

Relationship of Parenting Styles to Pre-schoolers' Socio-Emotional Competence and Academic Performance

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Abstract – It is undeniable that parents, as primary caregivers and facilitators, need to love and care for their children. Their role has become more interesting since theories maintain that they affect children's socio-emotional and academic competence. Thus, this descriptive-correlation study was conducted to confirm whether parenting styles significantly relate to pre-schoolers' socio-emotional competence and academic performance in a Meranao context. Fifty-two Meranao senior kindergarten pupils of Ranao Council-Al-Khwarizmi International College - Science Laboratory School and their respective parents were chosen as respondents. This study gathered data using the Parenting Styles Questionnaire, the Socio-Emotional Observation Checklist, and the grades of the pre-schoolers. Data revealed that authoritative parenting was the most dominant parenting style, manifested by parents' encouragements and acknowledgement of their children's good behavior. Majority of the pre-schoolers got an outstanding rating in academics and they demonstrated positive socio-emotional competence in general. Most importantly, parenting styles were not significantly related to socio-emotional competence and academic performance. It means that there are other factors involved in pre-schoolers' positive socio-emotional competence and outstanding academic performance. Therefore, it does not always follow that parents' way of parenting causes significant changes in children's socio-emotional being and academic standing.

Keywords – Parenting styles, Socio-Emotional competence, Academic Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Parenting is not an easy job. Its goals include developing children's behavior and that this goal is achieved in many ways such as inflicting physical pain, reprimanding, and making children understand their mistakes (De Leon, 2009). Between parents, it is oftentimes the father who aims to develop in their children a sense of responsibility, integrity, and love for family while mothers usually foster respect and relationship with others (Gromero, 2010). Therefore, right parenting may promote positive socio-emotional competence of the child.

In addition, Medina (1991) maintained that the institution having the significant influence to children's development is the family. It may mean that the socio-emotional development and future success of the child depend on the environment in the family.

Parents' relationship between each other and with their children is important for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Ermisch, et al., 2011). In this connection, Coon (2007) emphasized that parenting styles may also affect children's development as early as 2 years old and enhance their overall well-being throughout their life span.

Parenting styles have different forms such as authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting and permissive parenting. Steinberg and Silk (2002) said that authoritative parents are both accepting and controlling over their children. Thus, they ensure authority is present and enforce rules while staying responsive to children. Authoritarian parents, as Maccoby and Martin (1983) described, has excessive control over their children but are not fully accepting and responding to children's needs. Moreover, permissive parents are opposite to authoritarian parents as they are more on acceptance but not on control. Researchers' observations revealed that many early childhood professionals deal with pupils of varied behaviors in and out of the learning environment. Sometimes they encounter parents who blame teachers' teaching performance for their children's poor academic performance. Most of these parents have their children carry the brunt of their stress. Most of them are working parents who tend to be hard on their children. Parents' manner of disciplining their children becomes a source of questions, especially on its effects to children's socio-emotional development and academic performance. Thus, this study aims to determine the answer to that longtime inquiry in the field of early childhood development. In this study, a particular context is considered, that is the Meranao community in Marawi City, province of Lanao del Sur, Philippines. Considering this context, this study also aims to describe how Meranao parents do parenting to their children.

II. RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretically, Erikson's psychosocial development theory is of great importance. Its accessibility and perpetual relevance makes it significant in the quest to explaining human development. More so, Erikson's theory is useful in dealing with parenting and its possible effect to child development (Lucas, 2010). In his psychosocial stages (stages two and three), Erikson held that the child's relationship with the mother in the first year of life is vital in forming a trusting attitude. Since this theory explains stages of conflicts and crises, passing through them means developing hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care and wisdom. Parents can also foster initiative among children. This is a time for play, not for formal education. Erikson is, of course, a Freudian, and such, he included the Oedipal experience in this stage. From his perspective, the Oedipal crisis involves the reluctance a child feels in relinquishing his or her closeness to the opposite sex parent.

Another theory important in this study is Baumrind's (1991) model of parenting style. She defined parenting styles as "the consistent patterns of parental behaviors and

attitudes with which parents interact and deal with their children and adolescents along two parental dimensions, that is, demandingness and responsiveness.” Her model started the three categories of parenting styles (i.e., authoritarian- firm but not warm, permissive- warm but not firm, and authoritative- warm and firm), and focuses on four important aspects of family functioning: (i) nurturance or warmth, (ii) firmness and clarity of control, (iii) level of maturity demands, and (iv) degree of communication between parents and the child. Later, Maccoby and Martin (1983) elaborated and revised her typologies. Their conceptualization adds the fourth type, the neglecting or uninvolved parenting style (i.e., neither warm nor firm). However, this study only adopted Baumrind’s categorization as it is still considered until now and is what reflected in the instrument used to gather the data.

