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Academic Motivation and Parenting Styles

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between the Secondary student's academic motivation and perceived parenting style as well as the relationship between academic motivation and socioeconomic status of the student; An anonymous survey was given to the secondary students of government institutions and their correlation was determined by applying SPSS and it was found that the relationship between these variables was statistically significant.

Keywords: Motivation, Academic, Parenting style and Socio-economic status.

Introduction

According to Baumrind (1966) Authoritarian parents challenge to “shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority.

Baumrind (1966) suggests authoritarian parents do not encourage verbal conversation or compromise because they believe the child should “accept her (the parent) word for what is right” (p.890). These parents' expectations are very high regarding their child following their rules, with a reliance on punishment to teach a lesson if the child diverts. Baumrind (1966) explains permissive parents “behave in a non-punitive, acceptant, affirmative manner towards the child's impulses, desires, and actions” (p. 889). Permissive parents may check with the child about certain house rules, and ask very few demands regarding policies, chores, behaviors, or responsibilities.

Permissive parents regularly allow their child to regulate their own life such as activities, homework, and other responsibilities. Children of permissive parents usually do not receive direction in changing themselves to learn from mistakes for the future. They do not like confrontation and lack structure for their child, although they show love towards their child. The child may lack self-discipline and self-control due to permissive parents.

Authoritative parents are equally balanced and provide a healthy combination of being nurturing while having certain standards for the child to abide by in a rational way. Baumrind (1966) explains authoritative parents direct their child with guidance, verbally communicates giving reasons for their actions, and “... values both expressive and instrumental attributes and both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity”

(p.891). This means authoritative parents have control of their child while still having a purpose of allowing them to grow from their actions, not restricting them with excessive punishment or excessive leniency.

The last parenting style that was more recently considered is neglectful parenting.

This can also be referred to as “uninvolved” parenting and are not authoritarian, authoritative, nor permissive. Neglectful parenting is the absence of the responsibilities entirely.

According to Mgbemere and Telles (2013), children who have a negative or absent relationship with their parent will have a harder time forming relationships with other people, particularly children their age. This leads to the child lacking any guidance or nurturing, which can result in damaging outcomes.

Motivation can be divided into two main types, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Erlanger A. Turner, Megan Chandler, and Robert W. Heffer (2009), intrinsic motivation refers to completing an activity for itself and one’s own pleasure or satisfaction derived from participating, and extrinsic motivation refers to completing an activity to satisfy an external demand or reward contingency.

Turner, Chandler, and Heffer (2009) concluded that authoritative characteristics such as warmth and supportiveness result in student’s increased intrinsic motivation. Although the student may not be living at home due to residing on campus, previous exposure to parents still affect the student during their time away and have a lasting effect regarding their motivation towards their academics. The increased levels of motivation contributed to better overall academic performance, higher self-efficacy, and easier transitioning to a more independent lifestyle at college. Similarly, Kenney, Lac, Hummer, Grimaldi, and LaBrie (2015) reported authoritative parenting to be a predictor of better school adjustment. Schunk (2008) discussed the general motivation enhancements made when the parent allows the child to have an input on decisions, provide alternative choices and explanations, acknowledge the needs and feelings of the child, and state expectations in a suggestive manner. These general parental behaviors help accelerate intellectual development. Ricard and Pelletier (2016) found both parental support and teacher support as significant predictors for academic motivation in their study on high school students.

Authoritarian Parenting and Academic Motivation

Children of authoritarian parents may be extrinsically motivated; they demonstrate lower motivation levels than children of authoritative parents. Students of authoritarian parents may be motivated in the classroom; however, the academic motivation is desired for the satisfaction of their parents opposed to for themselves. Silva, Dorso, Azhar, and Renk (2008) suggested although authoritarian parenting is associated to lower grade point averages (GPA) in students; the anxiety that could be brought on by authoritarian parents may actually increase academic motivation. Gonzalez and Wolters (2006) similarly concluded that students who viewed their parents as controlling, tended to report a greater focus in order to do better than their peers. “...students who saw their parents as strict and dictating adherence to a clear set of parent-defined rules tended to report a greater focus on doing their math work in order to outperform others” (Gonzalez & Wolters, 2006, p.12). Results of a study conducted by Turner, Chandler, and Heffer (2009) suggested authoritarian parenting may be a motivational factor to academic success and children may lack any negative influence from authoritarian parents, in some cultures. These studies demonstrated children whose motivation increased due to having authoritarian parents.

