

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL DEMOGRAPHICS, PARENTING STYLES AND STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between demographic characteristics, parenting styles and academic achievement involving elementary school students. Participants in this study are the parents of students in fifth and sixth grades of public schools in Tirana. A measuring instrument, which was adapted from the literature (Robinson, Mandlaco, Olsen and Hart, 1995), was applied (N = 220). Quantitative methods were used and data were processed with SPSS. The study finds that parenting styles and demographic characteristics were associated primarily with the educational level of parents. Children's academic achievements are related to parenting styles. Demographic characteristics showed a relationship with parenting style. The dominating parenting style is authoritarian, which is connected with the family's low social status and economic level. Parenting with an authoritative style, which is different from the more severe authoritarian style, shows more successful results in terms of high academic achievement.

Keywords: Parenting, parenting style, academic achievement, socio-economic status

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges is finding a recipe for "perfect" parental style. Obviously, all parents want their children to succeed in school, but not all parents are successful in the process. Study of the different typologies of parenting and their effects on parental involvement with children is crucial to ensure appropriate support measures that will enable the desired academic performance of children in school (Kashahu, 2014).

Researchers have repeatedly paid attention to the relationship between parenting styles and SES, where they found relationships between different levels of SES and parenting styles (Bluestone and Tamis-Lemond, 1999; McLoyd, 1990; Rosier and Corsaro, 1993; Shumow, Vandell, and Posner, 1998). Likewise, the relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement turns out to be one of the topics studied (Brown and Iyengar, 2008; Grolnick, 2003; Pellerin, 2005; Pittman and Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Rogers, Theule, Ryan, Adams and Keating, 2009; Steinberg, LAMBOR, Dornbusch and Darling, 1992; Sullivan, Carmody, and Lewis, 2010).

This study is based on the theoretical framework of Baumrind on parenting styles (1991). According to this study, there are two dimensions: a) responsibility and b) demand of accountability, that in relation to each other; determine parenting style.

Responsibility measures ranking, based on the level of parental investment in developing the child's individuality through support and warmth, while accountability demand refers to the level of expectations set by parents for the child's behavior. The process of a child's growth is based on the creation of reports and agreements between parent and child, where parents in most cases decide the best way to treat a child, maintaining a balance between freedom and coercion (Kashahu, 2014)

According Vandell and Posner (1998), SES is associated with parenting styles, especially in cases where SES is low. McLoyd (1990) found that the authoritarian style is associated with low SES parents. He explains that because of poverty, parents become less supportive of their child. His study found that poor mothers are more severe when dealing with a child's behavior, expect more obedience from them, and when they are wrong physically punish them. Also, researchers Shumow, Vandell, and Posner (1998) reported that lower income is associated with parental harshness. While researchers Rosier and Corsaro (1993) found that working-class parents have more rules for the child to follow, which is characteristic for authoritarian parents, middle-class and older parents feed their children.

Authoritative parenting style is characterized by three components: warmth, control and democracy. This style results in a high demand of responsibility and parenting. These parents have high standards for their

children, monitor what children are doing and also allow proper freedom (Woolfolk, 2011).

In 1992, researchers Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch and Darling examined the impact of parental authority on academic achievement. They found that authoritative parents had an important influence in the academic performance of their children. In this study, it was observed that the correlation was stronger among parents with authority and student achievement with high marks, compared with other styles of parenting and high marks. In both cases of self-reporting, children who grow up with parents classified as other parenting styles have higher academic achievement. Researchers concluded that parental authority style promotes high academic achievement. Therefore, researchers support and encourage parental efforts to adapt to this parental style. Authoritative parents eventually “feeds his children with a sense of initiative and trust-related learning” (Rogers et al., 2009, 35), paving the way for academic success.

Indulgent parents are characterized by the lowest level of control over children and high levels of warmth in terms of parent-child relationship. Despite a high predisposition for warmth, low levels of control by indulgent parents cause reduced social competence in children (Baumrind, 1996). In addition, unlike the children of authoritative parents, children of indulgent parents are less likely to be motivated and therefore lack the patience for learning. Also, a lack of self-control often causes difficulties, especially when the child engages in social interaction. Their poor balance may be a reason why they are attacked at school.

