Investigation the relationship between goal orientation and parenting styles among sample of Jordanian university students

Ahmad M. Mahasneh

Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education Sciences, Hashemite University, Jordan.

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The primary purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between goal orientation and parenting styles. Participants of the study completed 650 goal orientation and parenting styles questionnaires. Means, standard deviations, regression and correlation analysis were used for data in establishing the dependence of the two variables. Results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between learning goal orientation and authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Performance-prove orientation is positively related to authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. And performance-avoid orientation is positively related to authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles.

Key words: Goal orientation, parenting styles, university students.

INTRODUCTION

Family members, especially parents have a role to play in the formation of their children’s character. Parenting style is defined as a child’s perceptions of his or her parents’ or caretakers’ behaviors in two dimensions: (1) parental demands. (2) Parental responsiveness (Baumrind, 1989). Parenting styles have been defined in different ways by different researchers. Authoritarian, authoritative and permissive types of parenting styles have been defined by Baumrind (1967).

Authoritarian parenting style

Parents with authoritarian parenting style are highly demanding and caring. Authoritarian style is a pattern of power-assertive behaviors of the parents. Authoritarian parenting tends to fall at other end of the continuum. Parents characterized as authoritarian exhibit highly directive behaviors, high levels of restriction and rejection behaviors, and power-asserting behaviors. They have good child-parent communication. According to Gleitman et al. (2007), authoritative parents set rules of conduct for their children and enforce them, assign tedious tasks and accept mature behavior. Baumrind (1967) concluded that authoritative parents are sensitive to their children’s needs; they do not use punitive discipline and reasons with the child in a loving and affectionate manner. They
encourage independence and take care of children's point of view. These parents put less restriction on their own children when they become mature.

**Authoritative parenting style**

Authoritative parenting is characterized by high levels of nurturance, involvement, sensitivity, reasoning, and encouragement of autonomy. Parents who direct the activities and decisions for their children through reasoning and discipline would be described as authoritative. Parents possessing this style set strict standards for children about how they should and should not speak and act. They do not allow children to talk on the rules set by them. They think the children should obey them without asking any question because it is their order. These parents have low acceptance and high control. These parents are demanding and unresponsive. They use punitive and harsh punishment for the wrong doings of their children. Therefore, children’s with authoritative parents tend to have good behaviors such as friendliness and cooperation (Lambon et al., 1991; Slicker, 1998).

**Permissive parenting style**

Permissive parenting style is characterized by making few demands, exhibiting non-controlling behaviors, and using minimal punishment. Permissive parents set some specific do's and don'ts for their children. They do not assert their authority on children. They do not set restrictions or schedule of activities for children. They rarely punish for any action. They make few demands. Baumrind (1967) reported permissive parents have low self-control and self-reliance. The children of these parents are described as anxious, immature (Karen, 1998) and show little initiative.

**Goal orientation**

Goal orientation is a concept of how individuals interpret and respond to position of achievement; it provides individual reasons and goals that are integrated in the achievement tasks (Ames, 1992). Pintrich and Schunk (1996) suggest that achievement goal theory is developed by scientists of developmental psychology and educational psychology to explain how children are learning in academic tasks. Achievement goal is defined as "integrated pattern of beliefs, attributions and effect that produce intentions of behavior; it is represented by different ways of approaching, engaging in, and responding to achievement-type activities" (Ames, 1992). The students use two contrasting achievement goals: performance and learning (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Ames and Archer, 1988; Archer, 1994; Elliott and Dweck, 1988). Achievement goals have four-factor model of goal orientation. The four factors are formed along two primary dimensions: (a) definition of competence (mastery/performance) and (b) valence of competence (approach/avoid) (Elliott and McGregor, 2001).

