

# Effect Of Parenting Styles On Academic Performance: A Case Study Of Parents And Public Sector Elementary School Children In Rural Areas

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## Abstract

The research aimed to determine parenting styles' impact on the academic performance of public sector elementary school children in rural areas. This research study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The study's population consisted of all public sector elementary school children and their parents belonging to District Peshawar (both from urban and rural backgrounds), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. However, for this research, 770 students and their parents were selected from rural areas of District Peshawar only, using a multistage sampling technique. An equal number of students and parents were selected from various geographical locations within rural areas of District Peshawar to avoid bias. The Parenting Styles Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ) was modified to examine and measure parents' parenting styles in rural areas. Two separate tests were performed to assess the academic performance of public sector elementary school children concerning parenting styles. A parametric test, One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), was performed in order to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the 'parenting styles' and 'school children's academic performance' means are significantly different. Besides this, Tukey's Post Hoc Test, HSD (Honestly Significant Difference), was performed to know the impact of various parenting styles on the academic performance of school children. Data, when analyzed, revealed that most parents had an authoritative parenting style and maintained a friendly and supportive relationship with their children. Parents emphasized discipline; however, neither did they grant freedom to their children nor indulge in their children's private matters. Furthermore, most children were self-confident during their schooling, and the study found that parental style positively correlated with academic performance. Recommendations were made based on findings and conclusions. Arrangement of Parents Teachers Meetings (PTM), parents' training to deal with their children politely, avoid harsh treatment, and show flexibility in behavior, and provision of incentives

and facilities to motivate families may yield positive outcomes and improve the public sector elementary school children's academic performance.

**Keywords:** Parents; Students; Public Sector Elementary School Children; Education in Rural Areas; Parenting Styles; Academic Performance

## **Introduction**

Children first learn about making choices, being responsible, respecting others, expressing love, and attending school depending on the families' financial status and social structure (Dil & Bulantekin, 2011). Based on their beliefs and values, some parents are stricter than others in dealing with their children. Parenting styles may vary and be influenced by factors such as their socio-psychological position, financial status, characteristics, the qualities of their children, and the children's behavior. The elements mentioned earlier influence how parents behave, which determines the parenting styles prevalent in rural areas. The phrase 'rural parenting style' refers to the interactions between parents and their children and how they take care of them in rural communities (Besharat et al., 2011).

According to the literature, parenting styles are the parents' attitudes toward their children and how they exhibit those attitudes via their behaviors (Darling & Steinberg, 2017). How a child learns might be influenced by the way his or her parents interact with him or her. The concept of goal orientation is crucial to student performance. The socio-cognitive theory of success examines why students attend school and what they want to achieve. Kordi and Baharudin (2010) and Akbar et al. (2018) refer to the typical ways parents raise their children, including their attitudes and behaviors, and mention it as 'parenting styles'. Children in rural areas may suffer due to how their parents raise them (Brown & Iyengar, 2014). Parents in rural areas apply various styles to help their children become successful people in the future. Parenting styles in rural areas are related to the cognitive, emotional, social, and academic development of children, young people, and adolescents (Durbin et al., 1993).

Alarcon (1997) cites studies indicating that parenting styles in rural areas may be categorized into three distinct groups: the authoritarian, which is demanding but not particularly open; the authoritative, which is both responsive and demanding; and the permissive, which is the polar opposite. Even though they are not directly related and are addressed in the research, not being responsive (as opposed to being responsive), not being demanding (as opposed to being demanding), and providing children with opportunities, all influence how successfully parents train and raise their children (Assefa & Sintayehu, 2019). All three styles were calculated based on the children's responses regarding their parents. Baumrind (1996) and Ambachew et al. (2018) noted in subsequent research that the authoritative style might be linked to the other two styles, and they are interrelated. Usually, parents in rural areas adopt one of the three parenting styles. According to Bogenschneider et al. (1997), educated and skillful parents always maintain cordial relationships with their children. Parents are responsive when they show interest in, listen to, and consistently support their children in pursuing their goals and desires. Various authors support this argument (Amponsah et al., 2018). For instance, children's responsibilities and perceived behavior are positively connected with how parents exercise direct or indirect power over their children and enforce their self-defined rules (Jaiswal & Choudhuri, 2017).

## **The Three Parenting Styles**

### **1. Authoritarian Parenting**

Authoritarian parents exercise strict authority over their children and demand nothing less than total obedience (Seid & Mikre, 2008). When parents behave more like supervisors, their children frequently do not perform well in school. Usually, rural parents tend to have harsher rules because they are more authoritative than permissive parents. Until then, parents devote little attention to their children.

Parents who know their children are not doing well in school often have little trust in their academic performance. In addition, these parents establish rules and instruct their children not to question or dispute them. These parents used to be harsh to their children, but now they require them to report everything they do outside the home. Baumrind (1991) emphasizes that authoritative parents monitor their children's activities and organize the house. On the other hand, authoritarian parents are considered unresponsive and discourage their children from communicating with them. Also, authoritarian parents often exhibit anxiety when it comes to relinquishing power to their children (Klein & Ballantine, 2001).

### **2. Authoritative Parenting**

Baumrind (1991) notes that rural parents are more likely to be authoritative, responsive, and maintain a harsh attitude in interacting with their children. On the other hand, permissive parents allow their children some independence within specific limits. After advising their children, parents may allow them to make some choices independently. Authoritative parents have high standards for their children and encourage them to discuss their action plans via arguments and justifications before making their decisions (Grobman, 2003; Seid & Mikre, 2008). In addition, authoritative parents constantly demonstrate their support for their children by complimenting them and assisting them in times of need. On the other hand, strict parents employ logic to monitor their children's everyday activities. In addition, parents are allowed to use whatever style they realize is necessary to discipline their ill-behaved children.

### **3. Permissive Parenting**

Permissive parents are less harsh than authoritarian parents yet give more attention to their children. Such parents give freedom of choice to their children, demonstrate affection for them, and impose limitations indirectly. As a result, parents offer their children fewer restrictions and administer fewer punishments. Permissive parents are also calm while interacting with their children. They fulfill their needs, behave politely according to their age, and let their children make their own decisions. Such parents provide more freedom to their children and show little concern about their children's activities outside their school. Generally, children are happier when their parents are less rigid. Usually, permissive parents assign less work and responsibilities to their children (Grobman, 2003). These parents exert great effort to motivate their children to achieve their goals. The influence of such parents on their children's academic performance is indirect (Bigner, 1989). Parents often consider their academic performance when attempting to predict their children's future happiness. Notably, Jacobs and Harvey (2005) asserted that how parents raise their children in rural areas significantly determines their academic success.

Permissive parents in rural areas are often more relaxed and attentive to their children and understand and tolerate their children's desires, needs, and responsibilities. These parents consider a self-regulation strategy. Rarely do permissive parents employ punishment or excessive power to persuade

their children to accomplish what they want (Baumrind, 1996). In addition, research indicates that these parents tend to be permissive, exhibiting low or high levels of warmth and control, as well as a lack of self-control, limits, and a potential leadership position for children who have difficulty managing it themselves (Chipman et al., 2000). In contrast, research indicates that children reared in rural areas have much lower self-esteem. As a result, these children are more inclined to rely on their parents, behave impulsively, and lack the courage to act and challenge societal norms when required (Romano, 1999).

### **Literature Review**

Researchers have found a correlation between parents' discipline, style, and support and their children's mental health and self-esteem. Permissiveness, parental rejection, and rigidity are all associated with negative consequences like depression, anxiety, violence, and suicidal thoughts. However, when they work together and are used with care by parents, the effects are positive (McKinney et al., 2016; Nunes & Mota, 2017). How parents react and behave when raising their children significantly influences their children's development, both in terms of whom they become and how they develop. Children must have a positive relationship with their parents to learn how to be decent people, acquire the skills necessary for success in life, attain financial independence, and attain emotional stability. This relates to how parents perceive and treat their children. Most parents adopt one of the four parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive, indifferent, or overprotective. Others have combined the 'indifferent' and 'overprotective' styles into one called 'authoritative style', and therefore their division of the parenting styles is three (Flouri & Midouhas, 2017; Pinquart, 2017). Recent research studies establish the importance of parenting styles on children's academic performance. These studies have focused on parents rather than children. However, fewer researchers have tried to explore factors and impact on children's performance instead of parenting styles (Hallers-Haalboom et al., 2014).

A children's quest for the ideal role model is influenced by various factors, including the degree to which two individuals share the same values and views (Bandura & Walters, 1963). It is also believed that the biological behavior of parents is the most significant indicator of how parents of the same gender impact a child and what causes this to occur (Patoek-Peckham et al., 2001). Even though research on rural parenting styles, punishment tactics, and parental psychology is often conducted, most of these studies need to examine these topics in the context of developing youth. A youngster raised in such a family is likelier to be an independent thinker who is not hesitant to take risks, express their opinions, or explore innovative solutions to old problems (Ibid, 2001).