Authoritarian parents follow a style quite different from the first two. This is an almost dictatorial style that involves the highest degree of control over children and very low levels of warmth (Baumrind, 1996). The high level of parental pressure within the authoritarian style often reduces a child’s internal motivation, causes negative dependence and undermines the learning process (Grolnick, 2003). Numerous studies have found that an authoritarian parenting style is negatively associated with academic achievement.

A considerable amount of research has documented that parental monitoring is associated with lower academic performance. In fact, Brown and Iyengar (2008) revealed that this strict control can alienate children from parents. Putting excessive pressure on children and intervening for any reason and at any time can lead children to low academic competence and low academic achievement (Rogers et al., 2009).

A negligent parenting style is characterized by low levels of both warmth and control at the same time (Baumrind, 1996). This often reflects the emotionally detached parents, as they respond only to their child’s vital needs. Conversely, Pellerin (2005), shows that children of negligent parents,

can benefit greatly from a school climate, where authority dominates. This type of school climate is believed to fill the gap created by a negligent parent (Pellerin, 2005). Neglect can lead to deficits in IQ and low academic performance (Sullivan, Carmody and Lewis, 2010).

Pittman and Chase-Lansdale (2001) investigated the relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement of adolescents in a sample of 302 girls from poor neighborhoods. In this study, research methods were combined, parenting style was quantitatively determined and interviews on the qualitative side showed how this style influences the academic achievement of girls. The results showed that parenting styles were significantly associated with marks of girls, and that girls with disengaged mothers had the lower scores (significantly) than adolescents whose mothers belonged to any another parenting style. Researchers found that girls whose mothers had parental authority style showed a better fit with the school, and this adjustment was better than all other groups with parenting styles. Girls who grew up with parents who were negligent had low scores.

This study aims:

- a) to reveal the relationship between parenting styles and demographic characteristics
- b) to reveal the dominant parenting style for fifth and sixth grade students in schools in the city of Tirana
- c) to examine the relationship between parenting styles and academic achievements of fifth and sixth grade students

Methodology

This study is quantitative and correlation in nature. The study was extended to six public schools in Tirana. The schools were randomly selected from all schools, two in the center of the city (EK and FN), two from first circle of ring (KL and DL), and two schools in the suburbs (BC and LP). The study's sample are parents of fifth and sixth grade students (N = 220). Of this number 66.4% (146 people) are females and 33.6% (74 persons) are male. Parents were also selected randomly.

To realize the goals of this study, a measuring instrument with two parts was applied. The first part contained information on demographic variables of parents, more specifically:

- a) gender of parent
- b) gender of child
- c) age of parents
- d) nature of parents' employment
- e) education of parents

In the first report requested from parents, the study asked for the child's academic achievement in mathematics, native language and GPA.

The second report was used to determine the type of parenting style and was borrowed from the literature (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen and Hart, 1995). The other part of the instrument was the Likert scale, where 1 meant that the respondent did not at all agree and 6 meant that the respondent fully agreed.

The self-reporting instrument had 28 items and measured two dimensions of responsibility, for example: *How responsible do you think you are for the feelings and needs of your child?* And accountability, for example: *How do you react when your child does not do what you say?* These are related to the theory of Baumrind. The factorial analysis for the second part of the instrument confirmed compliance rates with the original instrument; reliability is

$\alpha = .76$ for the first degree of authoritative parent, $\alpha = .91$ for the second degree of tolerant parent, $\alpha = .82$ for third degree of authoritarian parent and $\alpha = .88$ for fourth degree of negligent parent.

For purposes of processing the data into four major groups for academic achievement, grades were grouped: 4 =not passed, 5-6 = low level, 7-8 = medium level, 9-10 = high level. To discover the relationship between parenting styles and demographic characteristics, descriptive analyses were conducted, specifically cross-tabulations between parenting styles and variables that measure the parents' demographic characteristics.

