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Which One Is the Best Parenting Style in Early Childhoods' Psycho-Social Development in Tanzania? A Review of Literature

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Abstract:
This study examined the best parenting styles in the psycho-social development of a child in Tanzania. Data were collected using documentary review method and employed comparative research design. Data from the reviewed literature indicate that in Tanzania, the model of parenting is mixed, in the sense that it combines the two widely applicable styles; authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. This model seems to be different from most of the developed countries which rely on authoritative parenting style. The reason why Tanzanians model of parenting is mixed is that there are some continuity of traditional norms and values which support authoritarian parenting styles and changes that have adopted some elements of modern parenting skills which support authoritative parenting style in Tanzania. The literature also shows that there is no perfect parenting style and thus the inherent weaknesses of one parenting style are supplemented by the strength of another parenting style so as to suit the local context. The study concludes by holding that mixed model of parenting style seems to be the best parenting style in early psycho-social development in Tanzania. The study has two basic recommendations; one is that the modern parenting skills which the parents are equipped with have to complement the traditional parenting skills which are positive. Secondly, more studies have to be conducted to understand how different parenting styles are perceived across social-cultural and economic milieu in Tanzania.

Keywords: parenting, parenting style, psycho-social development, early childhood.

1. Introduction

The subject of parenting is considerably gaining attention among the world communities in modern times (Bibi et al. 2013, Darling 1999, Mwamwenda 2004). A good number of parents and/or caregivers are now exposed to the idea that children can best grow psycho-socially in the hands of adult guidance and protection and treated according to their developmental stage (Bibi et al. 2013, Darling & Steinberg 1993, Darling 1999, Mwamwenda 2004). Different research reports and publications done by Tame et al. (2012), Baumrind (1967), Belsky (1984), Berk (2003), Strage & Brandt (1999), Mwamwenda (2004), Maccoby & Martin (1983), REPSSI (2011), IRC (2015), have pointed out that the early years are a crucial time in a child's life, when every moment brings a new experience, a new chance to potentially gain knowledge and develop. The socio-emotional development of an early childhood influences many attributes of their lives, and parenting plays an important role in how child requires developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills (Martin 2000). As a matter of insistence, parents play a major role in the way children express personality characteristics and behaviors, even if parents (biological or adoptive) are limited in their ability to change basic personality traits or temperamental characteristics of their children (Bornstein 2007). From the foregoing arguments, it is clear that from early in the child's life, parenting skills, parenting style and the parent-child relationship are major factors that affect children's psychosocial development throughout most of childhood.

Numerous scholars have talked about parenting styles and grouped them into related clusters (Becker 1964, Berg 2011, Bibi et al. 2013, Dobson 2002, Dornbusch et al. 1987, Gerdes 1998, Grolnick 2003, Gupta & Theus 2006, Kelly & Goodwin 1983, Steinberg et al. 1989). Baumrind (1967), Papalia (1999) in particular identified three main parenting styles in early child development as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Baumrind 1967, Papalia et al., 1999). These parenting styles were later expanded to four, including an uninvolved style (Berk, 2003). This work has dealt with the first three parenting style namely; authoritative, authoritarian and permissive because the last one which is known as uninvolved parenting style look similar to permissive parenting style in many ways.

The current interest in parenting is championed by apparent increase in behavioral problems, child abuse and neglect, delinquency, juvenile crime (Berk 2003, UNICEF 2015). In Tanzania for example, there are an increasing number of children who are in conflict with the laws, increasing number of vulnerable children who live in the street and who drop out from school (Anderson 2012, Chamwi 2014, Lalor 2004, Lugalla & Mbwambo 1999). Some of the reasons ascribing to childrens' vulnerability in Tanzania include;

violation of human rights, mistreatment, irresponsibility of parents in the provision of care and support to their children (Pembe 2013, IRC 2015, SOS 2014, UNICEF 2015). In respect to this, various projects and programmes have been initiated and collectively monitored by the government through the ministry of Health and Social Welfare and Community Development, Children and Women Welfare and NGOs like UNICEF, IRC (International Rescue Committee), Child Protection and Care Reform, Save the Children, REPSSI to mention a few, that offer positive parenting education or skillful parenting approach to parents in Tanzania.