The students respond to difficult situations with one of three goal orientation:

1. **Mastery orientation:** students possessing a mastery goal orientation focus on the task rather than ability; they have a positive mind to engage in the activity and produce solution-oriented strategies which lead to improvement of their ability (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). Students who have a mastery goal orientation seem to be more willing to pursue challenging tasks and they have a positive attitude towards the learning situation and exhibit an adaptive attributional pattern (Ames and Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1988). When students pursue mastery goals they want to develop competence by acquiring new skills and knowledge. They value and are willing to undertake activities that allow them to improve their knowledge and they perceive effort as a positive and effective way to achieve their goals; they see mistakes as a normal step in the learning process (Bouffard and Couture, 2003). Mastery goal orientation has been linked with a number of positive outcomes such as superior academic achievement (Albaili, 1998; Tanaka and Ysmauchi, 2001), deep processing strategies (Albaili, 1998; Ames and Archer, 1988), preference for challenging tasks (Ames and Archer, 1988; Turner et al., 1998), attribution of success to effort (Ames and Archer, 1988), academic self-efficacy (Roesser et al., 1996), intrinsic interest in learning (Meece et al., 1988) and adaptive self-seeking behavior (Newman, 1998).

2. **Helpless orientation:** students possessing a helpless goal orientation focus on their personal inadequacies, attribute their failure of performance to their lack of ability and they have a negative mind to engage in an activity (Dweck and Leggett, 1988).

3. **Performance orientation:** students possessing performance orientation focus on their ability rather than the task and they concern about outcomes rather than improving their ability through the learning process (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). Students who have a performance goal orientation focus on performing a task for the purpose of demonstrating ability in comparison to others. The major focus would be to outperform or out-do others and they spend a great deal of time learning and trying to understand physics because they want to get an outstanding grade or outperform others their physics class (Dweck, 1986; Dweck and Elliot, 1983; Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Elliot and Dweck, 1988; Lepper, 1988).

The relationship between parenting styles and goal orientation

Parenting style is an important variable which influences
achievement goal orientation of students (Gonzalwz et al., 2001; Akin, 2006). For example, several researchers found that authoritarian, authoritarianism and permissive parenting styles are correlated with achievement goal orientation (Steinberg et al., 1989, 1994; Lamborn et al., 1991).

There are survey studies on the relationship between parenting styles and students achievement goal orientation. Duda and Hom (1993) found that Children's goal orientation was significantly related to their views concerning the goal orientation adopted by their parents. Wen Hsu (2001) found that authoritarianism is associated with performance goal orientation. Gonzalez et al. (2001) found that maternal authoritativeness was significantly related to mastery goal orientation of students. Gonzalwz et al. (2002) found that maternal authoritativeness is associated with mastery goal orientation, and maternal authoritarianism and permissiveness are related to performance goal orientation. Gonzalez et al. (2005) found that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and mastery goal orientation. Rivers (2006) found no significant correlations between parenting styles (responsiveness and demand) and goal orientation (mastery, performance-approach and performance-avoidances). Read (2010) found that supportive mothers influence their daughter's mastery goal orientation, which influences their academic success. Lerdpornkulrat et al. (2012) found that students who perceived their parents as empathic were more likely to have adopted mastery goals and empathic parenting had a particularly positive influence on females’ career aspirations. Students who perceived that their parents have “domineering views” were more likely to have adopted performance avoidance goals. Students who perceived that their parents are “the regulators of family rules” were more likely to have adopted both mastery and performance goals.

**Statement of the problem**

There are a lot of variables which influence achievement goal orientations of students. One of these variables is parenting styles (Akin, 2006; Gonzalez et al., 2001). Therefore, it is educationally meaningful and necessary to test the generalized ability of the relationship between parenting styles and goal orientation among adolescents. Thus, in this study we examined the relationship between goal orientation and parenting styles among the students at Hashemite University.

**Study purpose and questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between goal orientation and parenting styles among the students at Hashemite University in Jordan. The specific study questions that guided this study were:

RQ1. What different goal orientations do students have?

RQ2. Is there a significant relationship between students' goal orientation and their parenting styles?

**Significance of the study**

The purpose of the study is to determine the relationships between goal orientation and parenting styles.

