

The relationship between parenting styles with child Centrism

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Abstract: A controversial feature of modern parenting is “child-centrism,” the tendency for parents to prioritize their children’s well-being above their own. The present study deals with the family's role in parenting styles, types of parenting practices in families considering the culture, examples of positive parenting techniques, and the practices to establish discipline. General definition of child-centrism, the concept of child-centrism from the perspective of psychology and religion, and the ways to cope with and prevent from child-centrism will be also discussed. We also evaluate that which of parenting styles leads to child Centrism.

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1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, family, the quality of relationships in a family, and the way parents and children communicate with each other are of great importance in formation of children's personality and their social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Psychologists believe that the environment of home is the first and most enduring factor in the development of personality of family members. Family and parental influence on children is not limited to hereditary aspects, but it plays a significant role in all aspects of a person (Estep, H. M., & Olson, J. N. (2011). parenting). While children in ambivalent parent-child relationships may seem somewhat confused when it comes to if and when the parent will give them attention, kids in disorganized attachments take this characteristic to the extreme. Families can engage in everyday learning activities, even with very young children, and help them to develop lifelong motivation, persistence, and a love of learning. For example, parents can participate with their children in early literacy activities such as pointing to and naming objects, storytelling, and reading. Although parents sometimes consciously try to teach something to their children, children learn the things from the behaviors of parents in many cases that the parents themselves are not aware of them. Children, through their family and the small environment of their home, know the outside world and learn the way of life, social ethics and philosophy, and social customs, and how to socialize with others. Given the important educational functions of family and the importance of parent-child relationship, each psychology school, based on their foundations and principles and depending on their emphasis on one of the behavioral, motivational, and cognitive aspects of human, proposes a certain pattern and method for parenting (Spera, C. (2005). In the first three decades of the present century,

parenting styles, inspired by the behaviorism school, sought to create "good" habits and eliminate "bad" habits. This objective, controlled, and non-emotional view on child upbringing is exaggeratedly expressed in the remarks of John Watson, the founder of behaviorism school. "There is a reasonable way of raising a child (Rinaldi, C. M., & Howe, N. (2012). Treat children as if they are young adults, get dressed and bathe them very carefully, behave with them based objective method and with a gentle stability, never hug them or put them on your knees, kiss their forehead when saying goodnight if needed, shake hands with them in the morning, if they showed an outstanding success in a difficult work, give them a little pat. It's not bad to try this pattern. Within a week, you will find that how easy you can be quite serious and yet gentle with your children. Then, you will be ashamed of the emotional method you were previously following," says Watson (Feldman, H. (1981).

After 1940, parenting styles changed in order to become more permissive and flexible and emphasized on emotional security of child and avoiding the losses resulting from strict control of natural impulses, inspired by Mental Analysis school. The parent was recommended to follow their natural feeling and use the flexible programs that are consistent with the needs of both themselves and their children (Alizadeh, S.et.al. 2011). Parents now feel that permissiveness is not a suitable method for child upbringing and the correct parent-child relationship, so we need a new method that is between the 2 above-mentioned methods. This new method is "Control in moderation" which both away from the extremism of the first method and the wastage of the second one (Glenn, N. D., & McLanahan, S. (1982).

1.1. Differing parenting styles for male and female children

Mothers and fathers tend to pick up different behaviors of parenting based on the sex of their child. Studies have shown that fathers can affect their daughters' emotional adjustment more through the style of parenting they demonstrate rather than through using disciplinary approaches, such as punishment. Also, both a father and mother sometimes tend to use an authoritative style towards their daughters, while feeling more comfortable switching over to an authoritarian style for sons.

1.2. Types of parent-child relationships:

Parental behavior consists of three separate measures. 'Monitoring behavior' reflects the parents' awareness of what their child is doing and with whom they are friends. 'Nurturance behavior' captures a set of variables that measure the degree to which parents are supportive of their youth's education, are involved in their youth's school, and have a firm but responsive parenting style. 'Inconsistent discipline' captures how parents address their child's inappropriate behavior (Lareau, Annette (2002). There are 3 types of relationships between the members of a family, including absolute limitation, absolute freedom that family members don't interfere in each other's affairs, and conditional freedom.

