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Perceived Parenting Styles and Their Relation to Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction, Mental Health and Flourishing in a Sample of Lebanese College Youth

Alia Olivia A. Saleh and Shahé S. Kazarian

أنماط المعاملة الوالدية وعلاقتها بإشباع الحاجات النفسية الأساسية والصحة النفسية

والازدهار النفسي في عينة من طلاب جامعيين لبنانيين

عالية أوليفيا و شاهي كازاريان

Abstract

Objectives: The current study aimed to evaluate the factor structure of the Arabic version of the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and the relationship of parenting styles to needs satisfaction, negative mental health, and positive mental health. **Method:** A total of 293 university students (48.1% female) completed Arabic versions of the PAQ, the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale, the Psychological State Scale and the Mental Health Continuum-Short Form Scale. The factor structure of the Arabic PAQ and its relation to the demographic factors of age and gender and the three outcome measures were examined. **Results:** Three empirically derived and internally consistent factors corresponding to the three parenting styles of authoritative ($\alpha=.86$), authoritarian ($\alpha=.85$) and permissive ($\alpha=.76$) parenting were obtained. Forward regression analyses showed the authoritative parenting style as the better predictor of basic psychological needs (standardized ($\beta = 0.34$, $p<.001$), mental disorder (standardized ($\beta = -0.21$, $p<.001$) and positive mental health (standardized ($\beta = 0.18$, $p<.01$). **Conclusion:** Findings indicate that college students in Lebanon can differentiate the authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles; that authoritative parenting contributes most to the prediction of mental health and flourishing possibly through satisfaction of the basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness; and that family-informed interventions may be required to reduce risk for mental disorders and enhance positive mental health in college youth in Lebanon.

Key words: Parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, outcome **Declaration of Interest:** None

Introduction

Parenting styles refer to warmth and control informed attitudes and behaviors parents employ with their children. Baumrind^{1,2,3} identified three distinct parenting styles in white American middle-class families; namely authoritative, permissive and authoritarian. Authoritative parents maintain a parental climate that is warm and affectionate and they are more likely to deploy control that is democratic, non-punitive and supportive of independence. On the other hand, permissive parents show low behavioral control and high warmth whereas authoritarian parents display high behavioral control and low warmth.

The Parental Authority Questionnaire⁴ (PAQ) is a widely used measure of authoritative, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles and their differential relationship to academic and psychosocial outcomes in children, adolescents, and college youth from white middle-class families in Western cultures. More specifically, PAQ scores show test-retest reliabilities ranging from .77 to .92 and low correlations ranging from .01 to .23 with social desirability scores.⁴ In relation to outcome, PAQ-derived authoritative parenting style is associated consistently with such positive outcomes as academic achievement, autonomy and self-reliance, self-esteem, self-control and emotion regulation^{3,4, 5,7} whereas authoritarian parenting style and permissive parenting style are correlated with such negative outcomes as anxiety, depression, substance misuse and behavioral problems in school.^{8,9,10,11,12,13}

Cross-cultural studies on the factor structure of the PAQ, the reliability of the extracted factors and their relation to outcome have shown fewer consistencies than those in white middle-class

families in the West.^{14, 15,16,17,18,19} For example Raval and colleagues¹⁷ used exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis on the Gujarati version of the PAQ and showed that only the authoritarian scale was reliable and valid in urban, middle-class, educated families in India and linked meaningfully to youth adjustment problems. Similarly, Leung and colleagues²⁰ reported no link between authoritative parenting and academic performance in adolescents in Hong Kong and a positive rather than a negative link between authoritarian parenting and school performance.