To detect the dominant style of parenting, descriptive analyses were carried out, and to examine the relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement of students, cross-tabulation and correlation analyses were performed, which was interpreted based on Davis indicators (1971). According to Davis, the meaning of the values of the correlation coefficient is: .70 and tells about strong connection; .50 - .69 indicates substantial connection (important) .30 - .49 indicates a moderate relation (average), .10 - .29 shows the weak link; .00 - .09 shows not important connection.

Results

The relationship between parenting styles and demographic characteristics

Parenting style and gender of parents

The descriptive analysis shows that 43.2% (32 parents) of authoritative parents are male and 53.4% are female (108 parents). Tolerant fathers are not present in any case, while a few mothers appear to be tolerant 2.7% (4 persons). Fathers with authoritarian parenting style are 54.1% (40) and mothers 41.1% (60). Negligent fathers are 2.7% (2), mothers 2.7% (4).

According to these findings, gender differences between parenting styles, specifically mothers, appear to be more authoritative versus fathers who have a high percentage of authoritarian style. There are high

percentages of tolerant mothers and there are no tolerant fathers. In terms of negligible style, percentage values are equal for mothers and fathers.

Parenting style and gender of students

Based on descriptive data, differences in parenting styles are seen based on the student's gender. Tests show a high percentage of authoritative parental style with girls (53.7%) than with both (44.2%). It was also noted that 2.7% of parents are tolerant with girls, while no parents used this style with boys. Parents have a more authoritarian style of practice with boys (51.2%) than with girls (41%). The negligent parenting style is more addressed to girls (4.7%) than to boys (1.5%).

Parenting style and parental age

From the analysis of cross-tabulation of parents' ages with parenting style, we noted that the manner of parenting is associated with age. Specifically, parents who practice authoritarian style are under age 34 (38.5%), ages 35-45 (54.3%) and at age 45 or older (20%). When the parent is younger than 34, more than half of the parents practice authoritative style; only 7.7% are negligent. There is no reported case of liberal style.

In terms of parents ages 35-45, more than half reported authoritative parenting style and authoritarians are 40%. There is a low and equal-to-indulgent parenting style and negligent parenting style. It is noted that with increasing age, the percentage of negligent parents decreases. The tolerant parental style is practiced by parents ages 35-45. Regarding the authoritarian style, high values of this style are linked with the youngest parents, undergoing a decrease in ages 35-45 and values rise again at ages over 45 years.

Table 1. Percentages and frequencies of parenting styles on the basis of parents' ages.

Parenting style					
Parents 'ages	Parents with authority	Tolerant/liberal parents	Authoritarian parents	Negligent parents	Total
Age under 34 years	38.5%	.0%	53.8%	7.7%	100.0%
Age 35-45 years	9.1% 54.3%	.0% 2.9%	14.0% 40.0%	33.3% 2.9%	11.8% 100.0%
Age over 45 years	69.1% 42.3%	100.0% .0%	56.0% 57.7%	66.7% .0%	63.6% 100.0%
	20.0%	.0%	30.0%	.0%	23.6%
Total	50.0%	1.8%	45.5%	2.7%	100.0%

	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
				%	%

Parenting style and parents’ employment

Data analysis revealed that one authoritative parent does not have a job. Compared with other authoritative parents, there are 59% of full-time employees and 66.6% who work more than 8 hours. Tests also show that indulgent parents in the category of parents who work over 8 hours composed 16.7% of this category. In terms of authoritarian parents, 92.3% of parents work part-time. Results also indicated results that all negligent parents have no jobs.

Table 2. Percentage of parenting styles on the basis of parents’ employment

Parenting style	Parents employment				Total
	Witho ut job	Part time job	Full time job	Over 8 hours	
Authoritative	41.8%	1.8%	41.8%	14.5%	100.0%
Tolerant /liberal	50.0% .0%	7.7% .0%	59.0% .0%	66.7% 100.0%	50.0% 100.0%
Authoritarian	.0% 40.0%	.0% 24.0%	.0% 32.0%	16.7% 4.0%	1.8% 100.0%
Negligent	43.5% 100.0% %	92.3% .0%	41.0% .0%	16.7% .0%	45.5% 100.0% %
Total	6.5% 41.8%	.0% 11.8%	.0% 35.5%	.0% 10.9%	2.7% 100.0% %