1.3. Absolute limitation:

In such families, usually one person controls all behaviors and actions of other family members. This person is usually the father of family (patriarchy), sometimes the mother of family (matriarchy), and occasionally the older brother and sister (Hansen, T., Slagsvold, B., & Moum, T. (2009) . In this family, only one person decides, sets the goals, determines the tasks of others, organizes the affairs of life, everyone must act according to his/her own desires, he/she only has the right to comment, his/her orders must be observed by others without any dispute, interferes in any action others do, determines the value of others' works, everything he/she knows good is considered good and everything he/she considers bad is bad, he/she interferes in private affairs of family members such as job, education, leisure, relaxation, sleep, etc., he/she can criticize others, what he/she does must be approved by others, he/she recognizes the interests and benefits of family members and other must accept his/her idea in this regard. Authoritarian parents are parents who use punitive, absolute, and forceful discipline, and who place a premium on obedience and conformity. Authoritarian parents are less responsive to their child's needs, and are more likely to ground their child rather than discuss the problem. Authoritarian parenting deals with low parental responsiveness and high parental demand, the parents tend to demand

obedience without explanation and focus on status. Children resulting from this type of parenting may have less social competence because the parent generally tells the child what to do instead of allowing the child to choose by him or herself. This type of relationship may eventually result in much more serious effects such as depression or social withdrawal (Williams, K., Ciarrochi, J., & Heaven, P. (2012).

1.4. Adverse consequences of absolute limitation:

The following adverse effects and consequences are observed in such families:

1- Family members are overwhelmed by fear and they feel that they lack personality and are not treated as a respected member. Consequently, children do not feel safe in such families and their situation is always precarious.

2- The family members do not know the intention of works and don't dare to ask it. Although an apparent good discipline is established in the family, this discipline is imposed and leads to more pain and sometimes depression.

3- Children of such families seem to be the obedient to their father or mother, but in fact they are suffering from anxiety and excitement. They automatically learn to treat others using such techniques and in such mood. As a result, they are always in a state of hostility and harass their peers or younger children.

4- Since these children have accepted specific thoughts and beliefs from their parents without any dispute, they will be fanatic individuals who cannot tolerate any opposing idea.

5- Such people lack the power to develop a positive relationship with others. In other words, they are not fully developed both emotionally and socially.

6- Pessimism of these people to adults is another consequence of this method of upbringing.

7- Most people who grow in such conditions are coward and refuse to accept responsibility. They suffer from weakness and incapability at different stages of life and are not successful in their education.

8- Absolute limitation in home and patriarchal or matriarchal methods kill the creativity and prevent the talents to be emerged and don't allow the family members to do new activities and take their talents to flourish.

9- In some cases, absolute limitation leads to the feeling of inferiority and consequently causes the influx of negative thoughts about and dissatisfaction of oneself and other emotional disorders.

10- Patriarchy or matriarchies suppress the spirit of consultation and cooperation with others

1.5. Absolute freedom:

In such families, children are allowed to achieve their demand as they wish. Indulgent parents are parents who are characterized by responsiveness but low demandingness, and who are mainly concerned with the child's happiness. They behave in an accepting, benign, and somewhat more passive way in matters of discipline (Baumrind, D. (1978). In other words, family members have absolute freedom and can do whatever they want. The motto of the proponents of this view is that "Let them do whatever they want" and nobody or nothing should interfere in their work. Many mental analysts like Karen Horney believe that limiting the freedom can cause psychological complexes in people and disorders in their future life, because any demand indicates a need inside the person that should be met as soon as possible. If the person is restricted or suppressed, the person will suffer from depression. In fact, these desires and wishes of children are best guide to then to achieve physical and mental health and prosperity. Absolute freedom gives the energy to try for their present and future mental vitality and freshness (Iyengar, S. S., Wells, R. E., & Schwartz, B. (2006). In such families (child-centered), children's needs and desires are the centers of the directing factor of family member's activities, event parents. Followings are the results and implications of such parenting method that, due to its prevalence, should be studied more carefully:

1- Children in such families are usually weak-minded and lack determination or at least have a weak determination.