Discrepant findings on the Arabic version of the PAQ have also been reported in the Arab world.^{21,22,23,24} Administration of the Arabic translation of the PAQ to adolescents in eight different Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen and its factor analysis with a forced three-factor solution resulted in the extraction of three factors for the total sample of Arab adolescents with low to acceptable internal consistencies ($\alpha=.61$ for permissive, $\alpha=.72$ for authoritarian and $\alpha=.79$ for authoritative) and overlapping of items that is, items 1 and 24 loading on both the permissive and authoritative factors.^{21,22} Separate factor analyses for each Arab country provided similar results for the various Arab countries, but a few PAQ items did not load appropriately on their theoretically expected factors and the problematic items were not the same for the various Arab countries.²² Item overlap and even lower internal consistencies (permissive $\alpha=.62$, authoritarian $\alpha=.64$, and authoritative $\alpha=.76$ parenting style) were reported for Egyptian adolescents.²³ On the other hand, use of the Arabic PAQ on a group of Saudi college students supported a three-factor structure with acceptable internal consistencies for the measure.²⁴

In relation to the association of Arabic PAQ-derived parenting styles to outcome, the absence of a link between permissive parenting and negative mental health, a low positive correlation between authoritarian parenting and poorer mental health, and a positive link between authoritative parenting and better mental health are reported for Arab adolescents.²⁵ On the basis of such findings, the conclusion has been drawn that 'authoritarian parenting within an authoritarian culture does not harm adolescents' mental health as it does within the Western liberal societies' (p-262).²⁵

In the present study, we examined the factor structure of the Arabic PAQ4²⁷ in a group of Lebanese university students. We were interested in finding out whether three internally consistent parenting styles as theorized by Baumrind^{2,3} existed in the case of Lebanese college youth. We also examined the relation of Arabic PAQ- derived parenting styles to basic psychological needs satisfaction,^{28,29,30} negative mental health,²⁷ and positive mental health.^{31,32} We were interested in expanding the relation of parenting styles to two new outcome domains- needs satisfaction and positive mental health in the Lebanese context. Finally, we investigated parenting styles in relation to the demographic factors of age and sex. While the relation of these two demographic factors to parenting styles has been studied in an Egyptian adolescent sample,²³ Arab adolescents in Israel,²⁷ and Arab adolescents²² they have not been examined in the Lebanese context.

Method

Participants and procedure

A total of 293 Lebanese youth (48.1% female) from the American University of Beirut, a private institution of higher learning, participated in the study. Participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 with a mean age of 20.43 years ($SD=1.81$). Using convenience sampling, participants were recruited from the introductory psychology courses and the college campus generally. The students of the introductory psychology courses received an announcement of the research study and an appointment with the researcher was set for those interested students. Upon participation, they received course credit for their involvement in the study. Participants who were recruited from the university campus were approached individually and if interested were invited to participate in the study.

The questionnaire battery included a consent form, a demographic sheet, and the Arabic versions of the Parental Authority Questionnaire^{4,27} (Arabic PAQ), the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale^{29,33} (Arabic BNSG-S), the Psychological State Scale^{22,26} (Arabic PSS), and the Short Form Mental Health Continuum Scale^{31,34} (Arabic MHC-SF). Measures were administered in a counterbalanced order to minimize order effects.

Instrumentation

Arabic Version of the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Arabic PAQ)^{4,27}

The 30-item Arabic PAQ is a measure of the parenting styles of authoritative (10 items), authoritarianism (10 items), and permissiveness (10 items). Each item requires rating by both parents from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), higher scores signifying higher parenting style.

Arabic Version of the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General (Arabic BNSG-S) Scale^{29,33} The Arabic BNSG-S is a 21-item theoretically grounded composite measure of satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness.^{28,29} Each of the items requires a rating from (Not at all true) to 7 (Definitely true); higher total scores indicating higher needs satisfaction. Examples of items on this scale are “I consider the people I regularly interact with to be my friends”, “I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life.” Internal consistencies above .80 are reported for the English version of the scale.^{29,30} In the present study, the internal consistency of the Arabic BNSG-S was $\alpha=.84$.

