Parenting: Types, Effects and Cultural Variation

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Authors’ contributions
This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author SMYA designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors managed the analyses of the study and managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT
Studies have been coming out exploring different aspects of parenting and how the child has been shaped by parenting. Parenting is the emotional tone between parent and child. It is usually conceptualized by two dimensions, namely demandingness and responsiveness. Based on these dimensions, parenting has been conceptualized in four types mentioned as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Parenting has immediate as well as enduring effects on a child’s behavioral, emotional, personal, and cognitive development. However, parenting is deeply influenced by the culture which decides the limits of behavior that to be controlled and praised. This narrative review was aimed to discuss the dimensions, types, effect of parenting style on the child’s development, and cultural variation of it.

Keywords: Parenting; culture; demandingness; responsiveness; authoritative; authoritarian; permissive.
1. INTRODUCTION
Parenting has an immense role on the development of all the aspects of life of the child. It is perceived differently in different culture thus, cannot be defined easily. It is defined as the rearing of the child; especially the care, love, and guidance are given by the parent [1,2]. Other authors defined it as a general child-rearing pattern that characterizes parents’ behaviors toward their child [3]. It is the patterns of a child’s training molded by the normative interaction of parents and how they respond to child’s performance [4]. Parenting has been perceived as giving necessary support to a child to develop physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually [1,5,6]. Darling and Steinberg (1997), defined parenting as a constellation of attitudes towards the child that are communicated to the child and create an emotional climate in which the parent’s behaviors are expressed [6].

2. DIMENSIONS AND TYPOLOGY OF PARENTING
Parenting is most often conceptualized by two dimensions, i.e., parental acceptance, involvement, and strictness-supervision, which creates four types of parenting styles mentioned as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful [2]. Baumrind explained two independent dimensions theoretically which are able to predict a child's behavior [2]. The first dimension, i.e. responsiveness, is the amount of nutrition, warmth, emotional expression and positive reinforcement associated with child's opinion. The second dimension, i.e. demandingness, refers to the control application method, level of demand, and expectations [4,7,8]. Baumrind identified three parenting styles viz: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive [5,7]. However, Maccoby and Martin expanded the preceding three classifications into four parenting styles; viz: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful [8]. The authoritative parenting style is characterized by high parental responsiveness, and high parental demands. In the authoritarian parenting style, the parent is demanding but not responsive. The parent is responsive but not demanding in permissive style. The parent is neither responsive nor demanding in the neglectful style [5,7,8]. This scenario is further illustrated in Table 1.

3. EFFECTS OF PARENTING
The nature of parenting has immediate and enduring effects on the development of the child [1,7,9]. Parents have critical influences on the child’s behavioral, emotional, personal and cognitive development [10]. Parenting styles and techniques have consistently been shown to relate to various outcomes such as child psychological problems (e.g., aggression) and academic performance. Parenting style has been found to predict child wellbeing in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development and problem behavior [11]. Inadequate parenting based on harsh punishment and very little positive reinforcement (may be authoritarian parenting) have been linked with behavioral and conduct disorders, negative social adjustment, such as hostility and low self-esteem and permissive parenting is highly associated with physical aggression [10].

Previous studies revealed that the adolescents who perceive their parents as being firm, warm, involved and democratic (authoritative parenting), they perform better at school. It was revealed that the combination of the three factors i.e. high levels of parental warmth, behavioral control and granting parenting style is more effective than any of the factors considered individually [3]. Other studies found that the authoritative parenting style significantly predicted academic performance, and no relation was found for permissive and authoritarian parenting styles [12,13]. Another study found children from the authoritative parenting style have the highest number of school attendance, while children from authoritarian parenting styles have the lowest and children from permissive parenting style fall within the class of low school attendance [14]. Evidence from past studies showed that the authoritative style brings good outcomes among adolescents, while some other researchers have found out that in some cultures and ethnicities (Asian American families); authoritarian style may be associated with more positive child outcomes [1,3,4]. Children who

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<td><strong>Responsiveness</strong></td>
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have authoritative parents show the type of behavior described by Baumrind as energetic-friendly. Those children are very self-reliant and cheerful, can cope well with stress and they are achievement-oriented. Risky behaviors are more common among teenagers with authoritarian or permissive parents [15]. Effective parenting styles can reduce the risk of childhood overweight which is reported in Latin America and found that authoritarian parenting behaviors increase their children’s risk for overweight [16]. 

A recent review revealed that parents directly influence a child’s access to healthy or unhealthy foods and enable or inhibit physical activity and sedentary behaviors at home and a more permissive parenting style was associated with a more obesogenic environment while a more authoritative parenting style was associated with a less obesogenic environment [17]. John Buri found a strong positive relationship between parental authoritarianism and adolescent self-esteem, a strong inverse relationship between parental authoritarianism and adolescent self-esteem [18]. Adolescents with authoritative parents tend to achieve higher grades, be more self-reliant, less anxious, less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors and more likely to adopt positive coping strategies than are adolescents with parents using other rearing styles [11,19,20]. Students of authoritative parents have shown such values as a stronger work orientation, greater engagement in classroom activities, higher educational aspirations, more positive feelings about school, greater time spent on homework, more positive academic self-conceptions and lower levels of school misconduct, such as cheating or copying [12].