2- Children in such families, due to getting used to absolute freedom and promiscuity, cannot control themselves and are likely to suffer from educational and moral bankruptcy.

3- Absolute freedom and promiscuity in such families can provide the substrate for committing crimes by children in their social life.

4- In most cases children's trends have clashed with the wishes of other family members and caused conflict between them.

5- Since the wishes of children should be fulfilled in child-centered families, the spirit to obey the laws and respect for social rules and compliance with ethical rules reduces to its minimum. In other words, children in such families don't care the social and cultural norms and moral values and principles.

6- Since parents in such families are always trying to meet all the demands of children, they do not experience effort and hard working and find themselves weak in doing their own personal tasks.

7- Not having the courage to do important works suppresses the potential talents and abilities of

children and causes much of their abilities remains unflourished.

8- Followed by the two recent-mentioned outcomes (inability and lack of courage to deal and face with problems during the life, children gradually feel inferiority that can be the origin of many other problems.

1.6. Conditional freedom:

In families that neither have been overwhelmed by "absolute limitation" nor suffer from the problem of "absolute freedom", "conditional freedom" is the criterion of the child-parent relationship. All family member, based on their opportunities and facilities, can have a say about running the affairs of family and other issues. This state and the relationship between individuals is most wise and the most humane way of life and parenting, in which any right is accompanied with duty and responsibility. In such families, the young individuals and adults can have say about the issues related to them and perform their duties based on their ability and knowledge. Children of such families, without facing with strict control or excessive freedom, have a relative level of balance and freedom and also a directed discipline (Kahneman, D., & Deaton, A. (2010). They are also emotionally at a balanced level with no extremes. They enjoy the love of their parents at appropriate times and their personality is respected in the family. The position and place of children in the family gathering is reserved and they obey the social and family rules and regulations with the supervision and guidance of the home manager. In this emotional atmosphere and through the conditional freedom, children find that why they should refrain from doing something or why they should do specific tasks in certain situations. This condition is completely different from the method in which there are certain expectations of children due to the absolute limitation or the situation in which children are raised in a completely free environment and all their wishes and desires are fulfilled (Lawrence, E., Nylén, K., & Cobb, R. J. (2007). Children of families with conditional freedom are disciplined and obedient to social, cultural, and moral norms. In such families, children are given enough opportunity to have their say and talk about their problem to their parents. In such an atmosphere, children can freely express their ideas, promote their potential arts and skills, and finally have an adequate psychological safety. In such families, obedience to social and moral rules and regulations, respect for others, and following the social and family norms are not due to the fear of parents or being punished or scolded by them, but children gradually become familiar with moral rules and principles in a proper and balanced emotional atmosphere with a relative freedom under parental

guidance. So, they can control their own actions and behaviors and refrain from improper acts. In such families, when children can live with their parent and other family member in a balanced emotional atmosphere away from any extremes and enjoy a conditional freedom, they can also develop a correct social and emotional relationship with teachers, school officials, classmates, and others (Baumrind, D. (1967). They also learn to cooperate and consult with their friends and peers, respect them, easily accept the opposing ideas of others, and never violate the privacy of others. It is in the shadow of a conditional and useful freedom that the capabilities and talents of children not only are not wasted but also are directed to the most appropriate way and parents can do this. According to the studies of social psychologists, people who have had a mild and conditional freedom during their childhood will be the enemy of inadmissibility and oppression in adulthood and manage to do the great social reforms. Aspects of illumination and creativity are more powerful in these people and have more fun with their own world and life (Rinaldi, C. M., & Howe, N. (2012). Nowadays, most experts of psychology believe that the best emotional atmosphere among members of a family is an atmosphere that is neither dominated by absolute limitation by parents nor overwhelmed by absolute and excessive freedom for children. With a directed discipline and a conditional freedom, all family members try for the growth and excellence of each other and establishing peace and comfort in the family, because the major duty of family is to ensure safety and security of its members and educate children. As the arbitrary education and dictatorial relationship between parent and children foreclose the comfort of family members, excessive freedom and child-centrism can cause a lot of disorders and disharmonies in moral, psychological, and personality growth of family members and can be destructive for children and make them selfish. Family is a place where children should flourish positive ethos and characters in their personality and reach from selfishness to altruism. But in such an environment, children will never be able to reach this stage, because absolute freedom and child-centrism are obstacles to achieve this goal (Rivers, J.et.al.2012).

