

Parenting Styles and Competitiveness among Mothers of Preschool Children

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Abstract – *This study investigated the effect of Parenting Styles and Competitiveness among Mothers of Preschool Children. The main objective of this study was to determine the factors of competitiveness of preschool mothers and its psychological effects on children. Both qualitative and quantitative research method were utilized in this research. The qualitative data were consisted of focus group discussion and observation. The quantitative research was composed of standardized questionnaire. Based on the results researchers have found that the parenting style of the mothers of preschooler from private school was highly Equalitarian and in public school was highly authoritarian. Psychological effects were found in children such as concept of competition, motivation of winning and determination to be successful. Family and economic aspects resulted as the dominant subject of competitiveness.*

Keywords: *Parenting style, Competitiveness, academic performance, social activities, economic and family aspect*

I. INTRODUCTION

Parents play an important role in children since a baby's birth. It is widely known that parenting is one of the hardest jobs in life but fulfilling one. Many researches provide a variety of parenting styles which is widely use.

Parenting styles shapes child's behaviour. The young child learns from his parents how to think as well as how to talk, how to interpret and use his experience, how to control his reactions, and how to influence other people (Baumrind, 2008). There are lot of things that may affect child's behaviour in parenting style that they experienced. One best example is in education of children. Parents are one of the most influential factors on the lives of their children. They have the capability to shape, maintain and improve pupils who will be active and interested, through their positive involvement in the learning process and educational activities. Moreover, parents are also capable of repressing and destroying the motivation and ability of their children through ignore and indifference to their achievements.

It may also depend on the parenting style or strategies of parents that they do to their child.

According to Hui-Chen Huang and Mason (2008), parents' attitudes, along with their behaviour and activities with regard to their children's education, do affect academic achievement in a positive way. In connection with this, parental school involvement may actually affect children psychologically. Parental school involvement is largely defined as consisting of the activities such as staying at school, communicating with teachers and other school personnel, assisting in academic activities at home, and attending school events, meetings of parent/ teacher association and parent/teachers conferences (Hill & Taylor 2009).

A parent sees their child to be the most wonderful gift they ever had. No matter what happen, children will always be the apple in the eyes of their parents. According to Chua (2011) Chinese mothers believed that parenting is a success and if not, it is a failure for her child and most especially to them. He stated that Western mothers believed that stressing academic success is not good for children or that parents need to foster the idea that learning is fun. In contrast with the Chinese mothers, they believed that their children can be the best students, that academic achievement reflects successful parenting, and if their children did not excel in school it is the parent to be blame.

Parent's behavior depends on how the children interact with them. In school setting, parents are being competitive in which they reassure the learning of their child. As stated by Motkar (2012), Competitive or comparing parents are those who not only keep boasting and bragging about their child's achievements, but also look down upon other kids and their parents. He also stated that they are those who usually commenting on the performance of their child and humiliate the child to the extent of being ashamed. They are also those who keep bothering their own kids to maintain consistency in their performance and hold the top position always.

In connection to this competitive parents are believed to be those who affect much in their child maybe in positive or negative way. Competing with other parents affects the behaviour of the child. Children can become embarrassed or even ashamed of

how their competitive parents act and not even want to be around them. As said by Cramblett (2012) Competing with other parents is not only impractical, it can cause long term effects to children and how they perceive to other people.

With regards to this, the researcher's interest is to study the competitiveness of the pre-school mothers and its psychological effect on children. The study will focus on the parental involvement on school and education of the pre-schoolers wherein most parents are totally involved, and the psychological effects on children of competitive mothers.

