

Identifying the Influence of Parenting Practices on the Communicative Development of Preschool Children

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Abstract

Parenting style practices in assisting preschool children's communicative development need to be supported by all parties especially parents. This study aims to identify parenting style practices in relation to preschool children's communicative development. The respondents were parents of preschoolers from Kuantan, a district in Pahang. This study is based on quantitative research and survey study design. Samples involved 281 parents of 5 and 6 years old preschoolers, using simple random sampling method. Samples were gathered through a survey of questionnaire instruments answered via *Google Form*. The instrument responses were measured using the Likert scale, on the scale of 1 - 5. The data was then analyzed using the *Statistical Package For the Social Science (SPSS)* application and the outcomes were presented in the form of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The result of the study shows that there is significant difference in communication among the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting style. Parents of preschool children should adopt a suitable parenting style in raising their children to ensure that they receive the love and care that they need to support proper growth and development.

Keywords: Parenting Style, Preschool Children, Development of Communication

Introduction

Parenting styles refer to practices adopted by parents in educating, nurturing, teaching and inculcating values in children. There is no denying that parents play a pivotal role in a child's life. According to Nicole Taylor in an NAEYC discussion, parents spent 8,760 hours in consistent childcare activity. This totals up to 43,800 hours or more than 1,000 days of involvement in a child's growth and development before he or she leaves for preschool.

In Malaysia, the Malaysian Education Blueprint (PPPM 2023-2025), the 9th Key Shift stresses on parents' involvement as partners in assisting a child's excellence (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Family is the best platform to develop a person's ability, capability and talent since a substantial dimension of one's personality, such as one's social behaviour, responsibility, tolerance and emotional reactions were moulded within it (Novabakhsh and Fathi 2019). Parenting styles change with the passing of time. In the old days, children were not encouraged to voice out opinions and would be punished if they dared to go against the

words of their parents (Nur Firdaus, 2018). Modern day parents are more open to authoritative parenting which exercises balance in tolerance and strictness in responding to children's behaviour (Nik Hairi, Azmi & Ahmad Shazili, 2012; Hamidah, 2013; Salasiah et al., 2019). On the other hand, these days there are also parents who exercise ignorance or uninvolved parenting as a result of both parents being caught up with their careers respectively.

The parents' packed schedule has resulted in the children being neglected and lacking in personal touches and guidance. Therefore, effective communication is essential in instilling genuine Muslim personality in a child (Aini Faezah Ramlan et. al, 2018). Raising children is a challenging task and there are various influences from the outside that could bring effect to their behaviour and actions. Parenting too refers to a dominant way in raising children, which has significant effects to a child's growth and personality development (Yekta Shkahi, Parand, and Faqih 2015).

Parenting is the most demanding, dutiful and satisfying human responsibility (Ihuoma, 2023). Parenting practices are often linked to children's personality. Hence, parenting methods have significant contributions to a child's development in determining both his or her growth and behavioral development (Carroll, 2022). According to Tridhanato (2013), parenting is the best way in a parent's act to educate and manifest one's responsibility to the child. Apart from that, nurturing could be integrated consistently onto a child, in the process of educating, guiding, nurturing, and protecting him or her in day to day actions.

Parenting styles have been categorized into authoritative, authoritarian and permissive (Tsoi et al., 2018). Parenting style is a term which illustrates parents' acts and reactions towards their children concerning their beliefs and expectations. Adimora et al (2015), defines parenting style as a mental concept which explains the best method opted by parents in raising their children. In addition, it also refers to how parents respond to a child's demands. Every parent's action will be emulated by the child in his or her behavioral process; shaping his or her behaviour and personality. Additionally, Imam Al-Ghazali (1996), agrees with the notion that a child is a gift bestowed by Allah SWT to parents.

Thus, it is only fair to conduct a study on parenting style and its influence on a child's communicative development in young children in Malaysia. This study aims to analyse the effect of parenting style on preschool children in Kuantan, particularly in terms of communicative development.

Literature Review

Parents are role models for children in shaping their behaviour. Parenting style imposed by parents on a continuous daily basis, could help change a child's behaviour from negative to positive. A child's first models for actions and behaviour are his or her parents. Baumrind (1966, 1991) and Maccoby & Martin (1983), relate family connection to parenting style based on four main types of parenting styles namely authoritative, authoritarian, uninvolved and permissive.

Psychologists in parenting style studies cited that nurturing influences pupils' achievements in schools (Attiya et al., 2016; Dzever 2015; Heydapour et al., 2018; Toor, 2018). apart from

that, parents who practise uninvolved parenting style show lower standard of *responsiveness* and *demandingness* (Mariani Omar & Siti Sarah Hamzah, 2016; dan Cherry, 2019). In contrast, studies conducted on authoritative and authoritarian parenting style show higher achievements (Attiya, et al. 2016). Meanwhile, authoritarian parenting style show results of children possessing low social responsibility, dependency and susceptible to behavioural and academic problems (Ooi Shok Hong, Choi Sang Long and Rabeatul Husna Abdul Rahman, 2015; Diana et al, 2018). There are also studies carried out to evaluate the effects of the respective parenting styles among the Iban secondary school students (Hiang, Kutty, 2021).