Arabic Version of the Psychological State Scale (Arabic PSS)^{25,26}

The Arabic PSS is a 20-item composite measure of symptoms of anxiety, depression and conduct disorder. Each of the items requires 3-point ratings (0 = no, 1 = not sure, 2 = yes); lower total scores indicating better mental health. Examples of items on this scale are “I feel distressed for any reason”, “I do not know who I am and what I want”, “I do not enjoy life”; An internal consistency of $\alpha=.88$ is reported for the Arabic version of the measure²⁵. In the present study, the internal consistency of the Arabic PSS was $\alpha=.86$.

Arabic Version of the Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (Arabic MHC-SF) Scale^{31,34} The Arabic MHC-SF is a 14-item composite measure of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Each item requires a rating from 1 (Never) to 6 (everyday); higher total scores indicating higher positive mental health or flourishing. On this scale, participants specify how often they felt different feelings, e.g. happy, interested in life, confident to think or express own ideas and opinions, in the past month. An internal consistency above .70 is reported for this measure³⁴. In the present study, the internal consistency of the Arabic MHC-SF was $\alpha=.89$.

Results

Arabic PAQ: Factor Structure and Reliability

The 30 items of the Arabic PAQ were subjected to a principal component analysis using SPSS Version 22. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of .89 exceeded the recommended KMO value of .6, suggesting sampling adequacy³⁵. Similarly, Bartlett’s test of Sphericity reached statistical significance ($p<.0001$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Principal component analysis revealed the presence of seven factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1 (7.74, 3.05, 2.02, 1.25, 1.10, 1.04 and 1.00), and explaining 25.8%, 10.18%, 6.73%, 4.17%, 3.67%, 3.47% and 3.34% of the variance, respectively. Inspection of the scree plot revealed a clear break after the third factor and use of the scree test³⁶ suggested retention of three factors for further investigation. Retention of three factors was also supported by parallel analysis³⁷ on a random data matrix of 30 variables. The first seven random eigenvalues generated by the parallel analysis were 1.64, 1.56, 1.48, 1.43, 1.33, and 1.29. As such, only three eigenvalues obtained from the principal factors analysis (7.74, 3.05 and 2.02) exceeded the corresponding eigenvalues (1.64, 1.58 and 1.48) randomly generated by parallel analysis.

The three-factor solution explained after extraction a total of 42.70% of the variance, with the first factor contributing 25.80% of the variance, the second factor contributing 10.18% and factor 3 contributing 6.73%. To aid in the interpretations of these three factors, Oblimin

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rotations were performed. The pattern matrix of the three-factor solution is provided in Table 1. As can be seen, the ten items on each of the three empirically derived factors corresponded to the three parenting styles as identified by Baumrind¹². The authoritative parenting style comprised items 4, 5, 8, 11,15,20, 22, 23, 27, and 30; the authoritarian parenting style comprised items 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26, and 29; and the authoritarian parenting style comprised items 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, and 28.