However, not much is known about the suitable parenting style to be used particularly in early childhood that would impact on parent-child relationship which is positive and supportive in Tanzania and that can contribute to address behavioral problems, child abuse and neglect, juvenile crime, and delinquency as highlighted above. This is vital because every child's behavior is informed by the way he or she has been raised. Therefore, the purpose of this library research-based paper was to examine the best parenting style in ensuring children's psycho-social development in Tanzania. In the following part, a conceptual framework is presented. The conceptual framework has been basically extracted from the Baumrind's (1967) theorization of parenting styles and the literature reviewed.
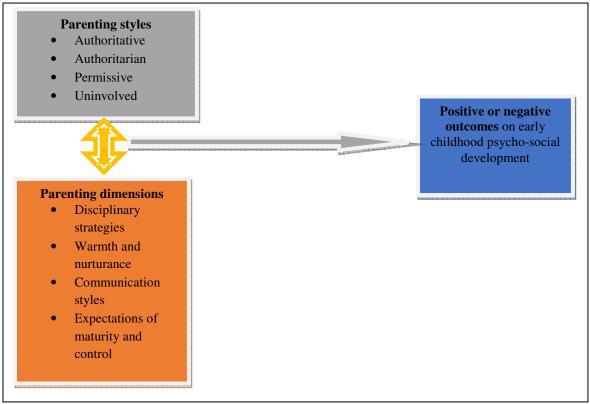

Figure 1: Conceptual framework
Source: Authors' own construct from the Baumrind's (1967) theorization of parenting styles

1.1. Clarification of the Diagram

Baumrind (1967) pointed out that each parenting style is characterized by either low or high of all or some of the aspects of parenting, which are disciplinary strategies, warmth and nurturance, communication styles and expectations of maturity and control. Every one of these styles tends to impact either positively or negatively on parent's role, responsiveness, control and expectations. These impacts on parents also tend to affect children psycho-social development.

2. Methods and Materials

This paper used a comparative research design to understand the best parenting style on the early childhood psycho-social development. Comparative research design compares the multiplicities of cases with regard to specific issues (Flick et al. 2007). Parenting styles which have been pulled out for comparisons include authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved/neglectful. They have been compared based on the findings of different studies.

This study also used documentary review method. The study dealt with existing or available data that are originally recorded or left behind or collected earlier by a different person from the current researcher (Curry et al. 2009, Kothari 2004, and Vartanian 2011). Secondary data on the best parenting style in early childhood psycho-social development were employed because they were less costly, easy to access Vartanian (2011). Before using these data, assessment was also being made to ensure their reliability, suitability and adequacy (Kothari 2004).

On the sampling procedures, since this study was library based, the sampling procedures did not deal directly with respondents/informants like other studies which bring into play primary data. Rather, the sampling procedures based on different publications on the topic under study. The sampling technique which was employed to get publications which informed this study was

purposive. Under purposive sampling the organizer of the investigation purposively chooses the particular units of the universe to constitute a sample (Kothari 2004, Patton 2002). Therefore, different articles, books were chosen to supply information in this study because they were suitable and adequate enough to enrich the findings of this study.

On study context, the review of the findings of this study was done in some of the Asian, American and European countries. However, the discussion of the findings brought in some perspectives from the Tanzanian context. The essence was to compare the parenting style that was mostly recommended by different scholars in the reviewed countries and see to what extent it fits into the Tanzanian context.

On data analysis, Merriam (1998:11) write that, "The analysis usually results in the identification of recurring patterns that cut through the data or into the delineation of a process." Content analysis was employed as a strategy for analyzing data in this study. Content analysis looks at documents, text, or speech to see what themes emerge and what do people talk mostly (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Thus, the findings of this study were analyzed in light of the recurrent patterns of data presented in different publications after comparing different parenting styles and their influence on early childhood psycho-social development. In the following section, review of literature is presented with regard to the best parenting style.

2.1. Different Parenting Styles and Their Impact on Early Childhood Psycho-social Development: Global and Tanzanian Perspectives
The first typology is authoritative parenting. Authoritative parenting is a strategy that seeks to set reasonable rules and guidelines that are in the best interests of the child (see also Seth & Ghormode 2013). It is an optimal balance of responsiveness and demandingness. Authoritative parents nurture children in a way based on reasoning, independent thinking and portraying degree of creativity. They acknowledge children's independence, promote verbal exchange, support children in joint decision-making, and emphasize that children progressively presume more responsibility for acting in response to the wishes of other family members informed by the limits of their capabilities (see also Maccoby's 1992 study in the USA).

Several scholars, from America, Europe and Asia (compare Baumrind 1967, Berg 2011, Bornsteins 2007, Bibi 2013, Lamborn 1991, Milevsky et al. 2007, Gupta&Theus 2006, Kazmi 2011, Lamborn 1991, Nyarko 2011, Steiberg 1992, Silva et al. 2007, Shek et al. 1998) have found that authoritative parents reported significantly higher personal capability, lower levels of problem behavior, and higher levels of psychosocial development than children raised under other types of parenting styles. The conclusion from these scholars indicates that authoritative parenting had a stronger and positive impact on social emotional development than authoritarian and permissive parenting styles.

In Tanzania, this type of parenting has been supported and put into practice in different forms. For example, there are different laws subsuming the law of the child act (LCA) of 2009, child development policy of 2008 which altogether support authoritative parenting style. In addition, Tanzania is a signatory to different international conventions and charters like the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 2011, United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 which also support authoritative parenting style. Reports by IRC (2015), UNICEF (2015) have documented that this type of parenting is mostly supported by the urban dwellers---who have exposure to education, interaction with the outside world. Thus, continued efforts are needed so that parents in Tanzania practice much positive behavior parenting practices like respectful discipline, early child stimulation, and engagement in children's education. Annette (2002) & Chao (2001) argue that typical parenting style of how parents and children relate to or interact with each other is without doubt influenced by cultural factors, social classes attributable to exposure to education and income level. In Tanzania for example, parenting is also shaped by the adult-centric perceptions which view children as passive beings. Thus while there might be a higher child-parent interaction in households where parents practice this type of parenting, there might still be a lower child-participation in decision making especially of young children, because the child is still identified as a passive being until they reach a certain age, which is also determined by the culture and traditions of the parents (Couzens and Mtengeti, 2011, UNICEF, 2010)

Different publications made by Kajula et al. (2016), Wamoyi et al. (2011) and report by ISC (2015) have also found that authoritative parenting styles is not preferred by most of the parents because of its inherent contradictions with the social-cultural norms and values. Thus, reports have recommended the appropriation of some cultural values which seem to be positive in supporting parenting programmes in Tanzania. This is because; some of the cultural norms like the way of greeting based on age and sex are not destructive but rather constructive to the behavior of children when portraying respect to their seniors/elders.

Further, reports made by ISC (2015), IRC (2015), Manyama (2017), MoCDGC (2014) have also indicated that this parenting style (authoritative) is supported by some of the parents especially those who are educated, who have access to the media and who have been exposed to different trainings and external interaction. The reports also indicate that some of the parenting skills which aim to change communication behavior between the parents and children have to be modified or improved in order to meet the local context in Tanzania. A study by Manyama (2017) in particular indicate that most of the parents prefer to show love to their children through actions and not by words such as "I love you" the parents seem to negate this phrase because they believe that those words make their children feel extremely special and thus become sluggish in thinking. According to Manyama's (2017) findings, most of the parents suggest that children should not be given an answer straight away when they ask for something. Instead, the parents have to tell them that they are working on it even though they have all the resources needed.

The second typology is authoritarian parenting. The authoritarian style is characterized by high levels of disciplinary strategies where parents set strict rules and children meet our severe punishments. Also, it is characterized by parent's setting high expectations for their children, coupled with excessive control and supervision over them. However, communication and warmth are low. Children whose parents are described as authoritarian, disengaged and permissive portray considerably poorer outcomes, with authoritarian parents, children are believed to clearly show a reasonable degree of anti-social behaviours. Several scholars including Baumrind (1991), Dobson (2002), Gottman (1997, Grolnick (2003), Heaven & Ciarrochi (2008), Strage and Brandt (1999),) affirm that long-

lasting distinctiveness of reliance; deep enduring irritation and grave adolescent rebellion frequently result from oppressive parental authority on the child when younger. Their studies found that the pre-school children of authoritarian parents were moody and unhappy, relatively aimless, and did not get along well with their fellow children, often showing signs of being withdrawn from their peers.

In Tanzania, this type of parenting style has been in existence for ages and has influenced many parents. IRC (2015), Wamoyi et al. (2011) have reported that many parents prefer this because it conforms to the traditional norms and values in the society which restrict children in many aspects of social life. Parents who support this style argue that the child is supposed to be recipient to his/her parents, family and the community at large. They are of the view that freedom to children has an impact on their behavior and children upbringing. Studies conducted by Kajula et al. (2016), Pembe (2013), show that the parents do not give a chance for their children to air out their views. Rather they perceive them as too young to contribute anything. With regard to disciplinary matters to children, the parents and teachers interviewed indicate that it is very important because in their environment, children understand better their mistakes with the support of physical punishment. However, the parents, school's administrations and the communities acknowledge that due to the changing parenthood skills, they are very careful so that they cannot exceeds the government standards of punishing i.e. the use of corporal punishment.