Permissive/Neglectful Parenting and Academic Motivation

Researches on permissive/neglectful parenting have conclusively demonstrated the negative influence this style has on academic motivation. Gonzalez and Wolters (2009) found many results regarding permissive parenting and academic motivation. They suggested permissive parents are related to a less adaptive pattern of motivation in children. They also suggested children who reported their parents as permissive were less concentrated on improving themselves or overcoming challenges while completing math homework. This was proposed to result from the lack of encouragement for example the parent displays by not engaging in learning new information or setting self-standards. Similarly, Hoang (2007) conducted a study which demonstrated students who reported their parents as permissive also reported being less mastery goal oriented, meaning the student had less desire to learn something new.

Wischerth, Mulvaney, Brackett, and Perkins (2016) found children of permissive parents predicted lower emotional intelligence, which is associated with a predicted lower personal growth. Barton and Hirsch (2015) concluded an overall lower score of wellbeing in the students of permissive parents. Love and Thomas (2014) revealed that permissive parenting predicted low levels of self-esteem and emotional well-being. Kenney et al. (2015) reported permissive parents as a predictor of poorer school adjustment compared to authoritative parenting. If a person has low self-esteem and low emotional well-being, it makes sense for them to also have poor adjustment skills.

Parenting Style, Academic Motivation, and Socioeconomic Status

Parenting style and socioeconomic status do in fact; have an influence on a student's academic motivation. Schunk (2008) described when parents were able to afford items such as books, puzzles, and computers; it encouraged the child's interest, increasing motivation. "Families of higher socioeconomic status were more likely to provide cognitively stimulating home environments, which in turn, directly increased academic motivation" (Schunk, 2008, p. 284). Interestingly, Alt (2014) found students of higher socioeconomic status to be children of authoritative parents, suggesting demographic variables as a possible predictor of academic motivation. Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998) conducted a study to examine academic intrinsic motivation in association with cognitively stimulating home environments. They found students whose houses had more emphasis on learning opportunities and stimulating activities were more academically intrinsically motivated than students whose houses had less emphasis on learning opportunities and stimulating activities. They suggested families who live in higher socioeconomic status areas are more likely to have a more stimulating cognitive home environment, resulting in students with higher academic motivation than students who live in lower socioeconomic status areas. It is important to note that Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried did not suggest higher socioeconomic status causes greater academic motivation; rather, they suggested a positive relationship. "Our view is that SES is indirectly filtered to the child through the proximal environment, that is, families of relatively higher socioeconomic status are more like to furnish a cognitively stimulating home...facilitating the development of academic intrinsic motivation" (Gottfried et al., 1998, p. 1457).