Based on scientific and empirical evidence and by examining the parenting practices, significant results have been obtained. Researchers have focused on four dimensions of the parent-child relations. These dimensions are as follows:

A) Control: To what extent parent try to be involved in children's activities and to what extent they try to change the dependence or aggression of their children based on their own criteria.

B) Expectation of development: The pressures that are put on children to their performance is matched to their ability.

C) Clarity of the relationship between the child and parents: The ability of parent to explain their reasons when requesting children to obey them and their attention to the opinions and feelings of children.

D) Child-caressing: The kindness and compassion of parents towards the children and enjoyment of their progress.

The results of this study suggest that parents whose children have grown up have gotten the highest scores in each of these four dimensions. These parents are loving and passionate and establish a good relationship with their children. They respect their children's opinions and generally act about their behaviors seriously and unequivocally. Parent of children in the second group largely the tool of control, so they were not so loving and passionate with their children. The parents of the most undeveloped children (the third group) showed affection toward their children, but they were not bound to control or communicate with their children and also didn't have high expectations of them. Such parents often lack the efficiency to organize the affairs of their home and show negligence in determining the rules, encouragement, and punishment and offering the rewards. Further studies indicate that parents, who show a considerable stability and consistency in their expectations of their children's behaviors and are yet gentle and kind and respect their children's opinions, will raise efficient and self-reliant children. Parent who excessively control their children's behaviors and more think about their own needs, will raise children that although are largely self-restraint, they don't have enough sense of security and self-confidence in facing with new situations or persons. Neglectful parenting is also called uninvolved, detached, dismissive or hands-off. The parents are low in warmth and control, are generally not involved in their child's life, are disengaged, undemanding, low in responsiveness, and do not set limits. Neglectful parenting can also mean dismissing the children's emotions and opinions. Parents are emotionally unsupportive of their children, but will still provide their basic needs. Provide basic needs meaning: food, housing, and toiletries or money for the prementioned. Neglectful parents that neither encourage the responsible behavior of their children nor prohibit their immature behavior will raise children who are at the lowest level in terms of self-restraint and self-reliance.

According to the results of these studies, the parent-child relationship and parenting should not be

affected by extremes and any extreme rigor and excessive negligence should be avoided. In addition to establishing a warm and friendly relationship with their children, parents are required to control the behaviors of their children. This is the method which provided in the atmosphere of conditional freedom, because while parents should try to maintain the independence and respect the dignity and personality of their children, it is necessary in some cases to get involve in their work and make them aware of the risks threatening them. Also, in some cases that children need to know the surrounding environment, parents should help them to grow and gain experience and shouldn't leave them free and alone.

1.7. General definition of child-centrism:

Parents engage in a variety of child-centric styles of parenting. "Helicopter parenting", for example, is a child-centric parenting style involving close monitoring of the behavior and activities of one's children (Cline & Fay, 1990). In contrast, the "little emperor syndrome" is a child-centric style of parenting associated with under controlling one's children's behavior and attempting to grant their every wish. Child-centrism refers to a situation in which children are directly or indirectly are the basis and the center of decision-making, activities, and generally the set of family affairs in different areas (Somers, M. D. (1993). Child-centrism in Iran is something different from intellectual, behavioral, and economic independence. This means that children enjoy all rates, facilities, and advantages of family but lack the behavioral independence and decision-making power and also rely on the income of their family.

This phenomenon, like many of today's problems, is related to city residents, because we observe that the family relationships in rural communities are still based on respect for elders and parents. Some have suggested that this trend towards greater child-centrism might be compromising parental well-being by reducing the amount of time parents spend maintaining important social relationships and engaging in the pursuit of personal goals. If child-centric parents do indeed prioritize their children's well-being over their own and are willing to invest more resources and efforts in the raising of their children, more child-centric parents might experience greater well-being when they are taking care of their children.