Parenting style and parents’ education

Data reveal that all parents who are highly educated are in the authoritative group, while all parents that are negligent have 8 years of education. Authoritative parents have the highest level of education and are followed in descending order by authoritarian parents who represent 38.2% of parents with higher education. Indulgent parents belong to the group with

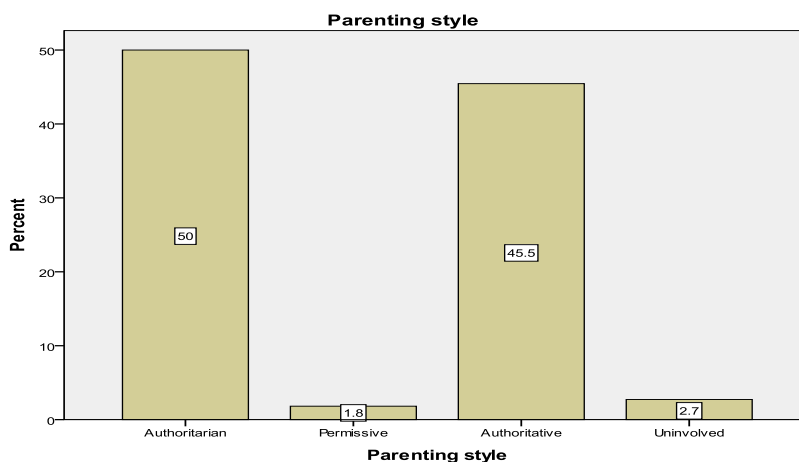
middle and bottom rank of neglectful parents. Table 3 shows in more detail how parenting style is associated with parental education

Table 3. Percentages and frequencies of parenting styles on the basis of education

Parenting style	Parent Education				Total
	8-year school	high school	higher education	master PhD	
Authoritative parents	10 15.6%	80 58.8%	18 100.0%	2 100.0%	110 50.0%
Tolerant /liberal parents	0 .0%	4 2.9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	4 1.8%
Authoritarian parents	48 75.0%	52 38.2%	0 .0%	0 .0%	100 45.5%
Negligent parents	6 9.4%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 2.7%
Total	64 100.0%	136 100.0%	18 100.0%	2 100.0%	220 100.0%

The dominant style of parenting

According to statistical analysis, the dominant parenting style of children in schools in Tirana is the authoritative style. Specifically, it was shown that one in two parents (50%) practice authoritative style, which means that half of the parents report higher levels of responsibility toward their children. After this style ranks authoritarian style with 45.5%, who have extremely high demand accountability but low in terms of parental responsibilities. Negligent style is represented in 2.7% of parents, even lower still is the most indulgent style represented by only 1.8% of parents.



Graph 1. Percentages of parenting styles

Relationship between parenting styles and academic achievements
Parenting style and grade of native language subject

Results show that parents have authoritative style in 95% of cases of children with high scores in native language, while the remaining 4.5% of

students with this level of achievement have parents with authoritarian style. Similarly, parents who practice an authoritarian style have 60.5% of children with average results, and 94.7% of children who belong to the group of students with low achievement in the native language subject. Liberal parents have children with average results. The remaining students have parents who practice an authoritarian style 77.8% and negligent style 22.2%.

Table 4. Percentages and frequencies of parenting styles on the basis of marks of language

Parenting style	Grades of native language				Total
	Residual	Low level	Average level	High level	
Authoritative parents	0 .0%	0 .0%	26 34.2%	84 95.5%	110 50.0%
Tolerant /liberal parents	0 .0%	0 .0%	4 5.3%	0 .0%	4 1.8%
Authoritarian parents	14 77.8%	36 94.7%	46 60.5%	4 4.5%	100 45.5%
Negligent parents	4 22.2%	2 5.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 2.7%
Total	18 100.0 %	38 100.0%	76 100.0%	88 100.0%	220 100.0 %

Parenting style and grade of mathematics

For mathematics, authoritative parents have children in high and medium levels. Not seen any case, except with the authority of parents to have children with high scores in mathematics. In terms of average achievement level, they are dominated by children of authoritarian parents and 61.8% followed by the children of parents who practice authoritative parenting style 32.4%. Also, children of parents who practice indulgent style have children who are grouped in average achievement level in this case. Remaining students have parents who practice authoritarian style 75% and negligent 25%.