Rural parents usually select a parenting style that enforces restrictions on their children. Bunim (1997) categorized parenting styles based on restrictions or punishments. These categories include physical punishment (showing authority), not loving the kid (withholding love), and having the youngster obey the rules and face the consequences (induction). Kochanska & Kim (2013) have found a relationship between power assertion and love withdrawal detrimental to knowing the impacts of parenting on children. For instance, parents who treat their children aggressively, in the majority of cases, face difficulty in sleeping. Nevertheless, guilt is closely associated with moral development and antisocial conduct (induction) (Patrick & Gibbs, 2012). A meta-analysis found that strict control and psychological control had substantial long-term impacts on the prevalence of externalizing disorders that involve under-controlled, impulsive, or aggressive behavior (Pinquart, 2017).

Flouri & Midouhas (2017) found that severe punishment was an indicator of long-term emotional and behavioral issues in high-risk and low-risk children. Permissive parents care about their children but do not need them to perform many tasks. According to this passive and indulgent parenting style, the only way to demonstrate love to youngsters is to grant them every request. When parents say, “Of course, you may stay out late if you want to”, they are not being strict. Most permissive parents prefer to answer ‘yes’ instead of saying ‘no’ in order to avoid the risk of making their child unhappy.

Consequently, youngsters often need to consult their parents before making choices. Due to this, some youngsters may struggle to maintain self-control and become more egocentric (Power & Woolger, 1994). Barnett et al. (2008) argues that men are more prone than women to enjoy love-withholding and power assertion, while women prefer induction. Mahoney (2011) noticed a similar trend where parents were more inclined to discipline their boys than their girls. Similarly, parents are more likely to instill ideals in their girls than in their boys regarding raising children.

Parents who are laid-back and unconcerned about their children raise brats who believe they deserve special treatment at the cost of others. Such children usually feel uncomfortable and uneasy, and they cannot develop friends outside their family if they are unimportant (Chao, 2001). According to Turner and Heffer (2005), how parents nurture their children in rural areas is the most influential element in a student’s academic performance.

Positive relationships exist between parental participation, encouragement, and desire for independence and academic performance. Weiss and Schwarz (1996) learned that parenting practices enormously impacted rural communities. In addition, they found that authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles in rural areas help youngsters develop innovative ideas. Darling (1999) observed that parental behavior in rural communities might predict IQ (Intelligence Quotient) in youngsters. Pong et al. (2010) learned that children in rural areas with authoritarian or permissive parents had lower grade point averages (GPA) than those with authoritative parents. Another research by Tiller (1995) found a negative correlation between authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and a child’s cognitive development and academic performance in rural areas. Gray and Steinberg (1999) found similar evidence that authoritative parenting styles in rural areas improved children’s academic performance. However, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles had no impact.

The study of Aunola and Nurmi (2005) indicates that children of authoritative parents are more likely to use adaptive success methods such as self-enhancing attributions to succeed in life. Youngsters may feel more confident in their self-control, providing them with the skills and motivation to succeed in school. Juang and Silbereisen (2002) found that parental characteristics such as empathy, curiosity, and involvement in their children’s school activities are positively and significantly associated with children’s academic success. These parents hold school-related discussions with their children. It revealed that such students perform better when they have confidence in their academic abilities.

Parents who devote less time to their children and pay less attention to their performance it is feared that their relationships with their children may deteriorate further. Such parents’ needs take priority over their children's needs, and they may ignore some of their children’s more peculiar requirements. This might make individuals less prone to withhold action. Children may also lose confidence and perform poorly in school. Even though Baumrind’s (1996) concept of the four parenting styles of rural areas is most commonly recognized in academia, it is crucial to highlight that evidence from non-Western countries has shown that it does not apply to all families. In addition, research from eight Arab nations revealed that youths’ perceptions of parental style fall into controlling, flexible,

and inconsistent.

Ochoa et al. (2007) research with school-aged Spanish children indicated that parents who are more sensitive to their children's needs did not negatively affect their children's academic performance. However, Martínez & García (2007) found that a correlation exists between children's academic performance, grades, and parents' behavior toward them in Spanish schools. Kim and Doh (2001) conducted research on Korean families and came up with similar findings. They examined a sample of Korean families and found that just 25 percent provided evidence that suited Baumrind's categories (1996). However, for this group of school children, having strict parents significantly impacted their academic performance. Contrary to what parents share, this research revealed no correlation between how rural women reared their children and their academic performance. At least in part, a child or youth's academic performance may be attributed to their upbringing. Parents often impart the same views, values, and norms in rural areas to their children.

