

Perceived Parenting Styles and the Psychological Correlates in Alpha Children: New Frontiers of Parenting in Pakistan

Dominance

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ABSTRACT

Fast transformation of social milieu, seen with the emergence of technology and bombardment of information in the form of internet gadgets and additional weight experienced during and after Covid outbreak, placed the Alpha Generation (who are now in their early/middle adolescence) to constantly pursue multiculturalism, which is in addition to their own unique physical, cognitive, and psychosocial demands, make it challenging for parents to adopt a parenting style in harmony with the idiosyncratic needs of their children, so that the goals of socialization are achieved.

The aim of the present study was to explore the perceived parenting styles and the psychological correlates of alpha children as practiced in Karachi, Pakistan. The data consisted of a sample of 200 early/middle adolescents (age range: 10 to 13 years), (89 males & 111 females) belonging to all three (lower, middle, upper middle class) socio-economic strata, studying in an English medium school. To collect data, simple random sampling was used. Children were assessed on Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS), Self –Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) and Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-12). The Cronbach's Alpha for perceived parenting styles was .57 (Authoritative parenting style=.57, authoritarian parenting style=.62, permissive parenting style .68), for SPPC .88, and for CYRM-12 was .76. The focus of the present study was: 1). What is the most prevailing parenting style in the culture of Karachi with alpha children, 2). How does parenting style impact alpha children. The research

hypotheses developed include: H1: There is a likelihood of significant relationship between perceived parenting style and self-esteem, among alpha children. H2: There would be a significant relationship between perceived parenting style and resilience among alpha children. H3: There is a possibility of a significant relationship between perceived parenting style and adjustment among alpha children. H4: There would be a significant difference between perceived parenting styles as an outcome of gender among alpha children. After scoring, analyses of data was done by using SPSS version-23. The study found the positive correlation between authoritative parenting style and psychological correlates and negative correlation with authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Though some show statistically significant and other show insignificant hypothesized relationship between variables.

The results of the study provide the evidence of the shifting trends in parenting in the form of authoritative parenting style in Pakistan reflecting that the family unit is ready to play its new role. Implications are discussed.

Key words: Parenting Style, Alpha Children, Self-esteem, Resilience, Adjustment

Introduction

Some of the alpha children (who were born in 2010 to 2013) are in their early adolescence which is a dynamic period due to rapidly occurring changes in their mind, body and psyche. Besides physical changes, they are going through a number of psychological challenges, such as, process of identity development as a unique person, unsupervised exploration of real world around them, preference to peer group over immediate family, inclination for being assertive and independent decision making. The context filled with digital technology is making them to share their thoughts and life experiences publicly, without boundaries. They will possibly grow up innovative and unconventional, have need for achievement, status, independence and competition along with self-love, impulsivity, risk taking, attention seeking and zero tolerance for ambiguity.

This makes it clear that this kind of profile requires parenting style which instill a psychological make-up necessary to overcome the challenges and inculcate a healthy and productive personality for self, community and world.

Baumrind (1973) was the initial figure to describe parenting styles, expressing the variable of balance between two elements: parental responsiveness and parental demandingness.

Responsiveness is about exercising parent's discretionary power to allow self-regulation and assertion and individuality by providing support, warmth and satisfying children's needs.

Demandingness is about parent s' desired demands placed on children by enabling them to meet behavioral standards and controls so that they are included in the family structure (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Parenting Dimensions

This is the approach of analyzing parenting strategies. Parenting styles are evaluated by examining three dimensions: warmth, control, and autonomy.

1. Warmth

Warmth refers to the emotional availability of parents by responding to child's needs. Warmth refers to unconditional love, care and show of affection manifested in the behavior of parents directed toward their children.

2. Control

Control refers to active, vigilant monitoring and supervision of child's ventures and interpersonal relationships. Basically, a distinction is made between two types of control:

2.1. Behavioral Control: Parents who work on the principle of behavioral control use communication strategically by establishing clear limits and boundaries , expect certain behaviors and make children to follow rules and afterwards monitor and keep vigilance over them (Sorkhabi & Middaugh, 2014; Baumrind, Larzelere & Owens, 2010).