Pembe (2013), Manyama (2017), MoCDGC (2014), SOS (2014) have also documented that in Tanzania some parents believe that they can make all decisions concerning their children with the exception of very few occasions; the child is allowed to give opinions. The findings also showed that communication is typically indirect in Tanzania. Children typically are not allowed to show negative feelings to their parents but are free to do that with their peers (Pembe 2013, Manyama 2017, and MoCDGC 2014). In some occasions, children do not present their issues directly to parents especially male parents rather through their mothers, aunts, uncles and grandparents (Manyama, 2017). Thus, child communication to their fathers occurs through their mothers. When communicating to parents or elders, eye contact is considered rude and disrespectful other than for some few modern families (Pembe 2013, Manyama, 2017). Also, parents expressed that it is important to raise children in an acceptable way according to the local context but parents expressed their readiness to choose and apply some of the modern parenting skills which require parents not to restrict much their children (Pembe 2013, Manyama 2017).

The third typology is permissive parenting. The permissive style of parenting is mediated by elevated levels of warmth but much lower levels of communication, disciplinary strategies and livelihoods relating to adulthood and self-control. Parents are non-restrictive, imposing few maturity demands and applying high levels of responsiveness. Permissive parents allow children to be self-regulated and free from rules or disciplines and neglect their children's needs (see also Lola & Shrinidhi 2008, Strage & Brandt 1999). Quite good a number of authors, whose works were based in Europe and America (see for example, Ayers 2002, Dobson 2002, Gerdes 1998, Gonzalez-Mena 2006, Grolnick, 2003, Gupta & Theus 2006) have found that the permissive parenting style has a negative effect on early childhood psycho-social development. Their research show that children who were raised by using this parenting style lack self-control, self-respect and consideration for others; they lack creativity; inspiration and self-reliance and are therefore sluggish in achieving something caused by permissive parenting than children who were raised by using authoritative parenting style.

Reports by Kisanga (2012) URT (2011) in Tanzania indicate that permissive parenting style is either attributed to excessive alcohol consumption or matrimonial conflicts. That, parents who drink excessively are more likely to portray some elements of permissive parenting styles. The drinking culture makes the parents to either consciously or unconsciously make use of this parenting style. Frequent matrimonial conflicts attract the appropriation of permissive parenting style in the sense that whenever there are conflicts between the parents, children are more likely to be affected or experience permissive parenting style.

3. Discussions and Reflections

In reviewing the selected related studies, this study has revealed that there is a mixed model of parenting styles in Tanzania. Various reports and publications have portrayed the existence of both authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles whereby each of which has been said to have some positive contributions in early childhood psycho-social development of a child according to the Tanzania local context. The parents accept that warmth but firm and sensitive parenting (authoritative parenting) is related optimistically to the progress of social capability and emotional capability in young children predominantly that of age ranging from three to six which is typical authoritative. However, parents find it difficult to use play with children so as to develop socially skilled behavior and teaching their children what behavior is suitable during play because of social-cultural norms which propagate gaps between parents and children. Another point related to the above is that of economic position. Some parents in Tanzania do not practice authoritative parenting style because of poor income level which makes them become busy and strict resulted from stress.

Annette (2002) argues that poverty is found to be one of the influential factors in the style of child rearing that is mostly preferred. Parents constituting the lower working-class families do not positively relate to their children like the way middle and upper classes do through supportive family, friends, and community members and groups as well as various professionals or experts (Christopher 2013). The feedback obtained from parenthood education carried out by IRC, UNICEF, ISC have also shown that parents deem important to have power-assertion, portray a reasonable degree of strictness, paying close supervision over children so as to ensure compliance with social rules. By doing this, parents accept to apply authoritarian parenting style.

The literature also shows that the variation in parenting style is attributed to different social environment in Tanzania. Bornstein (2007, 2014) argue that permitting children flexibility and autonomy may result in positive outcomes when children live in safe areas and their peers are less likely to take on risky behavior, but in high-risk neighborhoods, higher degrees of parental control might be essential. For example, in Dar es Salaam, children who live in prime areas like Masaki, Oysterbay and Mbezi beach might be given

some degree of freedom to hang out with their fellows because their environment is considered safe (Manyama, 2017). However, it might be difficult for the parents to allow children who are raised up in those areas to mingle with children from other areas because they are considered unsecured in terms of behavior and physical environment (Manyama, 2017). This divide attributed to areas of living has a bearing on early childhood psycho-social development especially for those kept in their gates. The possibility of developing anti-social behaviors is huge. Thus, authoritative parenting style might be useful in some contexts while others not.