Another theorist who emphasized the major role of parental influences in personality formation was Sigmund Freud. Freud discussed that parent-child exchanges have enormous influence to a child’s unique character type in a way that children learn a set of rules that earn acceptance or rejection from their parents. He considered and placed big emphasis on childhood experiences from which adult personality is firmly shaped and crystallized by the fifth year of life (Schultz and Schultz, 1998 as cited by Lucas (2010).

Among the theories discussed, Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development stressed the significance of parents’ role in children’s early stages. Freud also reinforced this theory. On the other hand, Baumrind (1966) presented parenting style models. This study, therefore, initially theorizes that parents-child relationship and parents’ parenting styles influence a child’s social and emotional competences as well as academic performance.

When dealing with children’s emotional competence, it also means dealing with many dispositions related to self-efficacy which are important in interpersonal relationship (Saarni, 1999). These interactions foster to students skills and strategies to deal with emotional challenges. Parents who are sensitive and responsive may help children who have difficulties with self-control develop regulation strategies that foster socially appropriate behavior. In view of that, it is therefore of great importance that socio-emotional competence is developed as early as possible. The National Academy of Sciences reported that 60% of children enter school with cognitive skills needed to be successful, but only 40% have the socio-emotional skills needed to succeed in kindergarten. Research has also exposed that children’s emotional and behavioral adjustment can be a key to school success (Raver, 2002). When children feel good about themselves in a sense that they are able to develop interpersonal skills and positive relationships with others, know how to identify their emotions, how to express, and manage their emotions, then they are more likely to be ready to learn and succeed.

Another research by Raver and Knitzer (2002) has proved that children’s social and behavioral competence can be a determinant of their academic performance in the first grade over and above their cognitive skills and family

backgrounds. They further concluded that children with a strong sense of social-emotional competence are more able to interact with others, active in class, finds enjoyment in learning and more likely to experience positive transition from preschool to kindergarten). Many studies have established link between social-emotional development and behavior and school success (Raver, 2002; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004).

A large body of research has also shown that parenting styles have an impact on children’s development (Rytönen, Aunola, and Nurmi, 2005; Kwon, 2008; Shahsavari, 2012). To mention some, authoritarian parents may have much self-respect but often lack respect for the child, show little affection and “seem aloof from their children” (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006; Grolnick, 2003; Berger 2001). Several authors (Gerdes, 1998; Grolnick, 2003) concluded that authoritarian parents attempt to shape, control, and evaluate children using a set of standards. These parents put premium on obedience, utilizing forceful measures to push children to display desired behaviors. Thus, authority is the center of the parenting process. They also tend to enforce rules firmly, confront and sanction negative behavior, and discourage independence and individuality.

Additionally, Dobson (2002) stated that authoritarian parents may develop in children dependency, deep abiding anger, and adolescent rebellion. Grolnick (2003) found that pre-school children of authoritarian parents displayed negative qualities such as moodiness, aimlessness, and weak interpersonal relationship. In fact, extreme authoritarianism may possibly lead to social inhibition and a lack of confidence (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006).

As to authoritative parenting, children of authoritative parents are more likely to develop independence, self-efficacy, and social skills (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg, 2000; Williams et al., 2009). They also display commendable academic performance in school and positive relationship with others (Spera, 2005; Hasting et al., 2007). Authoritative parenting thus make children optimistic and self-regulatory (Purdie, et al., 2004; Jackson, et al., 2005).

Several authors (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006; Gupta & Theus, 2006) found that authoritative parenting achieves good parent-child relationship. Accordingly, it can promote among children independence and self-reliance as well as motivation to succeed. Children exposed to this parenting style can be socially and intellectually fruitful. In other words, such an approach is helpful to their children’s emotional well-being. Grolnick (2003) stated “...the pre-school children of authoritative parents are energetic, socially outgoing, and independent.”