2.2. Psychological Control: Parental use of intrusive psychological tactics such as guilt and remorse induction. The child's approval becomes conditional as parents withdraw their affection if their agenda is not accepted by children (Smetana, 2017).

3. Autonomy

Psychological autonomy makes adolescents to cultivate independent thinking and responsibility. According to Self-determination theory, the need for freedom or autonomy makes children to experience genuineness in their behavior and choices. The fulfillment of this need becomes automatic if the parenting style is based on the dimensions of high warmth, age appropriate support for autonomy, and structure by exercising behavioral control. Parental display of less warmth, freedom and structure can cause no fulfillment of the need but not to frustrated anger (Ulferts, 2020).

Thus, parenting style consists of a chain of attitudes and behaviors used by parents to rear up and coach their offsprings which by and large generate an emotional climate that remains almost steady and changeless in a variety of conditions (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Based on the distinct degree of responsiveness and demandingness, Baumrind outlined three distinct styles of parenting.

Authoritative style is the best compromise as parents create balance between demandingness and responsiveness. The secret for experiencing well-being in every domain of life lies in striking the right balance between limits and autonomy which provide self-sufficiency, direction and motivation to match required criteria specified by authoritative parenting style (Rueter & Conger, 1995a, 1995b). A sound foundation laid in a protective parent- child interaction enables adolescents to develop logical reasoning, values, role taking and regard for others feelings (Baumrind, 1978; Krevans & Gibbs, 1996). This results in adolescents' ability to set attainable goals, searching means to attain these goals, and controlling hurdles and overcoming difficulties encountered during working for goals (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002). The care and warmth

expressed via parental involvement facilitate parental influence manifested in better socialization (Sim, 2000).

Permissive style makes a parent to have low level of demandingness and high level of responsiveness. The indifferent style adopted by permissive parents effects children's adjustment , devastate their mental health and other domains of behavior (Sheeber, Hops, Alpert, Davis,& Andrews., 1997).

Authoritarian style is about parents having high demands over children and low level of responsiveness. In such a parenting climate based on coercion and control, the child is unable to adjust and a battle to assert his increasing need for independence ensues in explicitly violating parental rules. This rebellion does not indicate emotional independence rather it's a reflection of child's frustration with the existing lack of parental understanding and inflexibility (Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993).Contrary to authoritative parenting, authoritarian parents are judgmental about the behavior and achievements of their offspring and expect them to meet perfect standard set by their dominant authority of parenting (Baumrind, 1971).The children become less likely to meet the perfect standards of their parents to which parents respond with punishment and force to mold and form their behavior.

Role of Culture

Various factors play role in determining specific parenting style including culture which is based either on individualism or collectivism (Grusec , Rudy, & Martini, 1997; Kim & Rohner, 2002). Without going into the debate of the difference between these two types of culture,there is change in parenting style from authoritarian to authoritativeness in industrialized countries (Doepke & Zilibotti, 2014; Bray & Dawes, 2016).For instance, Spanking, corporal punishment have decreased over time and are replaced by child-centered attitude and behavior even by less educated people. This is also reinforced by enactment of laws related to domestic violence in underdeveloped countries. The media is playing its role in uplifting the image of a better

and happy family in which parents and children seem involved in dialogue, problem solving and no confrontational relationships along the western line of thought. The impact of globalization has lessened the differences related to economic, social, generational and parenting styles. The intensive parenting culture has found acceptance by different socioeconomic and ethnicities (Ishizuka, 2019; Parker, 2015).

Alpha children are invested by their parents since the norms of globalization and multiculturalism dictate child-centeredness regardless social class and gender of the child thus we find parents having intention to intensive parenting in most of the situations as depicted in a survey conducted on 3600 parents by Ishizuka (2019) in United States.

Parenting styles and self-esteem, resilience, & adjustment According to Yang and Zhou (2008), expression of warmth which is displayed in authoritative and permissive parenting has positive association with better self-esteem whereas rebuff, hostility and negative expressions of love have negative correlation with self-esteem. Even permissive parenting style which is characterized by high warmth but low discipline or control lead to low self-esteem. The reasons behind the negative link between permissive parenting style and self-esteem may be due to feelings of insecurity, dependency on parents for approval, little achievement orientation, comparing self with peers, and emotional dysregulation (Smith & Johnson, 2023).

Adolescents brought up with positive or negative parenting show different levels of emotional and behavioral support, which either promote or inhibit resilience in them. Gilligan (2001) found that adolescents are destined to have greater resilience when parenting allows independence, constructive control, help in adapting to monetary needs. Also encourage association with community and other societal groups. It is only recently realized that parental acceptance plays a mediating role in shaping resilience (Rohner 1986). The acceptance on part of parents make children to experience optimistic world view whereas rejection shapes their world view as pessimistic.

Adjustment is an interplay of those adaptive behaviors that make an adolescent to avail his internal and external personal attributes in order to promote complete well-being (Wang, 2023). Darling and Steinberg (1993) held that adolescent's adjustment is an outcome of parenting style (i.e. a feature of social environment of the child) and has its own independent existence and not the feature of developing person.

Studies started since 2019, show similarities between the parenting styles globally, the change is particularly seen in the parenting styles in Asia including, India, Iran, and Pakistan. A study conducted in India on adolescents from grade 8 and 9, found 93.2 % adolescents perceived their parents as practicing authoritative parenting style which was positively related with the index of psychological well-being and purpose in life (Francis, Paj, & Badagabettu, 2020). In Iran, Parents displaying greater warmth and behavioral regulation relate it to social change due to education, emphasis on individuation, family planning and increasing awareness of authoritative parenting style (Edward et al,2022).

A study conducted on a sample of adolescents in Lahore found a negative association between authoritative parenting and problem behavior (Fariha, Rizvi, & Najam, 2015).

Another study (Akhter, Noor, & Iqbal, 2019) found authoritative parenting having positive impact on children's personality. A study conducted in Karachi, found negative association between authoritarian parenting style and academic performance (Rauf K, Ahmed j, 2017). The studies conducted since 2016 indicate as the foundation stone toward the practice of authoritative parenting in Pakistani culture.

Rationale

The aim of the study was to investigate the most practiced parenting style in face of challenges and opportunities experienced by alpha children in a globalized world and how they are related to psychological correlates of self-esteem, resilience, and adjustment. The research also aimed to describe how culture influences the parenting styles in the city of Karachi, Pakistan through children's perception of parenting styles and timeline finding from previous researches conducted on the topic of parenting in Pakistan

Research Questions

- 1).What is the most common parenting style in the culture of Karachi with alpha children,
- 2).How does parenting style impact alpha children.

Hypotheses

H1, There is a likelihood of significant relationship between perceived parenting style and self-esteem, among alpha children.

H2, There would be a significant relationship between perceived parenting style and resilience among alpha children

H3, There is a possibility of a significant relationship between perceived parenting style and adjustment among alpha children.

H4, There would be a significant difference between perceived parenting styles in two genders among alpha children.

Method

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 200 participants (89 males & 111 females) with age range between 10 to 13 years old from English medium schools. The grade levels included 5, 6, 7, & 8. The technique to select subjects was simple random sampling. Though the measures were taken in a group of 10-15, the participation was purely voluntarily and anonymous.

Measures

1. Demographic Information

The demographic information form was developed which consisted of seeking information including name age, gender, grade level, socioeconomic status, family structure, and parents' education.

2. Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS)

To assess perceived parenting style, Perceived Parenting Style Scale (Divya T, V & Manikandan K, 2013) was administered to early adolescents. The scale is based on three types of parenting styles including Authoritative, Permissive, and Authoritarian.