Table 1: The Pattern Matrix of Arabic PAQ Items

Item		Pattern coefficients		
		I	II	III
23.	Parents gave direction, but listened to concerns.	.82	-.16	-.01
30.	Parents discussed decisions that hurt me and admitted their mistake.	.71	.10	.05
15.	Parents gave consistent directions and guidance in a rational way.	.70	-.04	-.09
11.	Parents discussed their expectations when I felt they were unreasonable.	.65	-.10	-.10
8.	Parents directed activities through reasoning and discipline.	.62	-.03	-.18
5.	Parents encouraged verbal give and take when rules were unreasonable.	.62	.12	-.14
22.	Parents had clear standards but adjusted them to the needs of family members.	.61	.04	.30
20.	Parents took children’s opinions into consideration.	.61	.18	-.05
4.	Parents discussed reasoning behind established policy.	.54	-.04	-.24
27.	Parents gave clear directions but understood when I disagreed.	.50	.09	-.01
14.	Parents did what the children wanted when making family decisions.	.05	.65	.06
19.	Parents allowed me to decide most things for myself with little direction.	-.03	.63	-.18
13.	Parents seldom gave expectations or directions.	-.12	.60	.07
6.	Parents thought children had right to make their own decisions.	.15	.58	-.22
21.	Parents did not view themselves responsible for guiding/directing my behavior.	-.03	.58	.13
10.	Parents did not think rules/regulations of authority had to be obeyed.	-.05	.57	.05
24.	Parents allowed me to form my own view on family matters, decide what to do.	.13	.52	-.22
28.	Parents did not direct behaviors/activities/desires of the children.	.09	.49	-.14
17.	Parents were against restriction of children’s activities/decisions/desires.	.00	.56	.27
1.	Parents thought children should have their way as often as parents.	.22	.42	-.17
26.	Parents told exactly what they wanted me to do.	-.10	.10	.75
18.	Parents let me know what behavior they expected of me.	-.04	.07	.70
9.	Parents felt more force was needed to get children behave their way.	.04	.06	.67
12.	Parents thought wise parents teach their children who is the boss in the family.	.21	-.13	.64
29.	Parents insisted on conformity.	-.13	.05	.62
25.	Parents thought problems could be solved by with strictness.	-.06	.10	.59

Item		Pattern coefficients		
		I	II	III
7.	Parents did not allow questioning.	-.32	.01	.52
3.	Parents expected me to do what they wanted immediately/without questioning.	-.20	-.19	.50
16.	Parents got very upset if I tried to disagree with them.	-.16	-.20	.50
2.	Parents felt it is for our own good if we were forced to conform.	-.19	-.19	.43

The internal consistencies of the empirically derived factors were $\alpha=.85$ for authoritarian, $\alpha=.76$ for permissive and $\alpha=.86$ for authoritative. These internal consistencies are considered acceptable since they represent alpha values of .70 and higher.³⁸ They are also higher than those reported for Arab adolescents,²² Palestinian-Arab adolescents in Israel,²⁷ and Egyptian adolescents.²³

The empirically derived authoritarian parenting style scores correlated negatively with the authoritative parenting style scores ($r=-.52$, $p<.001$) and the permissive parenting style scores ($r=-.21$, $p<.001$) while the authoritative parenting style scores correlated positively with the permissive parenting style scores ($r=.35$, $p<.001$).

Parenting Styles Needs Satisfaction, Mental Health and Flourishing: Descriptive

The means and standard deviations of the Arabic versions of the PAQ, BNSG-S, PSS and MHC-SF scales are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of Arabic PAQ, BNSG-S, PSS and MHC-SF Scales

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Arabic PAQ	24.59	6.54
Authoritarian	24.59	6.54
Authoritative	37.22	5.97
Permissive	28.53	5.59
Arabic BNSG-S	4.97	.62
Arabic PSS	8.52	6.94
Arabic MHC-SF	4.36	.80

Lebanese college youth in the present sample rated the authoritative parenting style higher than the permissive parenting style ($t(292)=7.13$, $p<.001$) and the authoritarian parenting style ($t(292)=19.81$, $p<.001$) and the permissive parenting style higher than the authoritarian parenting style ($t(292)=7.93$, $p<.001$).

Arabic PAQ-derived parenting style scores did not correlate with age ($r=.07$, ns for permissive, $r=-.04$, ns, for authoritarian and $r=-.05$, ns, for authoritative). Comparisons of the sexes also failed to show differences between males and females on the authoritative parenting style ($M=37.39$, $SD=6.15$ and $M=37.07$, $SD=5.81$, respectively, $t(291)=.46$, ns) and the authoritarian parenting style ($M=24.20$, $SD=6.48$ for females and $M=24.95$, $SD=6.60$, for males, $t(291)=-.99$, ns). On the other hand, males obtained higher scores than females on the permissive parenting style ($M=29.21$, $SD=5.42$ for males and $M=27.80$, $SD=5.69$ for females, $t(291)=-2.17$, $p<.05$).