A parent showing little interest in what the child is trying to communicate and ridiculing a child’s emotions, believing that children’s feelings are irrational, is seen as the permissive parent. Permissive parents are found to have no self-respect and their children win over them. Many authors (Grolnick, 2003; Gonzalez-Mena, 2006; Gupta & Theus, 2006) agreed that permissive parenting style negatively affects pre-school children’s academic achievement and school behaviors. Children with

permissive parents cannot control themselves, do not respect and consider others. Since they do not rely on themselves and demotivated, they tend to perform poor in school. Grolnick (2003) further added that children with age 8 and 9 have low social and cognitive competence caused by the impact of permissive parents.

With the literature deliberated in this study, the connection between parenting and children’s well-being has been explored. However, studies conducted to determine the relationship between parenting styles and children’s socio-emotional competence are still scarce. This research attempts to fill in this knowledge gap.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the questions answered in this study:

1. What is the dominant parenting style of the pre-schoolers’ parents?
2. What is the pre-schoolers’ academic performance?
3. What is the pre-schoolers’ level of socio-emotional competence?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the pre-schoolers’ socio-emotional competence and academic performance and their parents’ parenting styles?
5. Which of the parenting styles significantly affect the pre-schoolers socio- emotional competence and academic performance?

IV. METHODOLOGY

This descriptive-correlation research aimed to: (i) describe parents’ parenting style and pre-schoolers’ socio-emotional competence and academic performance; and (ii) determine the relationship between parenting styles and pre-schoolers’ socio-emotional competence and academic performance. The participants of this study were the senior kindergartners of RC- Al Khwarizmi International College- Science Laboratory School and their parents. The study involved three sections of Senior Kinder, with eighteen, twenty, and twenty-two pupils in each section.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

Section	Sample	%
Jupiter	18	30.00
Mars	20	33.33
Saturn	22	36.67
Total	60	100.0

The study used two questionnaires. The first one was a parenting style questionnaire adopted from Joan E. LeFebvre (2004). This questionnaire is a reliable depiction of how each parent rates himself/herself as parents. The second instrument is a socio-emotional observation checklist adopted from Susanne A. Denham (2006). It is an evidence-based screening tool to detect the area of socio- emotional development of a child. The researchers also collected the average grades of the pre-schoolers in their second grading period, as it was the most recent evidence of their academic performance.

Prior to data gathering, the researcher secured permission from the school principal to allow the researcher to float the questionnaires to the pre-schoolers’ parents. The researcher then handed the survey instruments to the parents during a meeting where she explained to the parents the purpose of the research. This took place during the general parents- teachers meeting for the second grading period. The parents were asked to fill out the survey instrument. The first survey instrument, “What’s Your Parenting Style,” consists of 15 statements. It has five statements for each of the three parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive). Each parent was asked to place a check mark alongside a statement they believed to be true. Then the researchers scored the checked statements to determine which parenting style is most dominant. The second survey instrument, the Social-Emotional Observation Checklist, consists of 12 statements. It has six statements for positive indicators and six statements for negative indicators. Each of the statements asks participants to check the appropriate number indicating how much each describes the child’s social-emotional competence. The researchers observed pupils during the following school activities: Science Week Celebration, *BuwannngWika* (a month of commemoration for the national language), Mid-Year Recognition, Physical Education Activities, Individual Art Activity, Group Art Activity, and during the monitoring of interns. Lastly, the researchers asked the adviser for the grade point average of the pupils.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the data collection and the discussions of the data. The data are presented in a way that research questions are individually answered.

A. Problem 1. What is the dominant parenting style of the pre-schoolers’ parents?

Table 2. Parents’ Parenting Style

Parenting styles	M	SD
A. Authoritative Parenting Style		
1. Children should be given choices.	0.923	0.269
2. Sometimes children have a point. I try to listen to them.	0.981	0.139
3. Children should be allowed their own sense of individuality.	0.750	0.437
4. I have high standards which I expect my child to understand and I enforce rules consistently.	0.404	0.495
5. Parents should encourage the child to talk about his/her troubles.	0.827	0.382
GRAND MEAN	0.162	

B. Authoritarian Parenting Style

6. Children should obey their parents and not talk back.	0.750	0.437
7. I make the rules of my household. Children should be punished for not following these rules.	0.481	0.505
8. When my child misbehaves, I yell or shout and threaten.	0.135	0.345
9. I know what is best for my child; after all, I am the parent.	0.827	0.382
10. Parents should scold my child when he/she does not meet my expectations.	0.096	0.298
GRAND MEAN	0.458	0.179