Authoritarian parenting is believed to have adverse effects on children’s psychological development. Empirical studies showed that children with authoritarian parents tended to exhibit anxious and withdrawn behaviors, lack self-reliance, rely on authority figures to make decisions diminishing their sense of personal value and responsibility [12,20]. Additionally, the high level of parental pressure incorporated within the authoritarian style can often reduce children’s intrinsic motivation, causing them to be reliant on extrinsic sources, thus undermining the process of learning. These types of behaviors often trigger poor communication skills, an essential component predictor of future success [12,20]. Authoritarian parenting style has been linked to low academic achievement, the emergence of problems related to alcohol abuse and high levels of frustration and criminal behavior [19]. Despite the high provision of warmth, the low levels of control that permissive parents have over their children ultimately reduce their social competence [12].

4. CULTURE AND PARENTING

Parenting behavior is deeply influenced by the culture which decides the limits of behavior that to be controlled and praised. Extant conceptualization of the parental behavior largely bases on studies conducted with majority white, middle-class families’ values, cultural norms and parental expectancies [21]. There is a common perception that Asian American parents are authoritarians regarding academic as well as extracurricular activities, and exceedingly demanding in both academic and home setting. Recently, these parents have been termed “tiger parents” for the ferocity with which they discipline their children and for their emphasis on the importance of family obligation and academic achievement [1,22,23]. The common adage “strict father, kind mother” in Chinese families suggests that the mother may be responsible for the daily upbringing and emotional guidance, while the father may be responsible for discipline and socialization outside the home [22].

Previous research on parenting practices in ethnic minority groups indicates that cultural values and practices may impact parenting styles such that the western-derived profiles established by Baumrind and expanded by Maccoby and Martin are not as applicable to the groups [22]. Evidence revealed that among white American families and Asian-American families and highlighted the differences between them and pointed out that what is accepted by white Americans as good parenting is ‘authoritative parenting’ [14]. It is proved that the first-generation Chinese youth from authoritarian homes do just as well in school as those from authoritative homes [14]. Chinese-American youths think of support and control differently than White or Filipino Americans. Chinese adolescents reported that the parents show their love by instrumental support (by the provision of needs and sacrifice for children) than verbal for example “I love you”. Chinese parents are considered more authoritarian, controlling and restrictive compared with their Western counterparts [10,24]. American parenting seeks to “nurture innate abilities,” whereas Chinese parenting emphasizes “training” (guan) [10,24]. Guan in Chinese parenting is defined as the willingness of parents to be directive and
controlling, with an emphasis on self-discipline and hard work. This strong parental influence may potentially affect a child’s participation in daily activities, including physical activity. Since Confucian philosophy specifies that the father is responsible for indoctrination and discipline, it is logical to examine the paternal and maternal impact on Chinese children’s physical activity separately [24]. Among Sri Lankan Tamil families, family interests are prioritized over individual interests. The advice on child-rearing is obtained from older relatives and friends. The Tamil family unit revolves around children who are objects of love and affection. Parents make decisions on behalf of their children who are raised into obedience [25]. In Kenya, authoritarian style is the dominant parenting style hence a lot of emphases is put on physical punishment where there is a saying, ‘Spare the rod and spoil the child’ [26]. Parents and teachers insist on the use of corporal punishment and in so doing confuse discipline and punishment in Kenya [26]. In Pakistani society, obedience is valued as a virtue, both religiously and culturally. Parents usually believe in harsh disciplinary measures to reprimand children at points where their actions or beliefs are in conflict with parents’ expectations and religious values [10].

Parenting style differs across family types where parental authority structure is weaker in single-parent or stepparent families. It is also possible that some step-parents do not feel they have the authority to discipline step-child. It can be seen that, in proportional terms, authoritative parenting is more common among two-parent families than among single-parent families or step-families [27]. Furthermore, research revealed differences in perceived parenting style between spouses where fathers perceive their spouses to be more authoritative, more permissive and less authoritarian than themselves, whereas mothers only perceive themselves to be more authoritative than fathers [11].

5. CONCLUSION

Among the parenting styles, authoritative parenting is believed to be an adequate parenting style, because it supports a balanced use of warmth and control. All other parenting styles, such as authoritarian, permissive-indulgent and neglectful-uninvolved, are tagged as inadequate, because they either lack warmth but with too much control, as with the authoritarian style; or they lack control yet with excessive warmth, or they lack both warmth and control, as with the neglectful-uninvolved style. Further researches should be attempted to see the variation of conceptualization, the cultural variation of parenting style, the long-term effect of different types of parenting styles, and to develop culture-sensitive tools to promote healthy parenting. Standard educational kits could be included in the academic curricula focusing the parenting. The development of smartphone applications to make aware regarding the dimensions and standard parenting practices could be targeted in the resources limited cultures. However, the issue demands to be studied robustly especially in low- and middle-income countries where there is a dearth of researches. Stakeholders (such as parents, schools, teachers, public health authorities, child health services) should take the issue with importance and approach holistically.

CONSENT

It is not applicable.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

As the data includes only the printed and published information, no formal ethical clearance was needed.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES