

Specific Benefits of Authoritative Parenting Style

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Abstract

This study examines the specific benefits of the authoritative parenting style. Forty-one participants completed a survey that assessed success in terms of mental health, employability, academics, and closeness of parent-child relationship. These variables were compared to parenting style (authoritative or non-authoritative). The results showed a substantial difference between the Authoritative and Non-Authoritative groups in regard to mental health symptoms and the closeness of the parent-child relationship, in that participants with authoritative parenting showed less symptoms of mental health issues and a stronger bond with their parents. These results are not significant due to the small sample size, but this study does offer insight into what future research should be done.

It is well known that parents play an important role in the positive development of their children (Roboteg-Saric & Sakic, 2013). More specifically, parenting style has been shown to affect children's psychological well-being and possibly even school achievement (Bellatine, 2001). Previous research in the field of child development has made it evident that the authoritative parenting style yields the most positive and successful results (Melissa Nolan, personal communication, February 9, 2018). The authoritative parenting style is defined as being demanding and responsive without being restrictive, and has a child-centered approach that includes high parental involvement (Bellatine, 2001). Though research has been done to determine that the authoritative parenting style offers positive results and few problems (Bellatine, 2001), the concept of success is a broad topic that does not describe the specific benefits of the parenting style. There is previous research that tries to link parenting style and other variables that may affect success, such as temperament (Checa & Abundis-Gutierrez, 2017), culture (Watabe & Hibbard, 2014), and attachment styles (Nunes & Mota, 2016). There are also some individual studies that have tried to show correlation between parenting style and one specific benefit, such as less risk for suicidal ideation (Nunes & Mota, 2016). One study even went as far to say that adolescents with authoritative parenting have higher self-esteem, are more satisfied with their lives, and are generally happier than adolescents with authoritarian parenting (Roboteg-Saric & Sakic, 2013). While there is some research in the field discussing correlation between certain variables of success, my study hopes to look into several at once.

Methods

I made and completed a survey through Google Forms. The survey was distributed by sharing the link with campus organizations and asking for voluntary participation. Participants gave

informed consent, and were not compensated for their collaboration. Analysis of the data was completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Participants

Forty-one adults participated in my survey. Participants were chosen through voluntary sampling. The majority of participants are students at East Carolina University. Review by the institutional review board was not required.

Measures

Parenting Style

There were sixteen questions designed to determine whether the participant grew up with authoritative parenting or not. If the answer choice was consistent with authoritative parenting style, it was scored with a "1". If the answer choice was not consistent with authoritative parenting style, it was scored with a "0". The scores for each participant were added. A score of 12 or above indicated that 75% of the questions were answered consistently with authoritative parenting style. Scores greater than or equal to 12 were put in the "authoritative" group, while scores less than 12 were put in the "non-authoritative" group.

Academic Success

Academic success is determined by both Grade Point Average (GPA) and highest level of schooling achieved. These were determined from two questions from the survey. For the question: "What is your highest education level?" The value "1" is given to any participant who answered, "some college - currently enrolled", "completed a 4-year degree program", "completed a 2-year degree program", and "currently enrolled in graduate program." The value "2" is given to any participant who answered, "high school diploma or equivalent" or "some college – did not finish." For the question "What is your current

GPA?”, the value “1” is given to any participant who answered, “3.1-4.0” and the value “2” was given to any participant who answered “<1.0,” “1.1-2.0,” “2.1-3.0,” or “unsure.”

Mental Health Inventory

The presence of mental health symptoms is determined by symptoms or treatment of depression and/or anxiety. The presence of mental health issues was determined by three survey questions. The value of “1” is given to any participant who answered “yes” to any or all of the following questions, “have you ever been diagnosed or treated for depression or anxiety by a licensed practitioner?”, “have you ever experienced symptoms of depression or anxiety?”, and “have you ever seen a counselor or therapist?”