Parents, particularly mothers, often have a strong support to their child but sometimes get to the point of extreme and competitive pride towards other mothers. This study will benefit children and parent most especially the mothers. Future researchers and readers will find the study contents and will have an additional brainwave to the parents' competitiveness primarily to the pre-school mothers. The study will determine the level of competitiveness among mothers. The researchers presuppose to determine the psychological effects of competitiveness among mothers to children.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to identify the parenting style of pre-school mothers; to determine the most common aspects of competitiveness among preschool mothers between public and private; to determine the effects of preschool mother's competitiveness as to their children based on academic performance, social activities, economic and family aspects; and to propose an intervention program that addresses the results of the study.

III. THEORETICAL BASIS

As stated by Ainsworth and Bowlby (1969), attachment theory is the deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space. Attachment is characterized by specific behaviours in children, such as seeking closeness with the attachment figure when upset or threatened. Attachment theory in psychology originates with the seminal work of Bowlby (1958). In the 1930's, Bowlby worked as a psychiatrist in a Child Guidance Clinic in London, where he treated many emotionally disturbed children. This experience led Bowlby to consider the importance of the child's relationship with their mother in terms of their social, emotional and cognitive development. In connection to this theory, the study will incorporate this theory to meet the objectives of the study.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are individuals that are naturally competitive in every way. However, when these competitive individuals are parents and integrate their cut-throat behaviours into the relationships that they have with their children, the end result is bound to be unhealthy.

In terms of parenting styles, it is safe to say that once a child is born into this world, their enemies and top competitors are not typically thought to be their very own parents. When parents are in a relationship that does not have a strong foundation, a child can imitate and even violate upon the likelihood of having that sort of happiness with their spouse in the future.

Perceptions, attitudes and beliefs are important factors in understanding parenting styles and their potential impact on children's development. An individual's beliefs about childrearing styles and parenting goals may be important considerations in understanding childrearing strategies. Information about how family relations are actually experienced in families may extend knowledge about influences on parents' choices about parenting styles and the views of family relations in their own homes (Berg, 2011).

In accordance with Wessel (2005), mothers who had preschool children between the ages of 3 and 5 found that they were more supportive and involved parents. The children had better preschool ability and fewer behaviour problems. Parents who are involved with their children exhibited more positive control over their children. Parenting styles is involved in both parents and on children's personality. It is based on the authority of one's own parents and society.

As said by Dwishes (2008), the child is supposed to always do as they are told without discussion. It is highly based on the parent's rules and policy for the child who is used the authoritarian parenting. Children brought up by strictly authoritarian parents may show signs of unhappiness, anxiety and lack social skills. Punishment of the children is often physical or aggressive.

As indicated by Motkar (2011), nurturing the child is a major point of concern as it helps to develop your child's personality and prepares him/her to survive in the competitive world. Proper handling of your kid will make him/her stay disciplined and behave in a socially acceptable way Snehla (2011). Parents are role models for their kids and their first teachers too. Likewise, the atmosphere in the house also plays an important role in proper bringing up of the child. Parents, today, are aware about various parenting techniques but somehow do not follow them while raising their children. They tend to think that those techniques are pretty strict for a

child. The types of over parenting include over protectiveness, over involvement and over lenience.

Along with Bose (2010), the psychology of the parents controlling their kids is probably motivated by the desire of creating well-disciplined and responsible individuals out of their children. However, the parents may have had dysfunctional childhood themselves. Whatever the case, the effects of such control on children can be devastating. Constant scrutiny and preventing him from arguing his case robs a child of his confidence. A child, whose parents take decisions for him every time, fails to develop the ability take decisions on his own. Such children lose the sense of what is wrong and what is right for them.

Parental Involvement in Education

Parents are concerned in their child's education. Chua (2011) stated that Chinese mothers believed that parenting is a success and if not, it is a failure for her child and most especially to them. He stated that Western mothers believed that stressing academic success is not good for children or that parents need to foster the idea that learning is fun. In contrast with the Chinese mothers, they believed that their children can be the best students, that academic achievement reflects successful parenting, and if their children did not excel in school it is the parent to be blame.