In the present study, Lebanese college youth had a mean composite score on the Arabic BNSG-S that was above the midpoint ($M=4.97$, $SD=.62$), suggesting that the basic psychological needs of the group for autonomy, competence and relatedness was more satisfied than dissatisfied. Similarly, Lebanese college youth in the present sample had a mean composite score on the Arabic PSS that was on the low end ($M=8.52$, $SD=6.94$), indicating that as a group they perceived themselves free from symptoms of anxiety, depression, and conduct disorder. Finally, Lebanese college youth in the present sample had a mean composite score on the Arabic MHC-SF ($M=4.36$, $SD=.80$) that was above the midpoint, signifying that

participants as a group perceived themselves more on the side of flourishing rather than languishing.

Parenting Styles and Outcome Measures: Regression Analyses

In view of the overlap of the three parenting styles, three separate forward multiple regression analyses with the three parenting styles entered into the regression equations were conducted to evaluate their significance in predicting outcome. Only the authoritative parenting style scores predicted needs satisfaction scores ($R^2=0.11$, $F(1, 291) = 37.39$, $p<0.001$; $\beta = .34$, $p<.001$) accounting for 11% of the variance, mental health scores ($R^2=0.04$, $F(1, 291) = 13.57$, $p<0.001$; $\beta = -.21$, $p<.001$) accounting for 4.3% of the variance, and positive mental health or flourishing scores ($R^2=0.03$, $F(1, 291) = 9.43$, $p<0.01$; $\beta = .18$, $p<.01$), accounting for 3.1% of the variance. Taken together, the regression analyses suggest that the authoritative parenting style contributed most to prediction of need satisfaction, mental health and flourishing of college youth in Lebanon.

Discussion

This is the first study that examines parenting styles and their relation to outcome in Lebanese college youth. As such an important purpose of the study was validation of the Arabic translations of the PAQ, the BNSG-S, the PSS, and the MHC-SF in the case of Lebanese college youth with a view to extension of such investigations to the larger youth population in Lebanon. Nevertheless, our findings on the psychometric properties of the measures require replication and further standardization. For example, a limitation of the Arabic PAQ is that it does not consider parenting which is low in both the warmth and control dimensions. Also the test-retest reliabilities and inter-rater reliabilities of scores derived from the Arabic PAQ and their relationship to social desirability are not known.

The Arabic PAQ showed a factor structure that corresponded to the triarchic model of parenting styles.^{1,2} The 43.8% variance accounted for in the present study is higher than the 27.8% reported for Egyptian adolescents,²³ the 30.4% for Arab adolescents,²² and the 39.4% for Palestinian Arab adolescents in Israel.²⁷ In addition, the internal consistencies of the empirically derived factors were as high as those reported for the English version of the scale⁴ and higher than the reliabilities reported for adolescent Palestinian-Arabs in Israel,²⁷ Egyptian adolescents,²³ and Arab adolescents.²⁵

One possible explanation for the higher distinctiveness of the empirically derived factors in the present study is age in that participants were college youth rather than adolescents. It is likely that adolescents are less differentiating of the parenting styles of their significant others than college youth. Alternatively, it is likely that parents of university students are more differentiated in the deployment of their parenting styles than they are with adolescents.

Participants in the present study perceived their parents more authoritative than permissive or authoritarian and more permissive than authoritarian. Age was not related to parenting styles and while male college youth saw their parents employing a more permissive parenting style than did female college youth, male and female college youth did not differ in their ratings of their parents on the authoritative and the authoritarian parenting styles. These findings are inconsistent with female Arab adolescents reporting more deployment of the authoritative parenting style than their male counterparts.²² Age may explain the discrepancy in findings across the studies. It is possible that parents may rely on sex-informed parenting styles with their adolescents and gender-neutral parenting styles with college youth.

In the present study, the authoritative parenting style was the single predictor of good outcome in college youth in Lebanon: higher satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, better mental health, and positive mental health. The finding of a positive link between authoritative parenting and better mental health is consistent with findings in the west and Arab adolescents.^{3,25} The finding of authoritative parenting as the single predictor of positive outcome in college youth in Lebanon suggests a process underlying the beneficial effects of this style of parenting. It is likely that authoritative parenting

contributes to satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness and that the satisfaction of these basic needs leads to not only mental health but also positive mental health or flourishing.

While our study is limited by its correlational and cross-sectional methodologies, by its reliance on self-report measures, and by its focus on university students rather than a representative sample of Lebanese, the findings on the factor structure of the Arabic PAQ nevertheless indicate that college students in this sample of Lebanese can differentiate between the three parenting styles, and as such imply that it is reasonable to apply Baumrind's theory to college youth in the Lebanese context. Our findings on parenting styles and outcome also have theoretical and practical implications. On a theoretical level, the developmental effects of parenting styles should be examined not only in relation to mental disorders as has been done traditionally, but also in relation to positive mental health or flourishing. On a practical level, family-informed interventions that promote authoritative parenting may be required to reduce risk for mental disorders and enhance positive mental health in college youth in Lebanon.

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ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اختبار نموذج النسخة العربية من استبيان السلطة الوالدية، ودراسة علاقة أنماط المعاملة الوالدية بإشباع الحاجات الأساسية، الصحة النفسية السلبية، والصحة النفسية الإيجابية. **المنهج:** أكملت مجموعة تتألف من ٢٩٣ من طلاب جامعيين (٤٨,١% إناث) النسخ العربية من استبيان السلطة الوالدية، مقياس إشباع الحاجات الأساسية، مقياس الحالة النفسية، ومقياس الصحة النفسية الإيجابية. تم اختبار تركيب/ هيكل العامل في استبيان السلطة الوالدية، كما تم اختبار علاقته بالعوامل الديموغرافية كالسن والجنس وبالنتائج الثلاثة المختبرة. **النتائج:** تم الحصول على ثلاث عوامل مشتقة تجريبياً تتمتع بدرجة مرضية من الاتساق الداخلي ومطابقة لأنماط المعاملة الوالدية الثلاثة وهي النمط الديمقراطي ($\alpha = 0.86$)، النمط التسلطي ($\alpha = 0.85$)، والنمط المتساهل ($\alpha = 0.76$). أظهرت تحليل الانحدار أن النمط الديمقراطي هو المؤشر الأفضل لرضى الحاجات النفسية الأساسية، الصحة النفسية السلبية، والصحة النفسية الإيجابية. **الخلاصة:** تشير النتائج أن الطلاب الجامعيين قادرون على التفريق بين أنماط المعاملة الوالدية الثلاثة، وبأن النمط الديمقراطي هو المساهم الأكبر في تنبؤ الصحة النفسية والازدهار النفسي ربما من خلال إشباع الحاجات الأساسية للاستقلالية والكفاءة والانتماء، وبأن التدخلات العائلية قد تكون ضرورية لازمة للحد من الأمراض النفسية ولتعزيز الصحة النفسية الإيجابية للطلاب الجامعيين في لبنان.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أنماط المعاملة الوالدية، الديمقراطي، المتسلط، المتساهل، نتيجة.

Corresponding author

Ms. Alia Olivia A. Saleh

MA Psychology, Department of Psychology, American University of Beirut, Beirut 1107-2020, Lebanon E-mail: saleh.aliaolivia@gmail.com.

Authors

Ms. Alia Olivia A. Saleh

MA Psychology, Department of Psychology, American University of Beirut, Beirut 1107-2020, Lebanon

Professor Shahe S. Kazarian

Department of Psychology, American University of Beirut, Beirut 1107-2020, Lebanon