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# OSRA Grant Cycle I Public Reports

Project Title:

Parenting Style Influences on Child Academic Achievement and University Adjustment

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**Public Report**

**Project Title:**

**Parenting Style Influences on Child Academic Achievement and University Adjustment**

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## 1) Introduction and background

Children manage to perform and cope with life and its challenges better when they feel secured and are surrounded by supportive and understanding people. Parents are the preface and façade of life for their children and they are the first and primary companions they get for a considerable period of their lifetime; especially their early stages which are considered as building blocks for the child personality and well-being. Raising a child has always been a longitudinal challenge that accompanies mothers and fathers for an admirable time of their lives. Hence, parenting is a mission that possessed a great attention by researchers and counselors. Through their adopted parenting styles, parents represent a source of high influence on shaping their child's personality and characteristics. Researchers named two important dimensions of parenting that characterize the different parenting styles which are demandingness\ control, and responsiveness\acceptance (e.g. Rinaldi & Howe, 2012). Based on these two main dimensions, three different common parenting styles that are widely used by mothers and fathers were identified: the authoritarian, the authoritative, and the permissive. Maddahi et al. (2012) stated that authoritarian parenting style is characterized by high level of demandingness and less responsiveness. Baumrind (1991) clarified that parents using this style expect their orders to be complied to without negotiation. A clear conduct of behavior is stated between child and parent; and committing to this conduct becomes obligatory for the child. Baumrind explained that parents adopting the authoritarian parenting style usually use reward and punishment strategies to monitor their child behavior. The permissive parenting style, on the other hand, is a reversed version of the authoritarian style. Permissive parents exhibit a high level of responsiveness and low demandingness. They usually permit a high level of self-regulation for their children as they do not outline a clear behavior conduct (as cited in Conrade & Ho, 2001). Finally, the authoritative parenting is a style in between the aforementioned styles concerning the exhibited levels of demandingness and responsiveness. Authoritative parents put standers and monitor their children behavior in a supportive way. Usually they are described as “assertive” parents but not “restrictive” (e.g. Baumrind, 1991; & Maddahi et al., 2012).

Cumulative research demonstrated that positive parenting and continuous involvement and support by parents resulted on positive outcomes of the children, while negative characteristics of parenting, such as poor supervision and inconsistent discipline, associated with higher levels of children's behavioral, social, psychological, and academic problems (e.g. Gryckowski, Jordan, & Mercer, 2010). Previous research attempted to establish a relationship between parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) and academic achievement of the children. Kim and Chung (2003) found that authoritative parenting style significantly and positively correlated with academic competence. Similarly, Rudasill (2012) concluded that highly cognitive children perceived their parents to exhibit a flexible (authoritative) parenting style. Particularly, the children with lower cognitive abilities perceived their parents to be permissive or authoritarian more than did the children of higher cognitive ability. Rudasill justified these findings with the fact that children who live with authoritative parents feel free to question and explore. In line with these results, Ishak et al. (2012) integrated parenting styles as moderators in investigating the impact of academic self-concept on academic achievement and found that authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles work as moderator in the relationship between the two variables. However, the authoritative style demonstrated more significance and resulted in greater effect in the relationship. The researchers claimed that this might be explained by the characteristics of authoritative parents as they tend to give love, accept the uniqueness of each child, and provide equality among their children. The researchers suggested that authoritative parenting should be promoted as it predicts positive effects on individuals' psychosocial development, social competence and academic performance.

Researchers have also investigated possible connections between parenting styles and children's social adjustment. Ishak et al. (2012) found that authoritative parenting results on better social competence. Ardabili, Kazemi, and Solokian (2010) studied the influence of Iranian mothers' parenting style on the social competence of their daughters, and their results indicated that the participants perceiving their mother to use permissive and authoritative parenting techniques tended to demonstrate a greater social competence than the participants indicating authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles. Similar to these findings, Mckinney et al. (2011) argued that better emotional adjustment was associated with authoritative parenting style while poorer adolescent emotional adjustment was related to authoritarian parenting style and harsh discipline. In a later study by Mckinney and Renk (2012), they emphasized the same findings and

highlighted that authoritative parenting predicted higher emotional adjustment than permissive and authoritarian parenting.

As can be noted, most of available research used a cross-sectional design to study the connections between parenting styles and children's outcomes, including academic achievement and university adjustment. Very rare studies, if any, had used a longitudinal design to track the effects of parenting styles on children's outcomes over time. For example, Ciarrochi, Heaven, and Williams (2012) examined the longitudinal relationships between perceived parenting style and psychological flexibility among students at five Australian high schools over a 6-year period, from their first to their final year of secondary education. They found that students who reported increases in authoritarian parenting were less flexible than their peers, while those who reported increases in authoritative parenting tended to be more flexible in their later grades. Hence, authoritarian parenting was found longitudinally related to reduced psychological flexibility among older adolescents.

In the current study, the research team aimed to investigate the extent to which each parenting style is influential on children's academic achievement and university adjustment. Based on the reviewed literature, authoritative parenting style is a significant predictor of positive outcomes in the examined variables: academic achievement and university adjustment of the children. Hence, the researchers consider contrasting and comparing findings of the current study with results of similar studies conducted in other contexts for cultural differences and impacts. Through its longitudinal design, this study is an endeavor to enrich the existing literature with another evidence of the importance of parenting styles in children's life. It is also an attempt to shed light and spread knowledge about an Arab country, Oman, to the rest of the world. More importantly, and based on the study findings and applications, this project is expected to raise awareness among the GCC society about the significance of adopting positive parenting practices, and it may result in application of new policies and strategies in school and college counseling services in Oman and later in other GCC.

## 2) Objectives and significance

The significance of the study is represented by the importance of parenting styles in the development of children.

This study aimed at

1. Identifying the most common parenting styles in the Omani parents as perceived by grade12 students.
2. Examining the effects of parenting styles on predicting children's outcomes; particularly children's academic achievement and university adjustment.
3. Developing a guidebook that focuses on improving at-risk fresh students' adaptability to college life.

## 3) Justification

Cumulative research shows the importance of parenting styles on the development of children. Research shows that positive parenting styles influence children's outcomes positively while negative parenting styles influence children's outcomes negatively. Most of available research did not use longitudinal research design to examine the connections between parenting styles and the characteristics of children.

## 4) Methodology

The current study examined the connections between parenting styles and students' outcomes using a one-year longitudinal design that followed students from grade 12 up to their first year in higher education institutions. In the first phase during grade 12, 2267 students responded to a parenting styles questionnaire. Their scores in grade 12 were obtained from the ministry of higher education. Later after joining higher education institutions, the same students (N = 245) responded to a questionnaire examining their university academic, social and psychological adjustment.

## 5) Results/findings

1. The most common parenting styles in the Omani families is the authoritative parenting style. This style scored the highest mean for both mothers and fathers. The second common parenting style is the authoritarian style for both parents. In contrast, the means obtained for the permissive parenting style was lower than the theoretical mean. This indicates that permissive style is less common in the Omani context.
2. All parenting styles, except for authoritative father, correlated statistically and significantly with students' academic achievement. Among the significant five correlations, only authoritative mother showed positive connection with students' academic achievement. The largest correlation was found between students' academic achievement and their perception of permissive mother.
3. Two parenting styles correlated statistically significantly with academic achievement (i.e., negatively permissive mother and positively authoritative father). Similarly, these two parenting styles correlated significantly with psychological adjustment, in addition to authoritative mother which correlated positively. In contrast, none of the parenting styles correlated significantly with social adjustment.
4. The parenting style model explained 7.5% of variance on academic adjustment with two styles being significant predictors: Permissive mother and authoritative father. The results suggested that students' university academic adjustment increases as fathers increase their authoritative style and mothers decrease their permissive style.
5. Parenting styles accounted for 6.2% of variance in psychological adjustment. The effects of each parenting style, however, did not reach significance. Similar pattern was found when predicting social adjustment, in which only 2% of variance was explained by parenting styles.

## 6) Impacts (societal impacts, and/or legal impacts and/or policy impacts)

1. Developing a screening test for new enrolled students during admission process or prior to the university admission to explore the parenting styles dominant in each students' family atmosphere.

2. Utilizing the developed guideline for students' adjustment to increase students' life and academic skills that are important for students to succeed in their university years. The guideline covers variety of topics that are important for university students especially in their first year.

7) Benefits to Arab countries in terms of issues related to the Arab Family

All the Omani findings reported in this project can benefit other Arab countries as research from all Arabic countries is consistent with the findings of the current study. The main issues that can be taken to other Arab countries are the importance of parenting styles on the development of children's outcomes and the need for supporting first-year students by their higher education institutions.