Methodology

Sample: - The study was conducted in Government Schools of Muzaffarpur district Head Quarter. 16 years old students were collected from different socio-economic background by examining the annual income of their parents. 30% of participants were female and 70% were male. Rs. two lacs and less annual income group children were considered of Low Socio-economic background, From 6 lacs to 8 lacs annual income group children were taken as Middle Socio-economic background and from 8 lacs and above income group children were considered High income group children. Three questionnaires were completed by the participants. An alternate consent form was completed by participants prior to the questionnaires (Appendix A). The demographics of each participant were assessed through a questionnaire. Questions were based on similar studies (Appendix B). An academic motivation survey was used, based on Pintrich et al. "Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). These questions aimed at measuring the student's behaviors, attitudes, study habits, etc. towards their academics to identify how driven the student was (Appendix C). Lastly, a parenting style survey was used based on Robinson et al. "Parenting Style Questionnaire." The original version of this survey was for parents to complete. Each question was modified to be suitable for the student to respond about their parent, for example, changing the beginning statement to "my parent" instead of "my child". These questions aimed at measuring levels of parental warmth, support, neglect, responsiveness, expectations, etc. Common behaviors in perceived parenting to identify which parenting style was exhibited at the highest level were considered (Appendix D). The academic motivation questionnaire was based on a Likert-Scale 0-5, with 0 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. The parenting style questionnaire was based on a Likert-scale ranging from 0-5, with 0 being never and 5 being always. The scoring process of each questionnaire was the same as the original versions. The academic motivation questionnaire was scored by adding up the responses and dividing by the number of questions assigned. Participants who scored 0-2.72 was categorized as having low motivation, 2.73-3.89 were categorized as having average motivation, and 3.90-5 were categorized as having high motivation. The parenting style was scored by adding up the responses and dividing by the number of authoritative (questions 1-13), authoritarian (questions 14-26), and permissive (questions 27-30) questions and the highest scored style was how the parenting style was determined for each participant. Socioeconomic status was concluded through the participant's responses to the demographic questions, specifically measuring their yearly income and education levels.

Results & Discussion

Academic Motivation and Parenting Styles

The hypothesis examined if the student's perceived parenting style was correlated to their academic motivation level. With a total of 10 participants, all perceived their parents as authoritative more than authoritarian or permissive, although there were some scores that were on the boarder of being considered another parenting style. 20% reported having low academic motivation, 60% reported having middle or average academic motivation, and 20% reported having high academic motivation. As shown in Figure 1, the average mean of academic motivation was higher in students with authoritative parents compared to students with authoritarian or permissive parents. The average mean of academic motivation in students with authoritarian and permissive parents were similar and lower than students with authoritative parents.

A bivariate correlation determined the results which demonstrated authoritative parenting style and academic motivation levels were statistically significant $r(10) = .65, p < .05$ and authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and academic levels were not statistically significant $r(10) = -.66, p > .05$ and $r(10) = -.46, p > .05$ respectively.

Academic Motivation and Socioeconomic Status

Socio-economic status was considered in evaluating undergraduate student's academic motivation levels. 90% of participants reported their yearly income. Participant's reported their the highest education level for their parents as a Master's degree, with 50% of participant's parents completing high school as the highest education earned. 10% of participants reported not working at all, while 90% reported either working part time or full time jobs. When asked which class they would categorize their family in, 20% reported their family to be working class, 20% reported their family to be lower-middle class, 40% reported their family to be middle class, and 20% reported their family to be upper-middle class.

As shown in Figure 2, low, middle, and high socioeconomic status was not significantly correlated to academic motivation in the participants. The mean in students in relation to their socioeconomic status was also examined. Students who were low socioeconomic status had a higher average of academic motivation than students who were middle and high socioeconomic status. A one-way ANOVA analysis of variance determined the results were not statistically significant for SES $F(2, 7) = 3.03, p > .05$.

Results demonstrated a significance between academic motivation and authoritative parenting style $r(10) = .65, p < .05$. 1 represents low, 2 represents middle, and 3 represents high. There was not a statistical significance between academic motivation and authoritarian and permissive parenting styles $r(10) = -.66, p > .05$ and $r(10) = -.46, p > .05$ respectively. Results also suggested there was not a significant relationship between academic motivation and socioeconomic status $F(2, 7) = 3.03, p > .05$.

Findings

Through the bivariate correlation test, it can be inferred that authoritative parenting style will result in the highest academic motivation level in undergraduate students compared to authoritarian or permissive parenting styles. Students who reported higher levels of parental warmth and support ultimately had a higher average of academic motivation than students who lower levels of parental support and warmth. These results were consistent with previous research similar to this study. The one way ANOVA test and Post-Hoc test was not consistent with previous research. Results demonstrated lower socioeconomic status area students with higher academic motivation than higher socioeconomic status area students. These results suggest that socioeconomic status does not determine how academically motivated a student is during undergraduate years at a university.

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