1.8. The concept of child-centrism:

A) From the perspective of psychology: Although psychological and educational books have not directly mentioned the word "Child-centrism", a word like "Patriarchy" refers to the relationships between the family members and the way of addressing and resolving the various problems within

the family. So, from a educational point of view, child-centrism is a style of parenting and the child-parent relationship, in which the child has a considerable dominance over other family members and even the parents in order to achieve his/her goals and aspirations (Cline, Foster W.; Fay, Jim (1990) . Given the absolute freedom that is going on in such families, children can easily rule others using the facilities and cultural, economic, moral, social, etc. conditions and nobody or nothing can prevent them. Children in such families also impose their comments and insights on family members and even their parents.

Hence, the following features can be observed in child-centrism style of parenting:

1- Parents try to realize all needs and goals of their child without any dispute.

2- Children enjoy and abundant and enough freedom of action to implement and approach their wishes.

3- Parents, in the child's upbringing, either have a cognitive weakness or lack the required tact and power in applying the necessary practical solutions in this regard.

4- Children have managed to increase their psychological dominance over family members and even their parents and impose their ideas on them using the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral leverages.

5- The views and comments of children are taken into account more than what is appropriate and necessary in managing the affairs of home and family and associated decisions.

6- When there is a conflict between the ideas of family members and even between the child and parents, the ideas of children, whether they are right or wrong, are taken as a top priority and implemented.

B) From the perspective of religion: Islamic teachings and religious texts also suggest moderation and conditional freedom in relationships of family members and particularly the child-parent relationship, because what humans owns, including children are considered God's trust in Islamic culture and family is responsible for their health, growth, and prosperity. "You are responsible for what that is given to you," says Imam Sajjad (AS) in his rights dissertation. As children have a lot of duties and responsibilities towards their parents and the Quran has emphasized several times on obeying the parents and being kind to them, fathers and mothers are also responsible for the educations and development of their children and are not allowed to give an absolute freedom to their children without any control and be so neglectful that their children can do whatever they want and go wherever they like. This point can be

inferred from this verse of the holy Quran which says, "O you who believe, protect your family from a fire fueled by people and stones."

"Self-restraint" means to leave sins and not obey the roue lusts and "Family protecting" means to educate, prohibit them from what is evil, and provide a clean environment free from any contamination in the home and family. This program that should be the footstone of the family in all stages of life such marriage and its preliminaries, the birth of child, and other stages of education.

Note worthily, the reference of the Quran to the word "power" meaning "hold" mentions this point that if you leave them alone and let them go, they inevitably go to hell and this is you that should keep them from failing and deviation from the straight divine line and you are obliged to monitor and protect your family and are not allowed to leave them alone on the pretext of providing and paying attention to their different needs. The command of "Forbidding what is evil" is a general duty of all Muslims to each other, but it can be inferred from the above-mentioned verse and other narratives about the children's rights and so on in Islamic references that people have a heavier responsibility to their wife and children and are obliged to try for their education as far as possible, prevent them from sin, and invite them to make goods. People should not be focused on physical needs of their family members, but they should intervene in cases that it is necessary and have a constant surveillance and control over their children, prevent them from doing what that is against their interests, provide the substrate for their growth and prosperity using proper educational methods, and keep them away from absolute freedom and promiscuity.

As avers of the holly Quran indicates, not only the fires of resurrection but also the fires of the universe come from the existence of humans. Therefore, everyone is responsible to protect their own family from these fires and any aberrance. We read in a hadith that when the above-mentioned verse was revealed, one of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) asked, "How can we protect our family from the fire of hell?" The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) answered, "Prohibit them from what is evil, if they accept it, you have protected them from the fire of hell, otherwise, you have done your duty."

