up selves, strong empathy, less stress to in raising family". However, difference can be found between the description of disadvantages of being a girl for those with strict or loose paternal parenting. For those female participants who described to perceive a strict paternal parenting, the disadvantages of being a girl is mainly coming from family pressure as a source, common descriptions appear as "no makeup, no freedom to dress (according to family rules), being disciplined too much, have to give birth". While female participants who believed that paternal parenting gave them a lower demandingness and that they had a higher level of personal autonomy, most of the disadvantages described by female participants came from the pressure of sexism on the social level or troubles caused by women's physical characteristics, such as: "workplace discrimination, women objectification, discriminatory treatment, gender stereotypes, dysmenorrhea"

4.3. Daughters' gender role attitude through described femininity and lack of femininity traits

In the interviews, all 16 female subjects were asked to define "femininity", describe what it would be like to "lack of femininity", and being asked if they thought they were lacking femininity and how they felt. It can be found that daughters who grew up under different paternal parenting conditions have obvious differences in the description of femininity.

Generally looking at gender role attitude description towards femininity, 3 out of 16 participants defined them with negative adjectives, such as: over sensitive, troublesome, nagging). 3 out of 16 claims that there isn't a fixed definition for femininity or women's gender roles, and femininity traits vary from person to person. The rest 10 participants hold a positive description towards femininity, for instance: kind, empathetic, mentally strong/powerful, emotionally detailed, gentle.

Combined with the participants' descriptions of father-daughter relationship and perceived father rearing, those with strict paternal parenting usually negatively evaluate femininity and has certain exclusions. Therefore, this type of daughter will think that she is lacking femininity, feeling good and satisfied about her status quo (perfect, free). In contrast, loose paternal parenting daughters whose fathers gave less demandingness and more autonomy tended to rate femininity positively, affirming women's autonomy as individuals, and accepting the various possibilities of femininity that exist within themselves. Most of these people think that they are not lacking in femininity and still show a state of self-confidence about themselves. It is worth noting that this type of subjects generally can obtain higher responsiveness in paternal parenting. Same in loose paternal parenting, when fathers offer lower interaction, emotional support, and responsiveness, daughters tend to give explanations that there is no fixed concept of femininity that presupposes constraints on female behavior. Femininity can only be further defined in terms of the behavior of people who self-identify as female, but not a fixed idea.

5. Discussion

To seek a proper explanation for the given results, theory of identity development proposed by Erikson (1959)³⁷ can be applied. In his research, Erikson claimed that self-identity is complex internal state consist of sense of individuality, uniqueness, wholeness, and continuity between past and future. He claimed that without proper development of identity for individuals in their early stage, identity crisis may cause serious outcomes, resulting in the inability to determine who they are, their self worth, or their life direction.

As Marcia keep develops Erikson's theory and improved it into the ego identity model (1966)³⁸. The four stages in this model describing the process of an individual's identity development and formation from the dimensions of exploration and commitment includes: diffusion (low exploration and commitment), foreclosure (low exploration but high commitment), moratorium (high exploration but low commitment), and achievement (high exploration and high commitment). The research result in this paper were considered to be related to this four stages in model. In the second Stage foreclosure, individuals simply make commitments based on parental values without self-exploration.

Related to paternal parenting styles and daughter gender identity in this research, for those daughters whose fathers gave higher demandingness and less autonomy in parenting, their space for self-exploration was less than that of fathers who provided higher autonomy and low demandingness in parenting. Thus it is more difficult for them to enter stage 3 moratorium (in self-discovery). In the process of exploration, but no decision has been made yet) and stage 4 achievement (identity being explored and committed) which is reaching the ideal state. For daughters with higher autonomy in their perceived paternal parenting, greater self-exploration space and possibilities allow them to have more self-awareness and understanding, and ultimately it is easier for

them to make personal decisions and to adopt a gender identity that is most ideal for them, but not just to keep consistent with their biological sex.

As this investigation and paper explored the impact of specifically father's parenting style on the development of a daughter's gender identity. The disadvantage of the experiment is that the sample size is too small, which affects the data analysis and p-value of the questionnaire scale. Further experiments may need to expand the sample size to about 30 participants to enrich the data. At the same time, the main results of this study are basically related to the two dimensions of demandingness and autonomy in paternal parenting. Future researches can possibly focus on the effect of responsiveness in paternal parenting, that the impact of emotional communication in father-daughter relationship on daughter gender identity development appears to be a vacancy requiring further academic studies.

6. Conclusions

In summary, I have investigated the the effect of paternal parenting on daughter's gender identity formation and development in this research paper. By applying qualitative interview and qualitative questionnaire, 16 female participants are included. We found a positive relationship between paternal parenting autonomy and daughters' gender identity and bio-sex inconsistency. And results are found that participants who described to perceive a strict paternal parenting, the disadvantages of being a girl is mainly coming from family pressure as a source, while female participants who believed that paternal parenting gave them a lower demandingness and that they had a higher level of personal autonomy, most of the disadvantages described by female participants came from the pressure of sexism on the social level or troubles. For gender role attitude, those daughters with strict paternal parenting usually negatively evaluates femininity and has certain exclusions. As possible explanations are given according to the ego identity model, such result means that for those less demanding parents would allow their female offspring with more space to self-explore and investigated their gender identity to reach higher level of self identity achievement.

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