In addition, this study is very important for many reasons: (1) The study will provide other researchers with insight on significant gaps in the literature concerning predictors of achievement outcomes, especially regarding the relationship between goal orientation and parenting style. (2) The study will benefit teachers in helping them to understand the importance of goal orientation as this factor relates to engaging students in academic tasks. (3) The study will aid parents in allowing them to realize the influences of the parenting environment and parenting styles as a contextual element in shaping achievement outcome. (4) This is the first study in Arab country which examines the relationship between goal orientation and parenting styles.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

The sample of this study consisted of 650 undergraduate students who were enrolled in the faculties of Hashemite University in the academic year 2013/2014. Of these participants, 295 were males (45%) and 355 were females (55%). The participants were primarily grade 1 (n=165, 25%), grade 2 (n=210, 32%), grade 3 (n= 130, 20%), and grade 4 (n= 145, 23%), who represent all levels of study at (HU). Participants’ age ranged from 18 to 22 years.

**Instruments**

Participants completed measures of goal orientation and parenting styles questionnaire. Each is described as follows.

**Goal Orientation Questionnaire (GOQ)**

Goal orientation was measured with a scale adapted from Walle (1997). The wording of Vande Walle’s work-specific scale was slightly modified in order to measure general goal orientation. The 13-item measure contains 3 subscales: (a) 4 items assessing performance-prove goal orientation, (b) 4 items assessing performance-avoid goal orientation, and (c) 5 items assessing learning goal orientation. Participants respond to each item on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly agree; 6=strongly disagree). Internal consistency estimates were .84 for the learning goal orientation scale, .78 for the performance-prove scale and .80 for the performance-avoid scale.

In this study, the reliability coefficient was calculated using test–retest and was found to be 0.83, 0.80, and 0.81 for challenge, independent learning goal orientation and performance-prove orientation and performance-avoid orientation subscales, respectively. In this study, to clarify the validity of the instrument, the researcher translated the items into Arabic language and then a specialist in educational psychology was asked to translate the Arabic items into English language to ensure acceptable validity.
Table 1. Mean and standard deviations of students' goal orientation.

| Goal orientation          | Mean | SD  |
|---------------------------|------|-----|
| Learning goal orientation | 3.73 | 0.70|
| Performance-prove orientation | 3.12 | 0.65|
| Performance-avoid orientation | 3.09 | 0.61|

mean and standard deviations. The items were then given to another specialist who is proficient in both languages to compare the Arabic translation with the original.

Parental authority questionnaire (PAQ)

The Parental Authority Questionnaire by Buri (1991) was designed to determine the parents' disciplinary practices perceived by their adult children. The PAQ has three subscales which are permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. The PAQ has good construct validity and an internal consistency of .74 to .87 for the subscales. Test-retest reliabilities of the PAQ range from .77 to .92. A high score on the respective subscale indicates the parent's disposition towards that particular style of parenting. For example, a high score in authoritarian parenting indicates parents who use harsh disciplining for their children.

Procedures

The instruments were administered to the participants in their regular classrooms by the researcher. The researcher explained to the participants the purpose and the importance of their participation in this study. In addition, the researcher assured the participants of the confidentiality of their response and that their response would be used only for research purposes.

Then, the question booklets were distributed and instructions were given to the participants on how to answer them. The participants’ responses were scored by the researcher and were entered into the computer for statistical analysis. The data were analyzed using the SPSS(V:17) package.

RESULTS

To facilitate the understanding of the results of this study, questions of this study are divided into two.

Results related to study question (1): What different goal orientations do students have?

To answer this question, the students’ means and standard deviations are calculated and reported in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the scores obtained from all subscales of the goal orientation inventory indicate a positive situation. The sub-scales represent higher level of learning goal orientation (M=3.73), performance-prove orientation (M= 3.12) and performance-avoid orientation (3.09).

Results related to study question (2): Is there a significant relationship between students’ goal orientation and their parenting styles?

To answer this question, the correlation coefficients between goal orientation and parenting styles are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that learning goal orientation is positively related to authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (p=0.01). The performance-prove orientation is positively related to the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (p=0.01). And the performance-avoid orientation is positively related to the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (p=0.01, 0.05).

Multiple regression analysis

Table 3 shows the results of multiple regression analysis using parenting styles as predicted in goal orientation. Results given in Table 3 show that the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles is a significant predictor of learning goal orientation (R²= 0.038, F= 8.490, p=0.05). This result was supported by the close moderate correlation between the third variable (r= 0.195). Approximately 3.8% of the variance of the student's learning goal orientation was accounted for by parenting styles. Authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are a significant predictor of performance-prove orientation (R²= 0.191, F= 50.940, p=0.05). This result was supported by the close moderate correlation between the third variable (r= 0.437). Approximately 19.1% of the variance of the students’ performance-prove orientation was accounted for by parenting styles. Authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are a significant predictor of performance-avoid orientation (R²= 0.250, F= 71.219, p=0.05). This result was supported by the close moderate correlation between the third variable (r= 0.500). Approximately 25% of the variance of the students’ performance-avoid orientation was accounted for by parenting styles.

DISCUSSION

Parenting characteristics such as supportiveness and warmth continue to play an important role in influencing a student's goal orientation even after entering college and parenting styles may indeed be mediated by individual factors that strengthen or contribute to its explanation of student's goal orientation. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between goal orientation and parenting styles of university students in the faculties at Hashemite University in Jordan. A sample of 650 students participated in the study by responding to the goal orientation questionnaire and parenting styles questionnaire. As indicated in the results section the learning goal orientation is positively related to the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles.
Table 2. Correlation between goal orientation and parenting styles.

| Goal orientation       | Parenting styles | Authoritative | Authoritarian | Permissive |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Learning goal orientation | .15*             | .08*          | .15*          |            |
| Performance-prove orientation | .42*             | .12*          | .17*          |            |
| Performance-avoid orientation | .49*             | .09**         | .09**         |            |

*(p<0.01); **(p<0.05).

Table 3. Results of regression analysis predicting scores of parenting styles of goal orientation.

| Goal orientation       | Parenting styles | R   | R²  | F    | β    | T     |
|------------------------|------------------|-----|-----|------|------|-------|
| Learning goal orientation | Authoritative    | .195| .038| 8.490| .064| 1.562 |
|                         | Authoritarian    | .195|     |      |      |       |
|                         | Permissive       |     |     |      |      |       |
| Performance-prove orientation | Authoritative    | .437| .191| 50.940| .095| 2.683 |
|                         | Authoritarian    |     |     |      |      |       |
|                         | Permissive       |     |     |      |      |       |
| Performance-avoid orientation | Authoritative    | .500| .250| 71.219| .068| 1.972 |
|                         | Authoritarian    |     |     |      |      |       |
|                         | Permissive       |     |     |      |      |       |

styles. The performance-prove orientation is positively related to the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. And the performance-avoid orientation is positively related to the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. This result means that parenting styles are important factor to consider when examining goal orientation for university students. Students are heavily influenced by their parents' attitudes, personality and behavior; they tend to adopt a performance avoidance orientation or performance in order to avoid feelings of ferocity of "dumbness".

The results of the present study demonstrate that parental styles influence plays an important role in university students' goal orientation. University students venture out on their own; previous experiences with their parents seem to continue to affect their success in college.

The results of this study and other researches of Steinberg et al. (1989), Lamborn et al. (1991), Steinberg et al. (1994), Duda and Hom (1993), Wen Hsu (2001), Gonzalez et al. (2001), Gonzalez et al. (2002); Gonzalez et al. (2005), Read (2010) and Lerdpornkulrat (2012) show that authoritarian, authoritarianism and permissive parenting styles are correlated with achievement goal orientation.

From the theoretical standpoint, the authoritarian parenthood advances students' learning and be more open in terms of innovations. Therefore, future studies should aim on how to change the current culture and to embrace a more open communicative parental culture and the degree at which this type of western culture be implemented in teaching our next generation.

Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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