Several types of research on rural parenting styles have established a correlation between permissive and authoritarian parenting styles and children's low academic performance. However, research on authoritative parenting style reveals that children raised in such situations tend to perform well in school (Lau & Power, 2020). Kindness, discipline, and well-defined restrictions are more likely to contribute to academic success than obedience and a harsh attitude. Also, observing permissive parents in rural communities causes children to have greater insecurity since they have too much freedom and not enough supervision. As a result, they become dependent on others, lose self-control, and lack the courage to handle difficult circumstances (Lo et al., 2020). This study adds to what is previously known about parents in rural areas raising their children and how it influences the academic performance of these children.

### **Research Question, Aim and Pragmatism**

To what extent does parenting style influence the academic performance of public sector elementary school children in rural areas? This research seeks to find the answer to that question. It is believed that the findings of this study regarding the relationship between parenting style and academic performance will help educators and parents in supporting children to learn more effectively and in shaping them by instilling leadership qualities to withstand life's problems, challenges, and pressures, and to deal with them with intellect, openness, and charisma.

### **Methodology**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study. Public sector elementary school children and their parents took part in this study. A total of 770 school children and their parents were selected via a multistage random sampling technique from public sector schools in rural areas of District Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

### **Instruments**

In rural areas, parenting styles were measured with an approved version of Hart's Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) (Robinson et al., 2001). Children's academic performance was measured with a custom-made test that covered the required subjects of English, Science, and Math.

### Data Collection and Analysis

For this study, the researchers distributed 770 copies of the questionnaires, and the response rate was 100%. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. A parametric test, One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) (Heiberger & Neuwirth, 2009), was performed in order to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the 'parenting styles' and 'school children's academic performance' means are significantly different. Besides this, Tukey's Post Hoc Test HSD (Honestly Significant Difference) (Abdi & Williams, 2010), was performed to know the impact of various parenting styles on the academic performance of school children. The detailed analysis is given as under;

**Table 1** Gender-wise Distribution of Parents and Public Sector Elementary School Children

Parents			Students		
Gender	(n)	Percentage	Gender	(n)	Percentage
Mother	543	70.5	Male	385	50
Father	227	29.5	Female	385	50
Total	770	100	Total	770	100

**Table 1** shows the gender-wise distribution of school children and parents' samples. In a total sample of 770 parents of elementary school children, 70.5% (543 of 770) were mothers, and 29.5% (227 of 770) were fathers. It infers that the number of mothers exceeds fathers in the sample. Also, of the 770 elementary school children in the sample, 50% were male students (385), and 50% were female students (385). The sample collected for this research had the same number of male and female students.

**Table 2** Distribution of Elementary School Children w.r.t. their Grades

Categories/Levels	(n)	Percentage
A	45	5.8
B	516	67.0
C	209	27.1
Total	770	100

**Table 2** shows the Grades of the elementary school children. A sample of 770 elementary school students showed that 27.1% (209) had grade C, 67% (516) had grade B, and 5.8% (45) had grade A. Overall, it shows that most children got a B (516). The rest of the children got an A (45) or C (209) grade, respectively.

**Table 3** Distribution of Parents w.r.t. their Qualification

Categories/Levels	(n)	Percentage
Elementary	150	19.5
Middle	13	1.7
Matriculation	170	22.1
FA/ F.sc (Intermediate)	76	9.9

BA/ B.sc (Undergraduate) or above	95	12.3
Vocational	266	34.5
Total	770	100

**Table 3** shows the qualifications of the parents. 19.5% (150) of the parents had an elementary education, 1.7% (13) had a middle education, 22.1% (170) had a matriculation education, and 9.9% (76) had an F.A./F.Sc. education, 12.3% (95) had a B.A./B.Sc education or above, i.e., higher qualification than the undergraduate degree, and 34.5% (266) had vocational education. There were a total of 770 students in the sample. The parents in the sample with a vocational or matriculation qualification were recorded highest in number.

**Table 4 Parenting Style-wise Categorization of Parents**

Parenting style	Frequency	Percentage
Parenting Style (Authoritative)	510	66.2
Parenting Style (Authoritarian)	170	22.1
Parenting Style (Permissive)	90	11.7
Total	770	100.0

**Table 4** shows parents based on how they raise their children (parenting style). About 66.2% (510) of parents in rural areas had an authoritative parenting style. In comparison, 22.1% (170) of the parents in rural areas had an authoritarian parenting style, and the remaining 11.7% (90) had a permissive parenting style. Overall, it shows that most parents have an authoritative way of raising their children.