Haifa (2011) emphasized that involvement implies the dedication of resources by parents for the benefit of the child, and the total number of activities in which the parents can participate, so as to contribute either directly or indirectly towards the education of their children (Ginsburg, 2008).

Parent wants their children to go to school, to learn a lot of things. They were involved in school activities like volunteering at school, communicating with teachers and other school personnel. In a study of Hill and Taylor (2009), families and schools have worked together since the beginning of formalized schooling.

Without the cooperation of parents, the educational system today would not only be unsuccessful but would also find it difficult to function (Glick, 2007). The decision of the parents to participate and become involved is influenced by the wider context of their social environment. The extent of parental influence in the school depends on the degree of their involvement (Ginsburg, 2008).

On the other hand the nature of the association has evolved over the years (Epstein & Sanders, 2002). Schools were responsible for academic topics, and families were responsible and for moral, cultural and religious education. Additionally, Family and school

responsibilities for education were chronological. Families were responsible for preparing their children with the necessary skills in the early years and school took over from there with little input from families. It is well established the parental school involvement has a positive influence on school related outcomes for children.

In a study of Conway (2008), "Parental effort is consistently associated with higher levels of achievement, and the magnitude of the effect of parental effort is substantial. They seemed particularly interested in the academic achievements of their daughters. The researchers found parents spent more time talking to their daughters about their school work during dinnertime discussions.

Baumrind (2008) emphasized that the young child learns from his parents how to think as well as how to talk, how to interpret and use his experience, how to control his reactions, and how to influence other people. Children learn from their parents how to relate to others, whom to like and emulate, whom to avoid and derogate, how to express affiliation and animosity, and when to withhold response. The parents' use of reinforcement, whether, punishment or reward, alters the child's behaviour and affects his future likes and dislikes. Parents differ in their effectiveness as teachers and models. Some parents attempt to maximize and others to minimize the direct influence that they have upon their children.

Parents' attitudes, along with their behaviour and activities with regard to their children's education, do affect academic achievement in a positive way (Hui-Chen & Mason, 2008). There appears to be general agreement about the effects the family can have by being involved with their children's education. Students earn higher grades, they enrol in higher education, and their attitude towards school becomes more positive if the family, the community and school all work together.

Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) (2006) believes that children must have a range of learning environments around them, or complementary learning. Such learning environments include family, early childhood programs, schools, out-of-school time programs and activities, libraries, museums, and other community-based institutions. HFRP believes that complementary learning will provide a linking of consistent learning and development. This linkage is similar to that of Epstein's (2001) spheres of influence. HFRP linking of community and Epstein's spheres of influence are similar that they each incorporate community, school and family so that they all affect one another.

Olsen and Fuller (2008) found out that it has positive effects of parent involvement on children, families, and school when schools and parents continuously support and encourage the children's learning and development. The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status but the extent to which that student's family is able to become involved in their children's education at school and in the community and create a home environment that encourages learning.

Competitiveness among Mothers

Parent's behavior depends on how the children interact with them. In school setting, parents are being competitive in which they reassure the learning of their child. According to Perets (2009), people are unique. They have strengths and weaknesses in life. Every child has their own perception on things. When you measure your child against the standard of someone's accomplishments, you belittle him or her. The child needs places where she can explore her potency, learn from her weaknesses, and improve her own sense of self. Children desire to learn something with the supervisions of the parents.

As stated by Motkar (2012), competitive or comparing parents are those who not only keep boasting and bragging about their child's achievements, but also look down upon other kids and their parents. They are usually commenting on the performance of their child and humiliate the child to the extent of being ashamed. They also keep bothering their own kids to maintain consistency in their performance and hold the top position always. They do not understand the meaning and importance of healthy child rearing Snehla (2012). He also said that parents treat child rearing as a kind of contest wherein the ways of upbringing are judged by the activities the kids perform and the stage of life at which they are able to perform them.