8) Conclusion

1. The findings of the current project provide good evidence for the importance of parenting styles in shaping children's life and characteristics.
2. The longitudinal design of this project allows to examine the longitudinal effects of parenting styles in their children's lives as they move from school to university.
3. Authoritative parenting style has positive impacts on students' academic achievement and university adjustment.
4. In contrast, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles influence negatively students' academic achievement and university adjustment.
5. The effects of parenting styles, however, accounted only for less than tenth of the variance on these students' outcomes, which indicates the importance of examining other personal and institutional variables that influence students' academic achievement and university adjustment.

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## Appendix 1

### مقياس التكيف الجامعي

تعليمات التطبيق: الرجاء الاستجابة لهذه الأسئلة بناء على خبرتك في السنة الأولى من دراستك بالجامعة أو الكلية. لا توجد إجابة واحدة صحيحة، وإنما الإجابة الصحيحة هي التي تعبر فعلا عما تشعر به. ضع دائرة أمام الخيار الذي هو أقرب إليك أمام كل عبارة من عبارات المقياس.

م	العبارة	أعارض بشدة	أعارض	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
1	علاقتي بزملائي الطلبة جيدة.	1	2	3	4	5
2	علاقتي بمعظم أساتذتي في الكلية جيدة.	1	2	3	4	5
3	أجد صعوبة في كسب حب وتقدير أساتذتي في الكلية.	1	2	3	4	5
4	أعتقد أن أساتذتي يتضايقون مني.	1	2	3	4	5
5	أعتقد أن زملائي يتحدثون عني بما لا يليق من وراء ظهري.	1	2	3	4	5
6	من السهل علي إقامة علاقات جيدة مع الآخرين والانسجام معهم.	1	2	3	4	5
7	يسرني الاشتراك في الأعمال التطوعية.	1	2	3	4	5
8	يصفني الآخرون بأني شخص اجتماعي.	1	2	3	4	5
9	أشعر بالارتياح عندما أقدم خدمة الآخرين.	1	2	3	4	5
10	أحافظ على علاقتي بالآخرين حتى لو كانت لديهم أفكار تخالف أفكاري.	1	2	3	4	5
11	تكيفت بشكل إيجابي مع حياة السكن بعيدا عن أهلي.	1	2	3	4	5
م	العبارة	أعارض بشدة	أعارض	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
12	لدي عزيمة قوية لا تضعف أمام الصعوبات.	1	2	3	4	5
13	أشعر بعدم الاطمئنان عن إجاباتي في الامتحانات.	1	2	3	4	5
14	أشعر بأن ثقفتي بنفسية عالية.	1	2	3	4	5
15	أشعر بعدم التركيز في ترتيب أفكاري.	1	2	3	4	5

5	4	3	2	1	أشعر بالضجر والضييق داخل الجامعة.	16
5	4	3	2	1	أعاني من شروذ الذهن أثناء المذاكرة.	17
5	4	3	2	1	أشعر أحيانا بمشكلات في النوم عند التفكير في مستقبلي بعد انتهاء الدراسة.	18
5	4	3	2	1	أشعر بالحزن من سوء حظي أثناء دراستي.	19
5	4	3	2	1	أشعر بالثقة تجاه الأعمال التي أقوم بها في الجامعة.	20
5	4	3	2	1	مزاجي متقلب بين الحزن والفرح.	21
5	4	3	2	1	مشكلتي أنني لا أحب المذاكرة.	22
5	4	3	2	1	أشعر بفقدان الدافعية عند استمراري في الدراسة الجامعية في الفترة الأخيرة.	23
5	4	3	2	1	أستمع بتدوين المحاضرات الجامعية.	24
5	4	3	2	1	أعتقد أن معظم المقررات التي أدرسها جافة.	25
5	4	3	2	1	أشعر بالتوتر والقلق عند اقتراب الامتحانات.	26
أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	أعارض	أعارض بشدة	العبارة	م
5	4	3	2	1	أشعر بالملل من حضور المحاضرات.	27
5	4	3	2	1	تواجهني بعض الصعوبات في تحصيل بعض المقررات الدراسية.	28
5	4	3	2	1	طريقة تدريس أغلب الأساتذة غير مجدية.	29
5	4	3	2	1	لا أستطيع الإجابة عن سؤال المدرس داخل الفصل رغم أنني أعرف الإجابة.	30
5	4	3	2	1	سرعان ما يحبني ويقدرني الأساتذة.	31
5	4	3	2	1	أنا متوافق مع الحياة الجامعية.	32
5	4	3	2	1	أواجه صعوبة في إقامة علاقات اجتماعية مع الآخرين في السكن.	33
5	4	3	2	1	مهاراتي الدراسية ضعيفة وتؤثر في دراستي الجامعية.	34