**Table 5 Academic Performance of Public Sector Elementary School Children**

Grade	(n)	Percentage in sample
A	254	33.0
B	102	13.2
C	299	38.8
D	70	9.1
E	45	5.8

**Table 5** shows that about 33% (254) of the children got an A grade and 13.2% (102) got a B grade. 38.8% (299) of the students received a C grade, and the remaining 9.1% (70) and 5.8% (45) of the students got a D or E grade, respectively. It shows that more public sector elementary school children got an A or B grade.

**Table 6 One-way ANOVA among Parental Styles w.r.t Children's Academic Performance**



	Sum of Sq.	Mean Sq.	df	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28965.103	21310.523	199.743	3	0.000
Within Groups	50864.470	63.127		767	
Total	79829.573			770	

**Table 6** shows a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of Parents' Parenting Styles concerning Elementary School Children's Academic Performance, as evidenced by  $F=770$  with  $df=199.743$  and  $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$  obtained using ANOVA statistical tool (Heiberger & Neuwirth, 2009).

**Table 7 Post Hoc Test for the Difference of Children's Academic Performance w.r.t. Parenting Style**

Parenting Style	Parenting Style	Mean Diff.	St. Err.	Sig.
Parenting Style (Authoritative)	Parenting Style (Authoritarian)	5.532*	.549	.000
	Parenting Style (Permissive)	13.617*	.709	.000

**Table 7** shows the results of Tukey's Post Hoc Test, HSD (Abdi & Williams, 2010). There is a substantial difference in mean scores (5.532) between children whose parents used an authoritative parenting style and those whose parents were more permissive ( $p\text{-value}=0.00005$ ). It suggests that the former group of students has more academic success than the later one. Furthermore, the mean difference of 13.617 between the students of authoritative and permissive parents is statistically significant ( $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$ ).

**Table 8 Relationship between Parenting Style and Children's Academic Performance**

Variables	N	R	Sig. (p-value)
Parental Style * Academic Achievement	770	0.766	0.000

**Table 8** reflects a moderate and positive relationship between parenting style and academic achievement of elementary school children, which is statistically significant as indicated by  $n=770$ ,  $r=0.766$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$ .

### Conclusion & Discussion

The results reveal that many elementary school children scored in the top two quartiles on each academic achievement test. Furthermore, there is a strong significant relationship between parenting style and how well their children perform in school at the elementary level. Similarly, a moderately positive relationship was found between how rural parents raise their children and how well those children perform in school.

When two parenting styles were analyzed in combination, research studies referenced by Park and Bauer (2002), Attaway and Bry (2004), Slaten (2006), and Rochette & Bernier (2014) note that

those parents who use ‘authoritarian’ combined with ‘permissive’ style result in worse academic performance of their children as compared to those who use ‘authoritative’ style in combination with ‘permissive’ style. Usually, authoritative parents give stability, support their children’s academic achievement, and emphasize the significance of education in a way that helps develop their children to become successful and responsible citizens. Children raised in authoritative environments are often healthier and more effective in school and extracurricular activities (Baumrind, 1991). This study found a moderate positive correlation between parenting styles in rural areas and children’s academic achievements. Previous research has shown a positive and significant relationship between parenting styles and academic success (Spera, 2005). Using a Pearson correlation analysis, independent research showed that an authoritative parenting style was significantly and positively associated with students’ academic performance. It was revealed that youngsters with more authoritative parents performed better academically. Researchers found that authoritarian parenting styles are prevalent in rural communities in Malaysia (Ngu et al., 2016). In addition, these parents adhered to a strict set of positive traits, including but not limited to they cared for their children, often speaking with them, investing substantial time and effort in them, supporting them in their aims, monitoring their academic performance, and did not ignore them in general. In some of the research investigations, it was anticipated that school-aged children’s emotional and cognitive development might be impacted by their exposure to many unique events at school (Antle & Kitson, 2021). As they advance through primary school, children learn to handle their emotions and problems independently. As a result of these changes, parental direction, training, and monitoring of their children become more critical. Research indicates that children whose parents engage in less permissive parenting are better equipped to respond constructively to negative notions. A similar impact on school children was noted in the authoritarian parenting styles in rural areas (Ford et al., 2018). This research also revealed that parenting styles in rural areas are highly related to children’s academic success.

### **Recommendations & Future Research**

Based on the results mentioned earlier, it is recommended that parents may be sensitized regarding the impact of parenting styles and behavior on the academic performance of their children. Incentives may be provided to the parents to treat their children politely and avoid harsh treatment. A controlled and improved parenting style and behavior can help children perform better in school. In the future, the researchers can explore the correlation between parenting style, academic performance, and the qualification of parents. Similarly, cross-sectional research can be performed to compare school children of private sector schools and public sector schools. The venue for research is also open to explore the impact of parenting style on academic performance among students of colleges and universities.

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