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Chapter 1: Introduction

Rationale of the Study

Parents often expect their adult children to start careers, gain financial independence, get married, and have children. Parental well-being often depends on their children's success in these roles (Ryff, Lee, Essex, & Schmutte, 1994). Because parents experience strong desires for their children to achieve adult status and independence (Fingerman & Pitzer, 2007), they may perceive more intense tension regarding their adult children's independence and ability to care for themselves and report more intense individual tensions than their adult children. Disparities in communication, lifestyles, values, opinions or even household maintenance can lead to rise in conflicts, which exacerbates the deteriorating relationships and possible alienation between mother and son. Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined parenting styles as an overall climate of parent-child interactions. However, parenting styles adopted by a mother may not always be well received by her son and not only does this put a strain on their relationship, but may also adjust the child to develop undesirable characteristics. However, children raised in authoritarian homes are more likely to attain higher academic achievement and psychosocial development, and fewer behavioural problems (Ballantine, 2001).

Statement of Problem

We are studying the correlation between parenting styles and the child's behaviour because we want to find out how the relationship between mother and son can be maintained on good terms in order to help my readers understand the importance of their mothers and appreciate them for their devotion through a creative product.

Purpose and Significance

This study aims to examine the how the correlation between parenting styles and the child's social emotional development can be utilised as an effective tool to effect positive change in relationships between mother and son. Given a better understanding of the impact of parenting characteristics on the interactions, social skills, behaviour management and mental health of children, mothers can maintain a better relationship with their children which puts them in a better position to nurture their children and prevent any delay in development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Social Emotional Development

Gottman et al. (1996) proposed that parents who internalize versus those who fail to internalize the 'emotional' knowledge of themselves and their children exhibit at least two distinct parenting characteristics. These characteristics have been defined as an emotion coaching and an emotion dismissing parenting style. Parents who accept their child's expression of feelings, even negative ones such as anger or sadness, view feelings as an opportunity to teach their child about the world of emotions and to build a closer relationship with their child. (Gottman, J. & DeClaire, J, 1997). The emotion dismissing parenting style refers to a lack of awareness and therefore a diminished ability to deal with children's

emotions. Characteristically, such parents lack awareness of emotions within themselves and their children, fear being emotionally out of control, are unaware of techniques to address negative emotions, and believe negative emotions to be a reflection of poor parenting skills (Gottman & DeClaire, 1997). Furthermore, instead of addressing displays of negative emotions, they ignore or dismiss emotions, attempt to rid the child of the negative emotions immediately, and strive to reassure the child that negative feelings always pass quickly without lasting effects. Children with dismissing parents are more likely to believe that their negative feelings, such as sadness and anger are not valid under any circumstances (Gottman & DeClaire, 1997). Parental emotional styles are theoretically distinct from the traditional parental disciplinary styles. As adults build positive relationships with their children, their potential influence on the child's development grows exponentially. Children cue in on the presence of meaningful and caring adults; they attend differentially and selectively to what adults say and do, and they seek out ways to ensure even more positive attention from adults (Gail, 2003).

Emotions and Self-Esteem

Parents can create an environment where children experience acceptance, encouragement, responsibility and love that builds and nourishes their self-esteem. Amato and Ochiltree (1986) found that interpersonal resources such as, parental expectations, help and attention were more strongly related to the development of self-esteem of young children than family structure resources, such as parental income, education, and occupation. This finding is consistent with research that implies the importance of the home environment and the quality of the parent-child relationship in the building of the child's self-esteem (Amato & Ochiltree, 1986). Additional studies have shown that parenting style has been found to predict child wellbeing in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behaviour. Research based on parent interviews, child reports, and parent observations consistently finds that children and adolescents whose parents are authoritative rate themselves and are rated by objective measures as more socially and instrumentally competent than those whose parents are non-authoritative (Baumrind, 1991).

Social and Emotional Competence

Emotional competence focuses on more intrapersonal qualities, such as the ability to understand or produce appropriate emotion signals where as social competence is defined by one's social skills and peer status, whereas (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001). Children learn the different rules and norms apply to different everyday settings and they can adapt accordingly (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001). Parents who used more constructive coaching as opposed to more control over children's emotions had children who were better able to regulate emotions and engage in self soothing (Gottman, 1997). Eisenberg, Fabes, and Murphy (1996) have reported that when parents were more accepting of their children's emotional displays, children developed more positive coping strategies. Parental controlling behaviour was negatively related to both social acceptance and children's own affective displays (Isley, O'Neil & Parke, 1996).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Types of Parenting Styles

Baumrind (1991) describes responsiveness as "the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands" and demandingness as "the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys". Using these two criteria, Baumrind (1991) formulates the three conventional parenting styles – authoritative, authoritarian and pessimistic.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1977) states that behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Interactions between cognition, environment and other behaviours influences human response. We are also more likely to attend to and imitate behaviours if the person we are modelling after has an admired status (McPherson, 2004) Although youths spend an increasing amount of time away from home, parents still have much influence on them (Gecas & Seff, 1990) and are likely to be salient models in their lives. Children learn strategies about managing their emotions, resolving disputes and engaging with others not only from their experiences, but also from the way their own reactions were responded to. For younger children especially, the primary source of these experiences is in the context of the parent–child relationship and the family environment.

Data Collection and Analysis

Farrell, Giselle, "The Relationship Between Parenting Style and the Level of Emotional Intelligence in Preschool-Aged Children" (2015) investigated the relationship between parenting style and the level of emotional intelligence in preschool aged children using two questionnaires: Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) and Children's Behaviour Questionnaire-Very Short Form (CBQ-VSF). An authoritarian parenting style was most highly rated. The results also indicated a significant, positive correlation between the authoritarian parenting style and children's degree of negative affect yet no other significant correlations between parenting style and emotional intelligence were noted amongst the remaining variables.

Chapter 4: Discussion

Implications of Outcomes

Considering previous research, this finding is not altogether surprising. An authoritative home environment has been cited as one of the characteristics in the profile of the resilient child (Barocas, Seifer, & Sameroff, 1985) and Baumrind (1991) stated that authoritative parenting, "unlike any other pattern, consistently generated competence and deterred problem behaviour" (p. 91), while Steinberg et al. (1991) talk of the "psychological and behavioural advantages over their peers," which children of authoritative parents enjoy. However, it has been disputed by some of the negative impacts authoritarian parents can bring, as espoused by previous findings (e.g. Chen, Dong, Zhou, 1997; Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993).

Strengths and Limitations

Parents might have been uncomfortable or unwilling to report accurately about parenting practices or beliefs which they endorse but perceive as negative. Due to sensitivity and social desirability issues, the parents' perspective might not be appropriate to tap into the more negative aspects of certain parenting styles. Several limitations of the present study restrict the researchers' ability to draw more detailed conclusions. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the current data, causality cannot be established. In the absence of longitudinal data, one cannot conclude that parenting style caused or even preceded the outcome variables assessed (Steinbergetal.,1991). Another possible problem arises from the idea that parental reports of attitudes toward childrearing might differ from actual parenting practices, which were not assessed in our study. In other words, what parents think or say about parenting might not necessarily correspond to what they actually do. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that parenting as well as children's adjustment (except for the teacher-rated AML-R) were reported from the same rater perspective, allowing for the possibility that the current findings may be partly due to common method variance.

Suggestions for Future Research

In view of the fact that our research method was modelled on previous works, we would to replicate the study in other locations to generalise the results. Additionally, the questionnaires could be conducted with participants in the form of an interview so as to gain more valuable insights from observations through interacting with them.

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