The scale is composed of 30 items which measures responses on a 5 point Likert Scale (1=strongly disagree,2=disagree,3=neutral,4=agree, and 5=strongly agree).

The reliability in terms of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.52, 0.62, and 0.66 for authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting style, respectively.

3. Self –Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) (Susan Harter, 1985)

The SPPC has been widely used in various researches to study psychological adjustment (Such as Susan Harter & Nancy Whitesell, 2009., Heather et al, 2005) The scale is based on the theoretical assumption that others beliefs about self are internalized by children (Harter, 1998, 1999) which are manifested in their expectation about self to excel in academic, social command in peer group, sports competency, physical appearance, behavioral conduct and self-worth.

There are six items in each subscale, making a total of 36 items. In each domain, the technique of counterbalancing is used .Hence three of the items are scored 1, 2, 3, 4 and the remaining three are scored 4, 3, 2, 1. Internal consistency in terms of Cronbach's alpha for different grade levels, ranging from grade 5 to grade 8, was 0.88.

4. Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-12)

To assess resilience an omnibus version of CRYM, (CYRM-12) developed by Linda Liebenberg, et al (2013)

was administered. It is a brief scale validated to use for the age range of 10 to 18 years old children. This 12-item version covers the individual ability and their social ecology consisting of personal, social, community and cultural domains that bind together to facilitate positive outcomes by bouncing back from adversity. The Cronbach's Alpha of the scale for the present study was 0.76. The scale consists of 12 brief items to capture personal, age mates, relational, educational and community based support system that guards adolescents against potential risks and ensures a multi-level protection. The resilience is scored by summing all items on a 5-point scale.

Research Design

To test the hypotheses, self-report inventories were used. Each subject served in both the conditions of independent (perceived parenting style) and dependent variable (self-esteem, resilience, & adjustment). Separate Standard instructions with each scale were given at the time of administration.

Ethical Considerations

A written permission letter by the departmental head was provided to head mistress /headmaster of each school. They were also described the details , purpose of the study, and approximated administration time for self-report scales .A separate consent form in Urdu was developed to be signed by parents on school requirement .The researcher ensured about confidentially,anonymity,right to withdraw from participation to both ,school head and students. The whole process of questionnaire administration took about 25 to 30 minutes.

Results and Conclusion

Table 1: Respondents demographic characteristics

Respondents' characteristics	percentages
Gender	
Male	44.3%
Female	55.2%
Age of the Respondents	
10 years old	3.0%
11 years old	23.9%
12 years old	39.3%
13 & above	33.3%
Grade Levels	
5 th grade	35.8%
6 th grade	29.9%
7 th grade	25.4%
8 th grade	7.5%
9 th grade	1.0 %
Number of Siblings	
None	3.5%
1	10.9%
2	25.4%
3	30.8%
4 & more	28.9%
Socioeconomic status	
Low Class	16.9%
Middle Class	75.1%

Upper Class	7.5%
Mother's Education	
Matric & below	53.2%
Intermediate	19.9%
Graduation	15.4%
MA	10.9%
Father's Education	
Matric & below	45.3%
Intermediate	23.9%
Graduation	11.4.4%
MA	17.9%
Other	1.0%
Family Structure	
Joint	49.8%
Nuclear	49.8%
Spoken Language	
Urdu	60.2%
Urdu and English both	6.0%
Vernaculars	39.8%

Table 1, (n=200).

Table 2: Average means and standard deviations of variables

Variables	Average means	SD
PPS	89.3200	11.06843
authveparenting	38.1850	4.43159
authoritarianparenting	26.0900	6.38008
permissiveparenting	21.2400	7.78237
Selfperprofile(Adjustment)	114.8750	16.15159
scholasticcompetence	19.3450	3.85490
socialcompetence	18.8450	3.38649
athleticcompetence	19.0800	3.66068
physicalappearance	19.6200	3.74778
behavioralconduct	18.0900	3.39700
Selfesteem	19.8950	3.66622
Resilience	54.8800	4.91185