Difference in ethnic groups might result in different parenting approaches being practised. Based on a study by Smetana (2017), and Wang et al (2019), ethnic variety too has influence over parenting styles. Culture, belief, tradition Teti et al (2017), and demographic factors including ethnic history Roman et al (2016), are also determining factors in deciding on the best parenting style ideology. Various findings from previous studies illustrate authoritative parenting strategy Attiya et al (2016), results in better academic achievements while some findings in certain countries showing authoritarian parenting style Otto (2018); Smetana, (2017), leads to achievements with the influence of the local cultural ethnic characteristics.

The importance of parenting styles in human development is undeniable. It is highly recommended that parenting style brings a pivotal effect on the overall being of a child, apart from contributing contextual factors such as parents' socioeconomic status and cultural background which need to be taken into account in analyzing the different parenting approaches adopted by parents of different regions (Ulferts, 2020). In most industrial countries, there is a marked shift in parenting style among parents. Parents with better education and financial status prefer the authoritative to the authoritarian parenting style (Bray & Dawes, 2016; Trifan, Stattin & Tilton-Weaver, 2014).

Parenting style can also be perceived as an approach which combines values and humanistic patterns. However, researchers state that parenting style is different from parenting practices since parenting style is founded on the interaction between parents and their children across fixed standard or concepts and situations, whereas parents have to face with unexpected situations (Baumrind, 1971; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Parenting style could stimulate children development particularly in their emotional development to ensure a continuous and balanced development (Pfenninger dan Singleton, 2019). Progress in parenting style is a continuous behavioural, action and emotional act emulated by parents throughout the child rearing process (Steinberg, 1993). Parents, as the child's first role models play a major role in helping them to understand and adapting to new surrounding. According to Andrade and Gonzale (2017), negative physical parenting style, could impede a child's development and growth.

Pinta et al (2019), conducted a study entitled "Parenting Style and Development of Emotional Competencies" which focuses on the link between parenting style and a child's emotional stability. Castro and Paredes (2019) too, wrote on "Parenting style in behaviour of 4 to 5 year-olds to support parenting skills" which was conducted at Codroba National University. In addition, Aguirre and Vallamar (2022), in their study project entitled "Emotional development and parenting style for 5 to 6 year-old children in Ancon Education Unit during Covid-19".

Renny & Shahin (2020), and Tur-Parcarn (2017), discovered that different parenting style adopted by parents influences a child's psychological well-being. This is in line with Geldenberg and Goldenberg (2008), view which states parenting style plays a big contribution in shaping a child's behaviour. Therefore, parenting style is an important element in building an excellent generation for the future. Showing love and compassion, listening patiently and accepting their ideas in family decisions (Niaraki & Nahimi, 2013) are rational and democratic approaches which acknowledge and respect the rights of both parents and children. Children from such family would grow up to be balanced individuals. Psychologists show that children raised by authoritative parents are happier, more cheerful, confident and could exercise self-control and will be able to refrain from involving in disruptive behaviour (Baumrind, 1971; Akinsola, 2013; Garcia & Santiago, 2017).

Researchers have proven that there is a link between authoritative parenting style since infancy, toddler and in later stages of life to various efficiency aspects ranging from self worth, social and moral maturity, independence, involvement in school activities and higher academic achievements in school (Okunlola, Gesinde; & Odukoya, 2020). This finding is also supported by Akinsola (2013), showing proof of authoritative parents showing examples of positive self-concept and self worth resulting in academic excellence and in other fields, such as leadership, as well.

Parents who are emotionally distant and distressed, would likely to show lack of interest to their children. This will result in the child showing deficiency in various areas including love and relationship (Okunlola, Gesinde & Odukoya 2020). Children raised in this condition would unlikely be able to cope with disappointment and emotional control. They might not excel in school, nor have long-term goals and are prone to be involved in problematic behaviour (Baumrind, 1991; Okunlola, Gesinde & Odukoya 2020). Thus, parents who are emotionally-detached from their children, who refrain from showing affection and giving praises in their communication with their children, who disregard their children's opinions and feelings are clearly oppressing the child's rights (Niaraki & Nahimi, 2013; Garcia & Santiago, 2017). Hosokawa dan Katsura (2018) stress that permissive parenting style is closely linked to behavioral problems in children. Besides parenting style, temperament could also be a contributing factor in behavioral problems in children (Baer et al., 2015; Ren & Zhang, 2017).

