

Corporal Punishment Experience, Approach-Avoidance Temperaments and Parenting Styles on Parent-child Closeness in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose:

To investigate the relationships between corporal punishment experience, approach-avoidance temperaments, parenting styles, and parent-child closeness; raise awareness and provide findings based in Malaysian context.

Methodology:

201 Malaysian undergraduates from different universities, age ranging from 18 to 25 years old.

Results:

A significant negative relationship between corporal punishment and parent-child closeness. Individuals with approach temperament had higher parent-child closeness than individuals with avoidance temperament. Also, authoritative parenting and authoritarian parenting predicted parent-child closeness, where authoritative parenting has larger effect than authoritarian parenting.

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INTRODUCTION

Relationship and emotional bond between a child and their parents are crucial to the child's overall development, including their mental health. In Malaysia, corporal punishment like caning is a tradition way of punishment for bad-behaving children. It is still legal and widely used by Malaysian parents as an effective way of disciplining their children. In recent study done on Malaysian's young adults, Chong and Yeo (2018) found that repeated and harsh corporal punishment could result in psychological maladjustment as it was perceived the as parental rejection. Parent-child relationship can be affected by many factors and one of which may be the uncontrollable individual's born temperament. According to Acar et al. (2018), children with reactive temperament correlated with lower parent-child closeness. Another factor that plays a huge role in affecting the parent-child closeness is parenting styles. According to Keshavarz and Baharudin (2009), Malaysian parents apply authoritarian parenting more and do not regard it as negative due to cultural norms.

Objectives: To investigate the relationships between corporal punishment experienced, approach-avoidance temperaments, parenting styles, and parent-child closeness; raise awareness and provide findings based in Malaysian context

Hypothesis 1: Individuals who experienced corporal punishment will have lower parent-child closeness compared to individuals who have not experienced corporal punishment.

Hypothesis 2: Approach temperament individuals will have higher parent-child closeness compared to those with avoidance temperament.

Research Question 3: To examine whether approach-avoidance temperaments or types of parenting styles have an effect on parent-child closeness (RQ3).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Participants

- 201 participants (Female = 149, Male = 52)
- 18 to 25 years old (M = 21.00, SD = 1.36)
- Undergraduate students in Malaysia.
- Malaysians, excel in English and both biological parents living but not necessarily living together.

Measures

- Demographics
- Corporal Punishment Measure (Turner & Kopiec, 2006)
- Parental Authority Questionnaire--Modified Version (Trinkner et al., 2012).
- Approach-Avoidance Temperament Questionnaire (Elliot & Thrash, 2010)
- Parental Closeness Measure (Stepney et al., 2015)

Procedure

- Online survey link, Google Form.
- SPSS

Table 1
Corporal Punishment Experience on Parent-Child Closeness - Group Statistics

Corporal Punishment Experience	n	Mean	SD
Experienced	142	3.65	.92
Not Experienced	59	4.03	.67

Table 2
Approach-Avoidance Temperaments on Parent-Child Closeness - Group Statistics (N = 189)

Approach-Avoidance Temperaments	n	Mean	SD
Approach	154	3.83	.81
Avoidance	35	3.68	.93

Table 3
Regression - Coefficients

Model	IV	Beta	t	p
1	Approach	.08	1.18	.239
	Avoidance	-.27	-3.94	.000
2	Approach	.02	.33	.74
	Avoidance	-.07	-1.15	.25
	Authoritative	.47	7.76	.000
	Authoritarian	-.28	-4.37	.000
	Permissive	-.01	-.10	.923

RESULTS

1. Participants who have not experienced corporal punishment are closer to their parents (Mean = 4.03), eta squared statistic (.49) indicated a medium effect size (see Table 1).
2. Participants who have approach temperament have slightly higher parent-child closeness (Mean = 3.83), eta squared statistic (.18) indicated a small effect size (see Table 2).
3. Parenting styles explained an additional 37% of the variance in parent-child closeness, after controlling for approach-avoidance temperaments responding, $R^2 = .37$, $F(3, 195) = 42.26$, $p < .001$. Two parenting styles were statistically significant, authoritative parenting has a higher beta value ($\beta = .47$, $t = 7.76$, $p < .001$) than the authoritarian parenting ($\beta = -.28$, $t = -4.37$, $p < .001$) (see Table 3).

DISCUSSION

The findings showed that the effect of corporal punishment is consistent and can be generalize despite cultural differences. Results showed the importance of parenting styles as a factor in affecting the parent-child closeness. It concomitantly suggested the power of nurture over nature. The right parenting can bring the best outcomes despite the influence of natural factors like temperaments. One of the limitation of this study were the use of referent age of 13 in the Corporal Punishment Measure. There is a possibility of the reduction of corporal punishment usage on children after the age of 12. The inability to remember clearly on the frequency of corporal punishment they received in the past was also a limitation in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

Importance of understanding the effect of corporal punishment on children especially its main disadvantage, eroding the bond between parents and child. We urged the regulation and edict of corporal punishment usage on children in all settings in Malaysia. Additionally, the study also accentuated the recommended parenting styles, authoritative parenting. Parents should also start treating each of their child as unique individuals that require different care. It is pivotal that Malaysian population begin to evolve from what they deemed as culture to something that is less damaging and more beneficial.

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