Table 3: Correlations between perceived parenting styles

Variables	Correlation
Self-esteem	
Perceived Parenting Styles	-.205**
Authoritative parenting Style	.138
Authoritarian parenting Style	-.101
Permissive parenting Style	-.305**
Adjustment (self-perception profile)	
Perceived Parenting Styles	-.197**
Authoritative parenting Style	.167*
Authoritarian parenting Style	-.111
Permissive parenting Style	-.289**

Scholastic Competence (components of Adjustment)

Perceived Parenting Styles	-.175*
Authoritative parenting Style	.142*
Authoritarian parenting Style	-.069
Permissive parenting Style	-.283**

Social Competence (components of Adjustment)

Perceived Parenting Styles	-.078
Authoritative parenting Style	.099
Authoritarian parenting Style	-.054
Permissive parenting Style	-.111

Athletic Competence (components of Adjustment)

Perceived Parenting Styles	-.123
Authoritative parenting Style	.199**
Authoritarian parenting Style	-.151*
Permissive parenting Style	-.153*

Physical Appearance (components of Adjustment)

Perceived Parenting Style	-.117
Authoritative parenting Style	.139*
Authoritarian parenting Style	-.013
Permissive parenting Style	-.249**

Behavioral Conduct (components of Adjustment)

Perceived Parenting Style	-.180*
Authoritative parenting Style	.016
Authoritarian parenting Style	-.111
Permissive parenting Style	-.175*

Resilience

Perceived Parenting Style	-.089
Authoritative parenting Style	.385**
Authoritarian parenting Style	-.311**
Permissive parenting Style	-.111

correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
(n=200)

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test

Variables	Males		Females		<i>t</i> (198)	<i>p</i>	Hedges' <i>g</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
PPS	88.5730	11.58554	89.9189	10.65077	-.854	.394	0.122
Authoritative							
Parenting style	38.1236	4.93554	38.2342	4.00444	-.175	.861	0.025
Authoritarian	24.6517	4.84088	27.2432	7.20255	-2.908	.004	0.413613
Parenting style							
Permissive							
Parenting Style	22.0225	7.35462	20.6126	8.08722	1.275	.204	-0.181
Self-esteem	20.3371	3.49006	19.5405	3.77981	1.532	.127	-0.218
Adjustment	116.9551	15.40949	113.2072	16.60346	1.638	.103	-0.233
(Self-per p)							
Scholastic							
Competence	19.5618	3.96563	19.1712	3.77281	.711	.478	-0.101
Social Comp-	19.2247	3.39369	18.5405	3.36502	1.424	.156	-0.203

etence							
Athletic Comp- 19.9101	3.51503	18.4144	3.65431	2.926	.004	0.415887	
etence							
Physical							
Appearance	19.6180	3.77945	19.6216	3.73936	-.007	.995	0.001
Behavioral							
Conduct	18.3034	3.46215	17.9189	3.34972	.795	.428	-0.113
Resilience	55.7416	4.29992	54.1892	5.27001	2.244	.026	0.319239

All four hypotheses are supported which indicate change in psychological correlates associated with perceived parenting styles. The study found the positive correlation between authoritative parenting style and psychological correlates and negative correlation with authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Though some show statistically significant and other show insignificant hypothesized relationship between variables (see table 3). The findings indicate the perceived authoritative parenting as the most common style by the alpha children, as its mean score is greater than other two parenting styles (see table 2). The overall trend is evidently seen in all socioeconomic groups (low, middle, and upper) and children's age groups. The demographics do not seem to have any consequential impact on perceived parenting styles with the exception of adolescents' gender.

The mean value of authoritative parenting style across all age groups was approximately equal. A separate analysis for the socioeconomic strata indicated, the highest prevalence of authoritative parenting style across all three socioeconomic groups. Parental level of education did not influence the choice of parenting style. Nonetheless, gender of the child effected perceived parenting style by alpha children as they perceived it differently (see table 4). The mean score for authoritative parenting was almost same between males and females, however authoritarian

parenting was perceived more by girls than boys.