Cramblett (2012) stressed that competing with other parents is not only impractical, it can cause long term effects to your children and how they perceive you and other people. Competing with other parents affects the behaviour of the child. Their children can become embarrassed or even ashamed of how their competitive parents act and not even want to be around them.

Along with Lugardo (2012), it is a natural characteristic for parents to feel their kids are superior to other children. All parents think their children are the smartest, most attractive kids in the world. However, the competition that can come amongst parents can have adverse effects on their children. The biggest competition between parents has to do with their child's

abilities. Competing with other parents on the different milestones your child should be reaching can make for a negative atmosphere for your child. Parents can become overly aggressive and frustrated with their children in order to pressure them to achieve milestones other parents have reached for their children.

Motkar (2012) mentioned that it is not the correct way to judge child rearing, rather, there are different ways parents adopt to raise a child, and all of them are perfect in their own ways. There is method which is greater or lesser effective than the other. It's just the need to understand the difference between bringing out the best in child and being over-competitive. Sometimes, due to over-expectation, the thin line between the two is crossed and it affects the progress of the child.

According to Wang Yiqing, (2013) Competition among mothers begins as soon as their child enter primary school, in some cases kindergarten. Economic, social and cultural elements play important roles in a child's growth and though all parents want their children to get the best education.

Characteristics of Preschool Children

According to Malley (2013), three and four-year-old children are often called preschoolers. Preschool children are making developmental strides and express an interest in the world around them. They want to touch, taste, and smell, hear, and test things for themselves. They are eager to learn. They learn by experiencing and by doing. Preschoolers learn from their play. They are busy developing skills, using language, and struggling to gain inner control. Preschoolers want to establish themselves as separate from their parents. They are more independent than toddlers. They can express their needs since they have greater command of language.

As said by Mannheim (2012) that the preschooler learns the social skills needed to play and work with other children. As time passes, the child is better able to cooperate with a larger number of peers. Although 4- to 5-year-olds may be able to start playing games that have rules, the rules are likely to change often at the whim of the dominant child. The child should display initiative, curiosity, the desire to explore, and enjoyment without feeling guilty or inhibited.

Preschoolers are characterized by fear, love, rage, jealousy and curiosity. They express their emotions freely and openly. They show outbursts of anger. They exhibit jealousy among their age mates or peers. Fear among them is great which is why there are seen running away from animals such as cows, ducks,

goats, cats and etc. They equally run away from other frightful objects and dangerous situations. Children at this stage can hardly stay in the dark or walk alone. In some cases, they are afraid of strangers (Paxson & Schandy, 2005; Walker et al., 2005).

According to Okoh (2011), some important aspects of physical development of the preschooler are his motor activities. Children within present age grade are extremely active. They wield a good control of their bodies and enjoy every activity they engage in for its own sake. A child learns to coordinate motor activity that it had learned and practiced before and during the time it was learning to walk. This development improves the child's ability to walk and also helps him to acquire the ability to climb stairs and stand uprightly completely unassisted.

Along with Rodriquez (2011), pre-school helps promote cognitive development and prepare young children for the challenges ahead -- math, reading, critical thinking and problem-solving. In preschool, children begin the basics for learning numbers, letters, vocabulary, and speech, the skills necessary to learn to read in elementary school. Cognitive development in early childhood can indicate success in the later school years, as children who develop strong cognitive development skills in the younger years are often better readers in high school.

V. METHOD

Research Design

The researchers used the quantitative and qualitative design in conducting the study. Quantitative method is a research technique used to gather data dealing with numbers. It is a statistical tools in measuring the behaviour of a given sample or population. On the other hand, qualitative method involves the collection and analysis of information based on its quality. And in focus group method which is a group of children are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the stimulus that was being shown. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. This study used of triangulated form of data gathering wherein questionnaire, interview and focus group were applied.

Participants

The participants of the study were twenty pre-school mothers randomly chosen from public and private school in Batangas City. A total of 20 respondents were being observed in two school months,

July and August and were asked to participate and answer the questionnaire and 4 groups with five members of randomly chosen children were asked to participate in the focus group interview.