C. Permissive Parenting Style

11. I believe that it is better not to have rules than to worry about breaking them.	0.442	0.502
12. Parents should do as much as they can for their children (making their beds, getting their snacks, dressing them)	0.769	0.425
13. I let my child do what he/she wants because I want to avoid conflict.	0.462	0.503
14. If I discipline my child, I am afraid he/she will not love me.	0.154	0.364
15. I find it difficult to discipline my child.	0.385	0.491
GRAND MEAN	0.442	0.252

Table 2 shows the dominant parenting style of the pre-schoolers’ parents. As found, most of the parents (51 out of 52) practice authoritative parenting as evidenced by the highest overall mean of the said parenting style (GM=0.777). Particularly, parents listen to their children (0.981), give their children choices (0.923), and encourage their children about their troubles (0.827). Moreover, authoritarian parenting follows authoritative parenting, with a grand mean of 0.458. In this parenting style, ‘knowing what is best for their children since they are the parents’ (0.827) is the most held belief among parents. On the other hand, the parenting style least exhibited by parents is permissive parenting reflected by its overall mean of 0.442. These indicators include fear that their children may hate them should they be disciplined (0.154), difficulty in disciplining their children (0.385), and the thought that it is better not to have rules than worry about those rules broken by their children (0.442).

Overall, these findings simply that the pre-schoolers’ parents are more likely to encourage and help their children, although they practice some indicators of all parenting styles. If their demands as parents are not met, they are forgiving, controlling of their temper and understanding rather than punitive. This finding sheds positive light to the question on whether or not Meranao parents treat their children properly. This seems to be in contrast to what is seen and heard about Meranao parents. According to common beliefs about them, strictness and dictatorship prevail in treating their children. In fact, making rules and orders only ranked eighth as shown in the table above. It may be possible that Meranao parents’ way of parenting their children has evolved overtime. It may also be initially assumed that pre-schoolers have socio-emotional competence and good

academic performance since their parents treat them authoritatively.

B. Problem 2. What is the pre-schoolers’ academic performance

Table 3. Distribution of Pre-schoolers in terms of Academic Performance

	Frequency	Percent	Description
Above 95	10	19.2	Excellent
90-95	31	59.6	Outstanding
Below 90	11	21.2	Very Good
TOTAL	52	100.0	

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the pre-schoolers according to academic performance. As shown, more than half of the pre-schoolers (59.6%) had a grade between 90 and 95. The lowest percentage of pre-schoolers (19.2%) had a grade above 95. Only 21.2% had an average grade below 90. These findings reveal that majority of the pre-schoolers had outstanding academic performance during the second grading period. It implies that the pre-schoolers did their best academically at school. In relation to parenting style, literature cites evidence that children with authoritative parents tend to do well in school (Spera, 2005). It is possible that, since authoritative parenting style is dominant among parents in this study, pre-schoolers perform well in school. In addition, it is maintained that there is a strong link between young children’s socio-emotional competence and their chances of early school success (Raver, 2002). Thus, socio-emotional knowledge may also have a critical role in improving children’s academic performance. The following table reflects the pre-schoolers’ socio-emotional competence level.

C. Problem 3. What is the pre-schoolers’ level of socio-emotional competence?

Table 4; Pre-schoolers’ Level of Socio-Emotional Competence

Level of socio-emotional competence	M	SD	Level
1. Always active and happy	4.827	1.396	<i>very much like this child</i>

2. Loves to play with the group	4.769	1.215	<i>very much like this child</i>
3. Obedient when directed to do something	4.365	1.692	<i>very much like this child</i>
4. Comforts or assists children in difficulty	3.789	1.649	<i>very much like this child</i>
5. Negotiates solutions to conflicts	3.673	1.279	<i>very much like this child</i>
6. Taken other children’s viewpoint into account	2.942	1.434	<i>not much like this child</i>
7. Defiant when reprimanded	2.385	0.953	<i>not much like this child</i>
8. Inactive, watches others play	2.308	1.112	<i>not much like this child</i>
9. Easily frustrated	2.269	1.254	<i>not much like this child</i>
10. Sad, unhappy, or depressed	2.231	1.463	<i>not much like this child</i>
11. Irritable, gets mad easily	2.154	1.334	<i>not much like this child</i>
12. Remains apart, isolated from the group	2.135	1.030	<i>not much like this child</i>

Legend: 1-3 = not much like this child; 4-6 = very much like this child

As shown in Table 4, pre-schoolers seem to possess socio-emotional competence since high means are found in positive indicators and low means in negative indicators. Researchers’ observations revealed that the pre-schoolers were always active and happy (4.827), loves to play with the group (4.769), and obedient when directed to do something (4.365). Moreover, they were not isolated from the group (2.135), not easily get irritated or mad (2.154), not easily get sad, unhappy, or depressed (2.231), and not inactive (2.308).