Table 5. Percentages and frequencies of parenting styles on the basis of grades of mathematics

Parenting style	Grades of mathematics				Total
	Residual	Low level	Average level	High level	
Authoritative parents	0 .0%	0 .0%	22 32.4%	88 100.0 %	110 50.0%
Tolerant /liberal	0	0	4	0	4

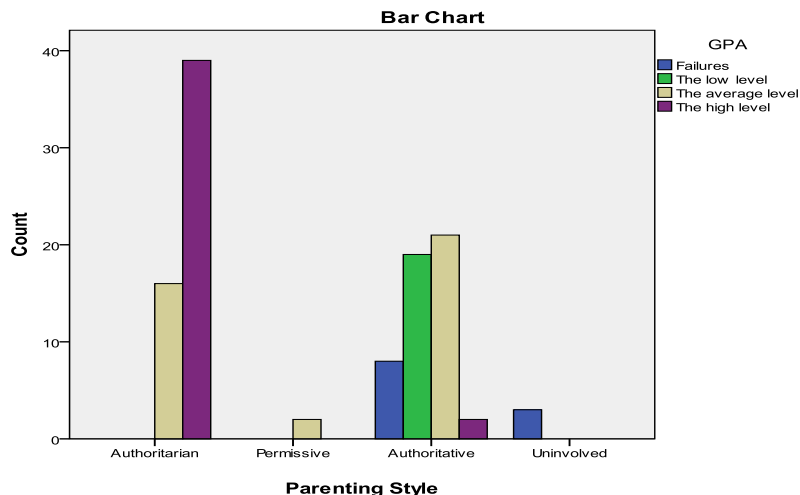
parents	.0%	.0%	5.9%	.0%	1.8%
Authoritarian parents	18 75.0%	40 100.0 %	42 61.8%	0 .0%	100 45.5%
Negligent parents	6 25.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 2.7%
Total	24 100.0%	40 100.0 %	68 100.0 %	88 100.0 %	220 100.0 %

Between native language and mathematics we see that children of parents with authority in mathematics presented a higher level, whereas indulgent style in both cases appear average. Children of authoritarian parents have a large percentage of residual and low level in mathematics, resulting in 0% to a high level, which differs from the subject of language in the higher level presented with 4.5%. Similarly in mathematics, children of parents who practice a negligent style, resulting all remaining in the difference from the subject of language, in some cases where they appear to be even lower level.

Parenting style and GPA

Data analysis shows that authoritative parents appear to have children with average scores of 41.0% (32 students) and high 95.1% (78 students). Even in terms of GPA, indulgent parents have children who stay on average by 5.1% (4 students), while authoritarian parenting students' results include all levels from the remaining 72.7% (16 students) in low level of 100% (19 students) at the 53.8% average (42 parents) at the top with 4.9% (4 students). So neglectful parenting style appears opposite of authority and indulgent style with 11.7% (6 students) whose children appear in the residual level and 0% for other levels

Observing GPA for each parenting style, we reached the conclusion, that the highest percentage of students with high academic achievement are children whose parents practice authoritative parenting style. Children of parents who exert authoritarian style appear at all levels of achievement. Children of parents who practice indulgent style appear to have average grades for all subjects, while children whose parents practice negligent parenting style appear in the residual level in all subjects.



Graph2. Parenting styles and levels of achievement based on students' average grade

To reconfirm the relationship between parenting style and academic achievement, was conducted and analyze with Pearson correlation, which shows that parenting style has a very strong relationship with student achievement in the native language, in mathematical but also in annual evaluation, where more links are also statistically significant.

Table 6. The relationship between parenting style and student achievement

		Grade of native language	Grade of mathematics	Average grade
Parenting style	Pearson Correlation	.764**	.821**	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	220	220	220

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The study found gender differences on the basis of parent gender, where mothers proved to be practicing authoritative parenting style, while fathers tend toward an authoritarian style. Also, it was found that although there are a very small percentage of parents who practice indulgent parenting style, they are all mothers.