Therefore, the role of parenting style in the communicative development of preschool children should not be undermined. It is undeniable that parents play a vital role in shaping a child's behaviour since it will affect the way they will behave in the future. Parents' behavioral influence has lifelong effects on a child's development, socially, emotionally, cognitive and moral. Based on the aforesaid arguments, this study is aimed at finding a link between parenting style practices and communicative development among preschoolers in Kuantan.

Methodology

This study is based on quantitative research and survey study design is used for data collection method. Therefore the data collected and analyzed were based on the feedback gathered via the questionnaire. Sample collection for the research will be based on simple sampling method. According to Idris (2013), simple sampling method is chosen as samples to represent the target population. In this context, a survey has been conducted on preschool parents to

identify their parenting style to see if it affects communicative development. Hence, a random survey is used as a method to achieve the objective.

The population for the research are 281 parents of preschool children of the Juara Zone in Kuantan. These parents have a preschool child of five or six years old. The selection of samples are crucial in ensuring the validity and reliability of the research outcome and summary. Stratified sampling tends to depict the population more accurately since it ensures representative of every element from the different levels of the population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample size is then presented in the form of sample sizing table used by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) in determining the reliability of the research. The demographic analysis results are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Respondents

Demography	n	%
Gender		
Male	27	9.6
Female	254	90.4
Age		
25 to 30 years old	34	12.1
31 to 40 years old	192	68.3
41 to 50 years old	53	18.9
51 and above	2	0.7
Race		
Malay	272	96.8
Chinese	4	1.4
Others	5	1.8
Education		
Primary school level	4	1.4
Secondary school level	128	45.6
Qualifications	37	13.2
Diploma	77	27.4
Bachelors Degree	28	10.0
Masters Degree	5	1.8
Phd	2	0.7
Location		
Rural	61	21.7
Urban	61	21.7
City centre	156	56.6

Research Instrument

A survey has been conducted as a means of data collection in order to achieve the objective of the research. The survey consists of multiple questions has been used as an instrumen to collect information from the respondents. According to Baharuddin et al. (2002), a survey is an effective quantitative data-collecting device to gather holistic information for research purposes.

The survey conducted consists of three parts; Part A consists of questions focussed on respondents' background, such as their education level, gender, race, age and locality. In Part B, 30 questions focussing on Parental Power Survey (PAQ) based on the one originated by Buri (1991) with adaptations to suit the research (Alazri Saif, 2019). Meanwhile Part C contains 10 communicative items which have been taken and adapted from the Parents' Guide Book to Child Development (2020). The survey was conducted using the *google form application* to measure the characteristics of parenting styles based on Baumrind's model and was translated into Bahasa Melayu using the '*back-translation*' technique. The questions have been tested beforehand through a pilot study. The questionnaire is conducted using the Likert Scale, on the scale of 1 - 5. Score 1 represents Highly Disagree (STS), Score 2 represents Disagree (TS), Score 3 Not Sure (TP), Score 4 represents Agree (S) while Score 5 represents Highly Agree (SS). Out of the 30 questions, 10 items were focussed on the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive style respectively. As for Part C, respondents only need to choose the most suitable answer based on the Likert scale.

Data-Collecting and Analysis Procedure

Data collecting and analysis are essential in assisting a research information gathering for Siti Arina & Suziyani Mohamed, (2021). The next step following data collection is to get a specialist's validation on the study research (Eras 2.0). Upon approval, a letter of validation needs to be obtained from the selected preschools, the State Department and District Office respectively. The *google form link* was then shared and circulated to the schools via the Kuantan Zon Juara *whatsapp group*. A two-week timeframe was given to the respondents to give their feedback. The data was then analyzed using the *Statistical Package For the Social Science* (SPSS 20) application. The findings were then analyzed using the descriptive statistic and inference statistic methods as a means to get to the summary and final suggestion for the research. The descriptive statistics method was used to obtain the mean, percentage, frequency and standard deviation in Part B. Based on the statistics in Table 1, the data would be interpreted as the mean score for parenting style. Table 2 illustrates the mean score of the respective parenting styles yang measured as a result of view modification by (Mohd Asri Harun et Al., 2016).

Table 2

Mean Score Interpretation

Mean Score	Mean Score Interpretation
1.00 to 1.50	Very Low
1.51 to 2.50	Low
2.51 to 3.50	Average
3.51 to 4.00	High

Source: Mohd Asri Harun et al, 2016

Findings

The target respondents of the research are 281 preschooler parents from Kuantan, Pahang. Based on Table 3, in general, out of 281 respondents 114 or 40.6% show that they practise authoritative parenting style. 87 of the respondents or 30.9% of the parents' responses show that they practise the authoritarian parenting style and the remainder of 80 parents or 28.5% practise the permissive parenting style. The summary outcome of the study shows that a parent of a preschooler who behaves authoritatively does not necessarily mean that he/she

rejects the ways of the permissive and the authoritarian. In general, the result illustrates that all three parenting styles are inter-related or inseparable. Though could be deemed as two factors, the link among the three parenting styles should not be separated, with the authoritative style being the centre between authoritarian and permissive in terms of being practised by parents.