Measures

The researchers used triangulation method in data gathering: the questionnaire, individual interview and focused group interview.

The study was utilized using the Parenting Style Assessment Questionnaire developed by McGraw. It consists of 30 statements describing various aspects of parenting behaviour. The goal of this assessment is to identify your dominant parenting style, not to look for any downside or negative labelling regarding how you parent your children. For each statement, participants should choose: Agree (A), Mostly Agree (MA), Mostly Disagree (MD) or Disagree (D).

On the other hand, the researchers were conducting an observation to preschool mothers to determine the aspects of competitiveness among them and to know their behaviour towards their children.

In focus group, the researchers interact to the children by chatting and sharing thoughts that would collect the important details on how the children gave perceives the stimulus that was shown. The researchers made use of stimulus that represents the different pictures of preschool child and their parents for them to figure out the behaviour of their parents towards them and as well as the questions. Pictures include parent-child interaction in different school settings. Other picture includes extreme support of parent to child that shows competitiveness.

Procedure

Just before the start of the data gathering processes, the researchers first had the instruments validated by the experts in the field of psychology. After the materials had been validated, the researchers planned the target area where they can gather data. In formality of the data gathering procedure, the researchers started by giving consent form fill and sign by the participants, indicating that they sincerely accept the invitation of participating in the research.

The researcher used the validated questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to the preschool mothers to assess their parenting style to their child. On the other hand, an observation method was conducted to gather information about the aspects of competitiveness among preschool mothers.

In focus group interview the researchers asked some questions followed by showing stimulus which is

in an informal conversation mood which helps to assess the effects of having a competitive mother to the behaviour child.

Through the use of the questionnaire, the gathered information was being computed by the statistician. And for the observation and focus group interview, the data collected was being transcribed.

Data Analysis

The attained data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The researchers used the quantitative analysis in data gathering through the questionnaire, while qualitative analysis was used in collecting data through observation and focus group interview. Weighted mean and standard deviation was used to compute the score from the answered questionnaires and scales and thematic analysis was applied to assess the psychological effects of competitiveness of parents on their children.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Parenting Style among Preschool Mother's between Private and Public School N= (20)

Categories	Mean	SD	VI
Private School			
Authoritarian	33.05	3.45	High
Equalitarian	33.70	3.04	High
Permissive	29.90	5.32	Dominant
Public School			
Authoritarian	32.85	4.73	High
Equalitarian	32.80	3.69	High
Permissive	31.10	5.14	Dominant

The results showed that the mother's of preschool children in private school are highly equalitarian. It was proven in our research that Equalitarian parenting style got the highest mean of 33.7000 and (SD=3.04527). While permissive parenting style got the lowest mean of 29.9000 with a standard deviation of 5.32027 and authoritarian parenting with a mean of 33.0500 (SD=3.45612).

Table 2. Action Plan for the Improvement of Parenting

Key Result Area: Improved Interpersonal Competitive being of Pre School Mothers

Objective	Strategies	Person Involved	Success Measures
1. To promote harmonious relationship between the mother of preschool children.	Conduct a meeting that can help the parents to distinguish the parenting style that will be beneficial for the child.	Preschool mothers	Effective parenting Strategies
2. To lead parents on awareness of competitiveness on preschool mothers.	Conduct a seminar and open forum regarding healthy relationship with co-parents.	Preschool mothers, school counselor	Harmonious relationship with co-parents

The gathered data revealed that the mother's of preschool children in public school are highly authoritarian. It was shown in our research that Authoritarian parents got the highest mean of 33.7000 and (SD=3.04527). The Permissive parents obtained the lowest mean of 31.1000 (SD= 5.14935) and Equalitarian got a mean of 32.8000 with a standard deviation of 5.14935.