The findings are in line with the previous researches by Ishizuka, 2019; Parker, 2015), who found globalization mitigating effects of economic, social, generational and parenting styles. The intensive parenting culture has found acceptance by different socioeconomic and ethnicities. The obtained findings in our study allow us to conceive authoritative parenting style in every ethnicity, Socio-economic class and family system which is in conformity to various studies (Carson, Chowdhury, Perry, & Pati, 1999).

Our research question is partially answered by Osenweugwor (2016) if we limit it to authoritative parenting style. This suggests that authoritative parenting style is the most common trend in contemporary Pakistani household. An important dimension of authoritative parenting style is the level of social adjustment and autonomous living (Cardinali & D'Allura, 2007). The preponderance of authoritative parenting style in the culture of this city may be a pointer toward transformation of our society in some social change due to access of western and modern values via media, education, and gradual emphasis on individual values. The gene alpha seems to loose ties with authoritarian style of parenting and witnessing authoritative parenting style taking some shape.

The tendency to approach children in a democratic way is visible not only in Pakistan but all over the world. Particularly the change is seen in Asian countries such as India, Iran, and other Eastern countries who believed in conservative and collectivistic values earlier (Ghorbani, 2021; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Shechory-Bitton & Ben-David, 2014; Shechory-Bitton et al., 2015; Su & Chen, 2020; Yafe, 2020). According to Ghorbani and colleagues (2021), the essence of authoritative parenting style is felt globally and everywhere.

Speaking in term of gender, the alpha girls perceive their parenting style as based on authoritarianism than alpha boys. The findings are in accordance with previous researches (Shek, 2002; Zhang et al., 2006; Zakeri, Karimpour, 2011). The findings suggest that more restrictions and rigid rules of behavior are specified for

girls than boys in the culture of Pakistan. This finding is supported by the research findings reported by Zakeri & Karimpour (2011).The research found that girls experience more “behavioral strictness-supervision” for them than boys.

This seems plausible to assume that as far as alpha girls are concerned, parents have not stepped out of the collectivistic cultural effects. The difference between alpha girl and alpha boy for athletic competence, where boys outshining girls show many factors other than parenting styles to be associated with gender difference. Socioculturally speaking, the gender stereotypes, mostly in favor of boys bring more support and encouragement to boys’ participation in sports. Also sports avenues attract and are available to boys than girls. Psychosocially, boy adolescents’ self- perception of athletic competence motivate and encourage their confidence level to meet social standards. More role models and peer influence related to sports are available to boys than girls. The socialization goals adopted by parents to impact athletic competence are based on their parenting style besides gender roles and stereotypes. In this regard each parenting style behave differently to support athletic competence in both the genders. Parents adopt different dimensions of parenting to promote physical activity in their children (Spruijit,Decker,Ziermans,Swaab ,2018).Unconscious gender bias make parents to behave differently depending on child’s gender (Bailey,2021).

Another significant difference found between alpha males and alpha female adolescents is related to resilience, in which mean value for males is high than females mean value. The outcome is in line with a number of researches (Stratta , 2013;Shehu & Mokgwathi, 2008; Ciarochi, Heaven ,2007).Females are found to be less resilient than males as they have more critical attitude toward self, experience peace in loneliness in face of some tragic event, have high intense emotions, and are less resilient (Neff ,2003).

Recommendations

Authoritative parenting style in Pakistan is a gradual and slow process, greatly influenced by media image than acquired conscious solution. However only further research can explore it in depth. There is a need for policy makers to educate parents for different parenting styles and the benefits attached with authoritative parenting style.

Perceived parenting styles are a major part which contribute to children's behavioral outcomes, however family dynamics and child temperament also play a significant role in it. These factors should be combined to have a more thorough understanding of children's developmental outcomes. A larger sample, using other methods than correlation to infer cause and effects, such as longitudinal or experimental design are suggested for future research.

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