Besides gender differences of parents, in this study we also found gender differences based on the child's gender, which means Albanians have different parenting practices for girls versus boys. Kashahu (2013), who undertook a study with 714 ninth grade students in Tirana city, detected gender differences in academic achievement. Girls have higher results than boys in mathematics and native language, but also in the average grades of the main subjects. In her conclusions, Kashahu explained the high achievements of girls started from the family system theories for which girls

are more confident than boys, but she also argues that another factor is the greater work that girls do in achieving results. The study offers another argument about the achievements of girls. Specifically, parents practice more authoritarian style with boys than with girls, authoritative parenting style according to the researcher who Baumrind (1996) results to be successful style and more connected with high academic achievements.

Even the parents' ages are associated with different parenting practices. Results show that parents ages 35-45 practice all styles of parenting, where more than half of the parents in this age group practice authoritative style, with less than other groups and negligent authoritarian style. However, it should be mentioned that this is the only age group where we find the tolerant style.

Parents at a younger age (under 34) in more than half the cases are authoritarian and also constitute a higher percentage in terms of negligent. In the group older than 45, one in two or three parents practice an authoritarian style and two in five have authority style. These findings are important for teachers, as it may help them to be more attentive when parents are too young and tend to be not only authoritarian but also negligent. Even when parents are older than 45, where even though parents are at a mature age and are not negligent parents, they have a tendency to be authoritarian.

Likewise one of the findings of this study is the fact that education and the type of work that parents do are linked with parenting style. Namely, three in five parents with authority are employed and have more favorable positive terms of employment than other groups and styles followed by authoritarian parents. Negligent parents in this sample are all unemployed. This means that these families have less income. This finding is consistent with McLoyd (1990), which states that parents who are unemployed are less supportive of their children as a result of lower revenues.

In this study, 64% of authoritarian parents are found to be unemployed or partially employed, which gives us the opportunity to interpret their harshness as associated with insufficient income. Shumow, Vandell, and Posner (1998) also came to this conclusion.

Parental education also appears to be associated with parenting style. Educated parents appear to be authoritative parents as all respondents have higher education and higher graduation level in this group. Indulgent parents have at most a high school education, while authoritarian parents are found to have a high school and 8-year education. Negligent parents have an 8-year education. There is an observed link not only between education and parenting style, but also between employment status and parenting style.

Academic achievement in native language, math and GPA are also associated with parenting practices, more specifically with higher achievement by students whose parents exercise authority style. This is

found articulated by the researcher Baumrind (1991). This parenting style is considered as the most successful style, from the literature reviewed above and the results obtained from this study, we see that there is a relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement, where the children of these parents have higher grades. Children of parents in this study with tolerant style have only average results and not any case, higher or lower results.

Baumrind's study in 1996 reached similar conclusions. Children of authoritarian parents are found to have high levels of achievement. As Rogers and his colleagues (2009) explained, with the parents' constant interference in order to maintain rules and demand accountability for every moment, these parents irk their children and create a high level of stress, which distracts students from their studies and consequently lowers grades. While children of negligent parents in this sample all have remaining result.

Conclusion

Results of this study once again confirm the theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1997) for the biological model where it becomes clear that the development of the child and his achievements are associated with the micro-environment where he lives and mostly with his family's micro-environment.

This study shows that students' academic achievements in all cases are related to parenting styles. On the other side of parenting style are the child's gender as well as the parent's gender, age, employment and education. More educated parents tend to use practices associated with authoritative style, which in this study was shown to be a successful style with regard to the student's academic achievement.

The findings of this study can be exploited by parents who can reflect on the style that they themselves practice and the resultant academic achievements of their child. Teachers also may make an effort to help parents determine some of the more positive parenting practices that will result in their child's highest academic achievement. Teachers can show special care with parents with low educational level or minimal employment status, as the study shows the link between neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles and low levels of education and high rates of unemployment, which creates financial difficulties and deviations from parental obligations and lack of support for their child to achieve high scores.

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