So, if we accept that children are divine trust is the hands of parents, fathers and mothers should be very careful in raising them, spare no efforts to control their actions and behaviors, invite them to make goods, prevent them from any fail and deviation. In another comprehensive and interesting hadith, the Prophet (pbuh) says, "Know that all you are guardians and all have a responsibility to those

who are guarding them." The head of the Islamic government is the guardian of people and has a responsibility to them. Man is the guardian of his own family and is in charge of the family members. Women are also the guardian of her family, husband, and children. The Guardian is responsible to protect what has been entrusted to him/her. If he/she wants to abandon the trust and doesn't prevent the potential losses, he/she will be considered a delinquent and should be fined. Children may want to play the role of the ruler of home and take the control of affairs and parents may be indifferent to it and assume that the violation their children are doing is slight and can back their action, but it should be noted that children are insatiable and if they are given freedom in doing a work, they would not be satisfied with that and every step that parents take back, children will go forward (Miller A.1981). The consequence of such freedom is that children dominate all which damages the life of other family members. This crucial point has been mentioned in a narrative in which Imam Ali (AS) says, "When a child in childhood dares to insult his/her father, in adulthood (and gradually) the father will disinherit him/her. So, the child-parent relationship should be formed from the beginning based on a correct educational planning in an emotional and friendly and yet freely and respectful atmosphere, so that children respect their father and father can also prevent his children from aberrances and guide them to growth and prosperity. Here, it is necessary to mention a narrative which divides the upbringing period into three stages. This narrative point out that child's first seven years is the period of lordship, the second seven years is the period of obedience, and the third seven years is the period of ministrations. If the first seven years is known as the period of lordship, it doesn't mean that children should be absolutely free and do whatever they want and parents are not responsible for their actions and behaviors, but it means that children have no binding duty or obligation and if they are asked to do something, they shouldn't be disciplined or questioned. That's why Islam has designed the formal training for children in the second seven years of their life and asks them to obey some orders in the period of obedience; otherwise, parent can protest them. If the second seven years of childhood is named the period of obedience in this narrative, it doesn't mean that parents can impose anything on their children with the absolute dictatorship or children have to perforce and grudgingly do what their parents want and obey their orders in a strict and harsh environment away from any affection and intimacy, but it means that as children can accept and understand logic and proof during this period, they can understand the logical reasoning of their parents

and instructors, their behaviors and actions are limited, and become familiar with moral and behavioral rules and regulations (Brown, Nina W. (2008). In fact, children in this period (period of obedience) gradually understand that they should accept the laws and obey the rules and their independence in the first period gives way to collectivism in the second period. Transition from the first period to the second period is influenced by the behavior of parents in a positive emotional atmosphere of family. In such an atmosphere, children can learn socialization and obedience to law and eliminate the substrates for the incidence of extremes with help of logical and convincing arguments provided by their parents. Studies show that children who were pampered with excessive freedom have suffered from radicalism in the future and drowned in the sea of moral corruptions. That's why Islam has introduced this period as the period of obedience of children to parents. The limitations that children are faced with in this period cause their purity and prevent the possible future risks. In addition, if these limitations are accompanied with a valid and logical reasoning, children easily accept them and don't feel that their freedom is foreclosed. The third seven years is called the period of ministrations. In this period, the child-parent relationship should be formed based on mutual understanding and this relationship should be full of intimacy, joy, warmth, and compassion. The terms of this period are not such to behave children with severity or treat them as if they feel constraint and dictatorship, because these methods would lead to rebellion and resistance against the parents and escape from family. In this period, children should be recognized as a minister, deputy, or partner and parents should pay more attention and value to them in order to take care of them and monitor their actions and behaviors. This way the acne of children isn't hurt nor they are released with an absolute freedom.

1.9. Ways to deal with and prevent child-centrism:

- 1- Providing a true definition of life issues in order to find a solution for dealing with in specific situations.
- 2- Assigning different duties to children with material and spiritual encouragements from their early life.
- 3- Developing the social relationships and handing out some responsibilities outside home with control and supervision of parents.
- 4- Preventing children from doing other works and activities in order to let them study their lessons.
- 5- Encouraging children to maintain the sanctity of others.

- 6- Rewarding children if they do the assigned duties with the expected speed and accuracy

2. Discussions

The present research has shown that parents might experience greater well-being when they are taking care of their children as compared to when they are doing all other activities except taking care of children. Many parents create their own style from a combination of factors, and these may evolve over time as the children develop their own personalities and move through life's stages. Parenting style is affected by both the parents' and children's temperaments, and is largely based on the influence of one's own parents and culture. "Most parents learn parenting practices from their own parents some they accept, some they discard.

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