Table 3

Parenting Style (N = 281)

Parenting Style	n	%
Authoritative	114	40.6
Authoritarian	87	30.9
Permissive	80	28.5
TOTAL	281	100

Likewise, Table 4 shows the Anova one way test to detect any difference in communication among these three parenting styles. The result of the hypothesis test was at $p < 0.05$, where there is a marked difference in communicative ways among the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive styles against communicative skills ($F = 2.035$, $p < 0.05$). This is also proven through the descriptive analysis where the mean for the parenting styles differ among the authoritative (Min=4.07), authoritarian (Min=3.13) and permissive (Min=1.59) against communicative skills. This proves that there are differences in the influence of parenting style on the children's communicative skills among preschoolers in Kuantan.

Table 4

ANOVA Communicative Style vs Parenting Style

Dimension	Parenting Style	N	Mean		df	MS	F	Sig.
Communication	Authoritative	114	4.07	BG	24	0.144	2.035	0.004
	Authoritarian	87	3.13	WG	256	0.071		
	Permissive	80	1.59	JUM	280			

Significance level $p < 0.05$

Discussion

The most dominant parenting style practised by parents in the Kuantan district is authoritative. The findings of this study is in line with Georgiou, Ioannou and Stavrindes (2017), whose findings also showed that the most dominant parenting style being practised by parents was authoritative, which is a combination of both control and high affection. Authoritative parents tend to be extremely authoritative while permissive and authoritarian parents showed average to low inclination in their practices. The findings showed that authoritarian parenting style has a slightly positive effect on children. This is consistent to the findings made by Okunlola et al (2020), who discovered a significant relation in the authoritarian parenting style. However, the aforesaid findings contradict Nijhof & Engels (2017), Qalbi & Zubaidah (2017), who mentioned that authoritarian parenting style had been linked to various negative effects on children's mental health, including symptoms of depression. The authoritarian style includes limiting, reprimanding and punishing, whereby parents suppress or force their children to abide by their rules. Children who grew up in an authoritarian family tend to be shy, quiet, reserved, lacking in initiative and rebellious. This is

due to the fact that parents who practise authoritarian parenting style are inclined to impose strict regulations on their children and they resort to punishment when the child made a mistake.

Permissive parents, on the other hand, showed weak relationship. They are highly concerned of their child's well-being but exercise poor control. This finding is also supported by Mullins & Tashjian (2018), in permissive parenting style parents exercise high degree of affection but less control on the child's behaviour. Tsoi (2018), research show permissive parents as parents who are inclined to show limited control over their children. Nonetheless, permissive parents exhibit warmth and affection more than other types of parents, so much so that the child feels like they are entitled to be loved unconditionally.

Authoritarian parenting style shows a significant 15.3% relation to the preschoolers' communicative level. The parents view themselves as having good rapport and interaction with their preschooler, via interactive activities and sharing of feelings and idea sessions. This statement is in line with Ngu Leh Seng's findings in 2021 which show that parents who have good communication and who involved themselves with their children's schoolwork have the tendency to produce successful children. According to Safinah Ismail (2022), in her research, communication patterns between parents and children plays a pivotal role in determining a child's success in school. This stresses the importance of parents' involvement in assisting a child's communication development at home. This is also supported by Aqilatuzzahrah Azharuddin & Kamariah Abu Bakar (2023), which shows that successful parenting practices among parents in relation to a child's communication are the result of social interactions and good communication. Nonetheless, there are still rooms for improvements, in terms of support for a child's excellent achievement in order for the parenting practices to achieve its excellence by the year 2025.

Research suggestions could be brought to attention to identify the parenting styles in the private preschool institutions. Besides, research based on other factors such as residential area, socioeconomic status and parents' career should be considered. Widening the study coverage across population, races and ethnics would also brought to light the relation between race and parenting style in supporting a child's communication, could be further looked into in the future. In general, every race and ethnic has its own perception towards children's communicative style. The demographic result acquired could assist in improving and enforcing knowledge especially on parents' communicative skills at home to support children's development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this research support the results of previous studies which show that good parenting practices have always been favoured by parents. Despite the similarities, this finding provides us with more insights on the link between parenting style practices and communicative skills development among preschoolers in Kuantan. The outcome reveals that parents who practise authoritative, authoritarian and permissive styles in childcare during preschooling ages do not show any significant influence on their child's communicative development and skills. Thus, it is important to give support to parents who try to exercise the most suitable parenting style, in their effort to boost their child's development in their various stages.

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