Aspects of Preschool Mothers' Competitiveness

The family and economic aspects were the dominant subject in competition of mothers. It includes the competition on technology advancement, appliances at home, water and electric bills and other family concerned matters. The preschool mothers are also concern in the academic performance of their children in school. All aspects are dominant in Private schools.

Themes and Categories to determine the Psychological effect of competitiveness of parents on their children

The students has the sense of responsibility on studying as a student, information from the participants identified that preschoolers already know their purpose of going to school. Identifying parent's role was also evident; preschoolers knew the role of their parents to them. Egocentrism, which is common to children, was also identified. Setting identity to their parents was a remarkable one, preschoolers has the tendencies to get frustrated of establishing their good identity to show to their parents. Preschoolers also tend to have a sense of competitiveness when it comes to their mothers, they wanted their mothers to be on top or higher than the other moms. Determination to be successful was also a noteworthy to the data gathered. Responsibility on studying, egocentrism, setting identity, concept of winning, perception on fighting, and motivation for winning are mostly manifest by the children from public school. Children from private schools manifest the identification of parents role, and the determination to be successful.

Table 2 presents the proposed action plan for the Improvement of parenting of preschool mothers. It indicates the objectives, strategies, person involve and success measure. This intervention program will be useful to establish healthy relationship with co- mothers of preschool children.

VII. CONCLUSION

The researchers found out that mothers of preschool children in private school are highly equalitarian. According to McGraw, (2012) equalitarian parents, give their children choices. Their family probably operates more like a team and their children feel like they like in a democracy up to some point. As a parent, they probably are the type that likes to set own goals and when it comes to family's goals, they are set together as a family. Decisions that impact the family are made as a family and problems that affect the family are solved as a family. As resulted, mothers' of preschool children in public school are highly authoritarian.

The effects of competitiveness of their parents, students have the sense of responsibility on studying as a student, information from the participants identified that preschoolers already know their purpose of going to school. Identifying parent's role was also evident; preschoolers knew the role of their parents to them. Egocentrism, which is common to children, was also identified. Setting identity to their parents was a remarkable one, preschoolers has the tendencies to get frustrated of establishing their good identity to show to their parents. Preschoolers also tend to have a sense of competitiveness when it comes to their mothers; they wanted their mothers to be on top or higher than the other moms. Determination to be successful was also a noteworthy to the data gathered.

As regards to Malley (2013) preschool children are making developmental strides and express an interest in the world around them. They want to touch, taste, and smell, hear, and test things for themselves. And as said by Mannheim (2012), the preschooler learns the social skills needed to play and work with other children. As time passes, the child is better able to cooperate with a larger number of peers. In this case children really do wants to prove something in their own little ways.

Furthermore, the researchers found out that Family and economic aspects was the dominant subject in competition of mothers. It includes the competition on technology advancement, appliances at home, water and electric bills and other family concerned matters. The preschool mothers are also concern in the academic performance of their children in school. Along with Wang (2013) Competition among mothers begins as

soon as their child enters primary school, in some cases kindergarten. Economic, social and cultural elements play important roles in a child's growth and though all parents want their children to get the best education.

Parent wants their children to go to school, to learn a lot of things. They were involved in school activities like volunteering at school, communicating with teachers and other school personnel. In the study of Hill and Taylor (2009) found out that the families and schools have worked together since the beginning of formalized schooling wherein it was also proven in this study.

The proposed intervention program addresses to have effective parenting strategies to their preschool children. It also aims to have a harmonious relationship with co- parents to lessen the competitiveness with each other.

For the future researchers, they may conduct a comparable study but with a great number of respondents for reliability and consistency and add another instrument for their research study. Moreover, it can be suggested that the Mothers of the participants should be informed with different forms of parenting procedure to differentiate what will be beneficial to the child. This study will be useful for the guidance offices and teachers in each school to develop programs that can help students and parents to establish harmonious relationship.

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