Further, some of the male parents are not practicing in face-to-face interaction with their children by either talking to them or listening to them because of the prevailing social-cultural norms like gender norms, roles and expectations (Manyama, 2017). For example, in some of the families and communities in Tanzania, female parents are the ones who are supposed to be close to their children while male parents are working or continuing with other businesses (Manyama, 2017) Also, some parents tend to argue that the modern parenting styles which reflect authoritative parenting style impact on the behaviors of their children. They believe that children should be raised very strictly and with the help of bodily punishment (Manyama, 2017). Also, some of the parents believe that they have been raised in that way. Thus, they want to pass on what they had learned and experienced when they were young and are not aware of other positive and supportive alternatives (ISC 2015, IRC 2015, Manyama 2017). This is typical authoritarian type of parenting. On the other side, we would say parents who tend to raise their children in the way they were raised might be erroneous. Pembe (2013) and Manyama (2017) argue that there are many changes in the family structures that we have recently come across due to the influence of globalization in Tanzania. For example, in the past all children were the community properties in the sense that every community member would correct and act on every child that misbehaved. This practice enhanced authoritarian parenting styles and most of the parents believed that children were growing well psycho-socially but today things are changing. Community members are no longer acting on children who are not theirs.

Further, there is a slight difference on the way authoritative parenting style is practiced in Tanzania between urban and rural areas (Pembe 2013, Manyama 2017). In urban areas in Tanzania where we find affluent and nuclear families for example, parents spare sometime talking to their children, responding to their feelings, demanding their children to do something or behave in a certain way, taking more time with the children so that the children see and learns from their parents' wishes (Pembe 2013, Manyama 2017). By doing this, children develop, act independently and recognize themselves much better. However, those parents who reside in the rural areas tend to be very strict and provide little chance for their children to have their own freedom. This is attributed to the fact that in rural areas the traditional norms and values that inform parenting systems are still strong.

4. Conclusions

According to the literature, authoritarian parenting style seems to be more acceptable in Tanzania simply because it is supported by the traditional norms of raising children. However, according to the interventions done by IRC, UNICEF some of the parents in Tanzania have started changing this style and adopt some of the elements of authoritative parenting style which are considered positive. Differences in social-cultural and economic context is considered to be one the reasons why authoritative parenting style has been considered as most favorable parenting style and effective practice to a child's psycho-social change and success in Asian, American and European countries as opposed to Tanzania.

This article would like to draw a conclusion that a mixed model of parenting has emerged in Tanzania due to the opposition between two discourses; modern and indigenous models of parenting in Tanzania. Some of the modern parenting skills that are embedded within authoritative parenting style have been accepted, while some rejected and some modified to suit the local context. The literature also shows that the authoritarian parenting style in Tanzania is changing due to the influence of globalization and education. However, most of the parents would not like to let it go because they were raised in that style and found it positive and useful in some aspects. Another facet that has been accrued from the literature is that the appropriate parenting style depends on the child characteristics. That's why some of the studies have indicated the reasons that authoritarian parenting, which support physical punishment is important because of the nature of children found in the Tanzanian society. Studies have also indicated that parents' characteristics have also a bearing on the parenting style. Parents who have poor income level are more likely to use authoritarian parenting style than authoritative because of economic and social stress. The last point is that parenting depends on the context. The reality of one area with regard to proper parenting might be different from other areas and these realities are dynamic. All these points have convinced this article to conclude that there is no single explanation of parenting but rather multiple parenting styles in Tanzania.

Arguing in line with this article, Grolnick (2003, p68) pointed out that there is no universally "good" parenting style but rather that good or proper parenting pivots on the constructive impact it has on the child and his or her development stages as whole. A study which was conducted by Dornbusch et al. (in Grolnick, 2003) on different parenting styles involving children from different continents like Asia, Africa, Europe found that children particularly Asian, African American, and Hispanic families reported more authoritarian parenting style than White families. Families of Asian, Hispanic, and African American children reported less authoritative parenting style than White families. For permissiveness, compared to Whites, African Americans displayed lower degree of permissive parenting style, Hispanics portrayed higher and Asians portrayed slightly higher degree of permissive parenting style. This certainly explains that there might be dissimilarity of parenting styles across social-cultural groups in the world.

5. Recommendations

In the light of these findings, the study recommends the following; one is that the modern parenthood education which is provided to the parents has to complement the traditional parenting skills which are positive because this has shown some elements of change among the parents in the intervened areas. Secondly, more studies have to be conducted regarding the most suitable parenting styles across different social-cultural and economic contexts. Different research in the area of parent-child interface have to be conducted not

only outcomes in a broader variety of ethnic/racial/cultural and socioeconomic groups, but also outcomes in children of different ages so that families in all types of situations can harvest the complete benefits of research concerning the best parenting styles in Tanzania.

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