Parent-Child Relationship

Parent-child relationships are described as being “close” or “not close.” There were eight questions in the survey about what the participant would feel comfortable discussing with their parent. The value “1” is used if a participant chose “likely” or “extremely likely” for six or more of the questions – this indicates a close parent-child relationship. The value “2” is used if a participant chose “extremely unlikely” for two or less of the questions – this indicates a parent-child relationship that is not close. An answer of “does not apply to me” did not affect the score positively or negatively.

Employability

Employability is determined by the current or previous employment of the participant. There were two questions in the survey about employment. For the questions, “have you ever been employed?” and/or “are you currently employed?” the value “1” is given to any participant who answered “yes” and The value “2” is given to any participant who answered “no.”

Leadership Skills

Leadership skills are determined by currently or previously being in a leadership role. Participants were asked one question in the survey about past or current leadership roles. For the question, “have you ever

been in a leadership role?" the value "1" is given to any participant who answered "yes" and the value "2" is given to any participant who answered "no."

Analysis

A Chi-Square test of independence was done on the survey results, however due to the small sample size, the statistics were not significant. Instead, crosstabs of the raw data are shown for simple comparisons. The raw data found may be helpful for future researchers to recreate with a large sample size.

Results

Thirteen participants fit into the "Authoritative" group and twenty-eight participants fit into the "Non-Authoritative" group. 31% of the Authoritative group and 43% of the Non-Authoritative group had a GPA of 3.1 or higher. 92% of the Authoritative group and 89% of the Non-Authoritative group have either completed or are currently enrolled in a degree program. 77% of the Authoritative group and 93% of the Non-Authoritative group presented symptoms of anxiety and/or depression. 62% of the Authoritative group and 21% of the Non-Authoritative group were determined to have a good relationship with their parents. 92% of the Authoritative group and 93% of the Non-Authoritative group are either currently employed or have been employed in the past. 77% of the Authoritative group and 68% of the Non-Authoritative group have been in a leadership role. These results show some interesting trends that could lead to further research to determine correlation.

Discussion

Keeping in mind that the results cannot be extrapolated to the entire population due to a small sample size, there are interesting trends in the data. There is a substantial difference between the

Authoritative and Non-Authoritative groups in both mental health and parent-child relationship. The differences between groups could potentially indicate a relationship between the variables and parenting style, but a larger-scale study would have to be done in order to determine correlation. Academic success may be a faulty variable due to sampling bias. The participants were chosen through voluntary convenience sampling, and most of the participants are current college students. Because of this, it is difficult to determine whether college attendance is a notable benefit of authoritative parenting. Employability was also a possibly bad variable, because it only considered whether the participant has ever been employed. Other factors should be included in future research, such as promotions and length of employment, to determine if individuals who grew up with authoritative parenting are more employable than peers who grew up with permissive or authoritarian parenting. There appears to be no considerable difference between the Authoritative group and Non-Authoritative group in the leadership and GPA variables. Overall, this research is a good foundation for future studies to build upon, as it offers some insight into the trends between parenting style and variables of success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides an insight into the effects of parenting style on variables of success. My survey results showed less participants with mental health symptoms in the Authoritative group than in the Non-Authoritative group, which is congruent with the study done by Nunes and Mota (2016) that showed a negative correlation between authoritative parenting style and suicidal ideation. One study, done by Raboteg-Saric and Sakic (2013), was consistent with my findings in that their participants showed higher results on indicators of well-being with authoritative parenting style than authoritarian, but this study offered a deeper level of paternal v.

maternal parenting significance. For future research, this could be a variable that is important to include. Another important variable to include in future research is culture. While my study was focused not only to one country but one region, another study contrasts the different academic outcomes for children based on authoritative parenting style in both the United States and Japan (Watabe & Hibbard, 2014). It would be beneficial for future researchers to expand their sample to the global level in order to determine if parenting style benefits change from culture to culture. The results of the study done by Watabe and Hibbard (2014) in Western culture are compatible with my results, suggesting a link between academic success and authoritative parenting style – though my results were not significant enough to be significant. Overall, my research was in agreeance with past studies, which tend to agree that the authoritative parenting style offers positive, successful results, but more research should be done in the future to take into account other variables, such as culture, temperament, and maternal v. paternal effects on parenting style.

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