The findings reveal that the pre-schoolers demonstrated positive socio-emotional competence. It implies that they are well-developed in terms of socio-emotional aspect, which may be caused by their parents’ supportiveness in giving their needs for them to become active and happy, to love to play with other children, and to be sensitive to the feelings of others.

D. Problem 4. Do parenting styles significantly relate to pre-schoolers’ socio-emotional competence and academic performance?

Table 5. Correlation Results between Parenting Styles and Pre-schoolers’ Socio-emotional Competence

Relationship		<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Decision
<i>Authoritative</i>	Pre-schoolers’ socio-emotional competence	0.093	0.514	Not significant
<i>Authoritarian</i>		0.008	0.954	Not significant
<i>Permissive</i>		0.098	0.489	Not significant

The test of relationship using Pearson *r* reveals no significant relationship between parenting styles and pre-schoolers’ socio-emotional competence, hence the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This finding implies that the pre-schoolers’ socio-emotional competence is not significantly correlated to parenting styles and that there may be other factors affecting the development of their socio-emotional competence. This is contrary to the findings of earlier studies that parenting styles have

bearing on the development of children’s socio-emotional competence. For instance, children of permissive parents have relatively low self-control (Steinberg and Silk, 2002). Also, children of authoritative parents tend to have the highest level of self-control and self-esteem as well as social competence (Spera, et al., 2005; Steinberg et al., 2006). Therefore, it may not always be true that children’s socio-emotional development is due to parents’ way of parenting their children.

Table 6: Correlation Results between Parenting Styles and Pre-schoolers’ Academic Performance

Relationship		<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Remarks
<i>Authoritative</i>	Academic performance	0.018	0.901	Not significant
<i>Authoritarian</i>		0.175	0.215	Not significant
<i>Permissive</i>		-0.052	0.713	Not significant

The table above shows the results of correlating parenting styles to pre-schoolers’ academic performance. Similar with the previous table, data show that there is no significant relationship between parenting styles and pre-schoolers’ academic performance, hence the acceptance of the null hypothesis. That is, there is no sufficient evidence to show that parenting styles have significant bearing on the pre-schoolers’ performance in school. Probably, several factors such as study habits,

child’s self-perceptions, learning environment, and innate intelligence may have caused the pre-schoolers’ outstanding performance. Again, these findings are contrary to what has been established in literature that parenting styles may significantly influence children’s academic achievement. As an example, studies reveal that families practicing the non-authoritative parenting style have a negative effect on pre-school children’s educational level and on their behaviors at school. However, in this

study, all styles of parenting are not potential factors that bear significant effects to children's performance in school. Moreover, the findings might possibly be influenced by the sample size (n= 52), which affected the power of the statistical tool.

VI. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Overall, the data presented and interpreted addressed the research questions posed in this study. As a brief recall of the major findings, the gathered and analysed data disclosed that: (i) the dominant parenting style among parents was authoritative parenting; (ii) majority of the pre-schoolers gained outstanding ratings in their latest grading period; (iii) pre-schoolers' socio-emotional competence is independent from parenting styles; and (iv) pre-schoolers' academic performance is not contingent to parenting styles.

While parenting style is found in other studies to influence the development of children's socio-emotional competence and academic performance, this study suggests otherwise. In this study, no sufficient statistical evidence established the relationship between parents' parenting styles and their children's socio-emotional competence and academic performance. The results of this study were inconclusive and difficult to interpret due to a mixture of expected and unexpected results and few significant powerful relationships between parenting styles and children's socio-emotional competence and academic performance. Moreover, the inconclusive results of this study indicate the need for further investigation on what is the effect of parenting practices to the development of young children's socio-emotional competence and academic performance. It also promotes the need to study mothers and fathers separately in regard to show their possibly different parenting styles that can affect child outcomes.

Baumrind's (1991) theoretical tripartite model of parenting styles reveals that other factors affect child outcomes more directly than previously considered, such as genes, peers, culture, gender, and financial status, are of lesser importance and parents work and the quality of parents' marriage. As indicated, child's characteristics also influence child outcomes. It is possible that the results of this study were limited because the child's characteristics were not considered. Perhaps child characteristics such as temperament and resiliency are more significant on children's socio-emotional and academic competence.

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