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RESEARCH ARTICLE

HAVING ONE AND ONLY, HAPPY OR LONELY? : THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS WITH ONE CHILD

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Abstract

Background: An idea formerly dismissed by others due to the social construct of yesterday's parents expecting their children to support them their entire lives; having an only child is quickly becoming the norm within today's generation of parents in order to achieve a much more stable experience and balanced family life.

Method: This qualitative paper used a phenomenological research design to understand the lived experiences and perceptions of the parents with one child, relative to the central question: "What are the struggles and benefits of having an only child." The data were gathered through a twenty-five semi-structured interview, which was then analyzed by using an inductive approach in theme development.

Findings: Findings have shown that the experience of parents in raising a child is a journey of unknown, which they prepare themselves in so that they could raise them properly. They adapt to their child's needs in terms of their character and values by implementing a punishment system.

Conclusion: Parents play a major role in the child's growth. They mold their child to become a responsible citizen.

Recommendation: To comply with the literature gap, this study advises future researchers to take more cognizance on the struggles of the parents. This includes pressure from environmental factors, underlying issues, and their strategies to cope.

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Introduction:-

Family is the basic unit of society. The quality of family, which eventually affects the development of a nation, depends on several factors. One area that cannot be neglected is the impact of the one-child family and how parents of these family types face the pros and cons of having their "Uniqo ija" or their "Uniqo ijo."

Several studies have been made to focus on the impact of family size on the quality of life. Yet, few have to dwell on the study of the character development, adjustment styles, struggles encountered, and values integration experiences of parents with one child.

The paper will present the story of parents on how they are enjoying the bliss as well as how they are coping with the challenges looming every parent with a single child under their care.

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Once shunned by others, only children are becoming the norm within adults of today. In 1964, the average female had just over five children; by 2015, she had only 2.5. Some governments are creating benefits for their citizens to encourage procreation, but the trend seems unstoppable. (United Nations Development Program, 2015).

In our study, we tackle the many reasons why parents are becoming more enticed to the one-child family life rather than having multiple offspring. We look into the many factors they considered, from the betterment of the child to their benefits in the long run.

Like all trends, it occurs when a growing majority is influencing people. In America, people are coming around to the idea of having one child. The single-child family is the fastest-growing family unit in the United States, according to census data. This is causing a reassessment of many persistently held beliefs about only children and their parents, and what constitutes a happy family. (Sheasley, 2019).

As stated earlier, when parents decide to bear only one child, they first think of the effect this decision will have on their young development. Parents have a mindset that the sibling relationship affects the mental development and adaptation of children. When children develop a secure connection to their siblings, they can form a reliable model of internal development, thereby creating a positive view of themselves and the outside world, more comfortable and stronger in coping with interpersonal relations. Failure to develop a secure relationship of attachment will lead to negative evaluations of children themselves and the environment, lack of self-confidence and difficulties with interpersonal relationships, and thus fail to adapt society (Jia, Q., 2018).

With all that being said, the mindset also includes them stepping up their game and spending as much time with them as possible to help them develop the necessary social interacting skills. Only children benefit from undivided parental attention. Single-child families spend much more time with their children, playing vital roles of caretaker, mentor, and group of friends, son, or sister in the absence of a parent. Lauren Sandler, who is the author of the book *One and Only*, has argued that they are far more mature and intelligent.

Judging from the previous paragraph, the parents may feel at ease with that fact and will try to go for the one-child alternative. However, some studies support extreme parental care in single-child families and indicate that this extreme care is given to the single child often leads to internalization, isolation, dependency on the child, emotional problems, and potentially risky behavior. (Tahereh Ataei, Reza Zeighami, Nezal Azh, Maryam Mafi, 2019). The parent's primary concern is the overall development of their children. After all, their decision will impact their child significantly through the course of their life.

Aside from that, we also considered external environmental factors. Seeing as some parents are also concerned with what impact this will bring to the world as a whole. Sarah Conly wrote in her book, *one child*, that at this point when the world around us is in so many threats from environmental degradation, having as many as we happen to want is no longer viable. Interest can also be another factor in this, as she added. We don't have a fundamental interest in having more than one child. That is, having more than one isn't something we need to live at least a minimally decent life.

When discussing external factors, one cannot rule out the most concerning part for the parents' decision, the finances. As the death rate has declined in underdeveloped parts of the world, the absence of a similar decline in birth rates has meant that family size and population have grown rapidly, effectively slowing the rate of economic growth while at the same time increasing appetite for a higher standard of living and greater national strength. (Routeledge, 2017). Multiple prominent families put a lot of strain on the community, making it harder for the breadwinners of the family to look for opportunities to provide for their family's everyday needs. Problems like job availability and overall salaries that are below minimum wage put the big families out of favor — seeing as there is more mouth to feed with so little income to avail.

Other concerns are the most likely of things, Accompaniment for old age. Being in a one-child family has increased the chance of receiving support from children, but does not support the provision of support from/to older parents (Chen, J., & Jordan, L. P., 2017).

Older parents in England had higher chances of face-to-face social contact at least weekly than their childless counterparts, but larger family size only had a small additional effect. It was more important for parents to have at

least one daughter than the number of children. Larger family size has been positively associated with parents with daily living tasks receiving help from a son. (Emily Grundy, Sanna Read, 2012)

This study aims to explore the personal experiences of parents who have only one child and to understand what it means to nurture one—in the hope that the exploration will, to some extent, provide further insight into the human condition. It also seeks to seize the essence of their experiences that challenges some of the archaic, socially-constructed ideas of having only one child. A phenomenological study was used to help learn from the experiences of others and to help understand people's meanings. (Neubauer, B.E., Witkop, C.T. & Varpio, L. *Perspect Med Educ.*, 2019).

Method:-

The study that was conducted used a qualitative design. Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that it seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places. (Crossman, 2019). The phenomenological approach was employed as it is designed to understand the experiences and perceptions of the participants regarding the experiences of parents with one child. A phenomenology is a form of qualitative research where it focuses on answering the question of 'what is it' rather than frequency or magnitude questions such as 'how much' and 'how many' (Guilbeau, 2014). The objective of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of this experience, both in terms of what has been experienced and how it has been experienced (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019). The study is phenomenological, having focused on the commonality of lived experiences, their benefits, and struggles of parents with only one child. Phenomenology follows the approach of human science by respecting the essential characteristics of humanness throughout the research process (Giorgi, 2009; Guilbeau, 2014).

Research Locus and Sample:

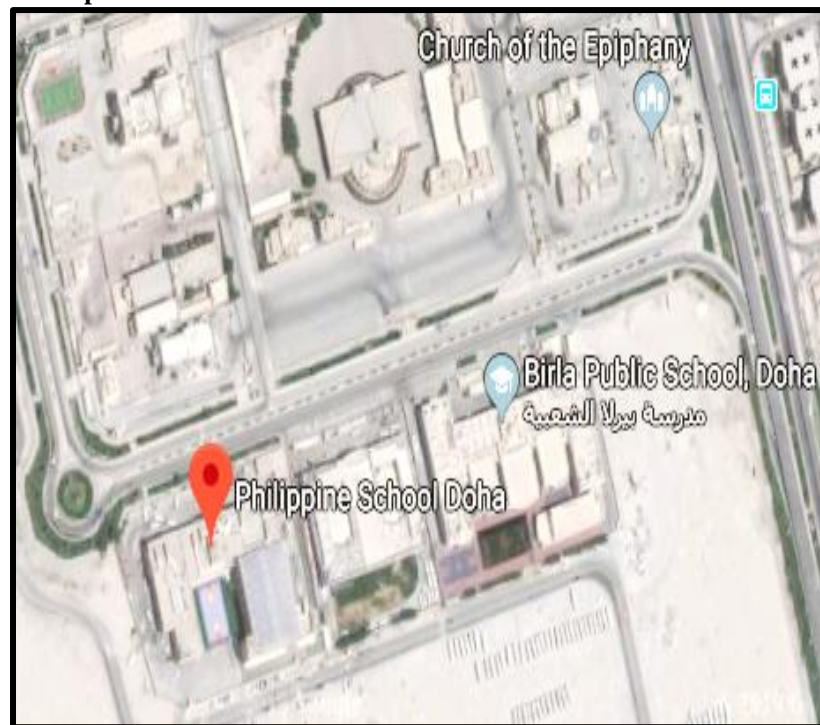


Figure 1:- Map of Qatar (lonelyplanet.com., 2019).



Figure 2:- Location of Philippine School Doha at Al Messiah, Doha, Qatar taken from Google Maps.

This study was conducted at the leading educational institution in Qatar, Philippine School Doha (PSD). With its well-known national and regional achievements, PSD has always been regarded as an outstanding Philippine school in the Middle East, serving the Filipino community with excellence since October 1992. This location was chosen due to the accessibility of the researchers' advisor Dr. Noemi F. Formaran, so that she could assist and guide them throughout the study.

The participants for this study are parents of one child that lives in Qatar. They are also involved with PSD as a teacher or a parent of the school. They compose four females and two males. Both males are working as a teacher in Philippine School Doha. They were selected with the use of the purposive sampling strategy. Purposive sampling strategy identifies and selects individuals or groups of individuals who are familiar with or experienced a phenomenon (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015). The researchers select their participants while considering their psychological and emotional experiences towards their only child. The researchers chose them through careful observation and recommended them by certain connections of the researchers to evaluate.

Data Collection and Ethical Consideration:

A semi-structured interview was conducted to gather the data needed for the study. The instruments used in this data collection were the robotfoto and the guide for a twenty-five semi-structured interview. The robotfoto is used for the demographic sketch of the participants, particularly their educational attainment, and their years of stay in Qatar (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Garcia & Acosta, 2016). The semi-structured interview uses a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, frequently followed by a follow-up of why or how questions (Adams, 2015).

Before the researchers conduct the interview, they used a written consent for the approval of the participants. The participants' responses were recorded using a recording device, which will then be transcribed. The collected responses will be treated with confidentiality to restrict access to certain information about a person (Fossheim, 2015).

Data Analysis:-

The researchers have adopted the inductive method in the creation of themes (Ryan, 2003; Vallesteros, 2018) to analyze the gathered data in this study comprehensively:

Reading and re-reading transcribed data to gain a general sense of the idea or opinion of the participants; (2) identifying small units called the meaning units; (3) Transforming meaning units from the participants' language

(emic) into the researchers' language (etic); (4) Sorting of formulated meanings into themes and categories through a dendrogram (Faulkner and Sparkes as cited by Acosta, 2010); (5) creating a simulacrum for the visual representation of the findings; (6) subjecting emergent themes to triangulation and member checking procedures to ensure validity and data trustworthiness (McWilliam et al., 2009).

Findings:-

This phenomenological study tackles the lived experiences of parents living with only one child in the state of Qatar, specifically parents whose children are currently studying in Philippine School Doha, relative to the central question: "How is the life of being a parent with only one child in the family?" Moreover, this study focused on the specific question: "What are the benefits and struggles of having one child in the family?" Furthermore, families and couples have difficulty deciding to have only one child in the family for various reasons. Having worries and concerns towards your

child is one of the reasons why parents usually doubt having a one-child family. Still, it depends on the commitment and prioritization of the relationship they have with the child (Townsville Bulletin, 2015).

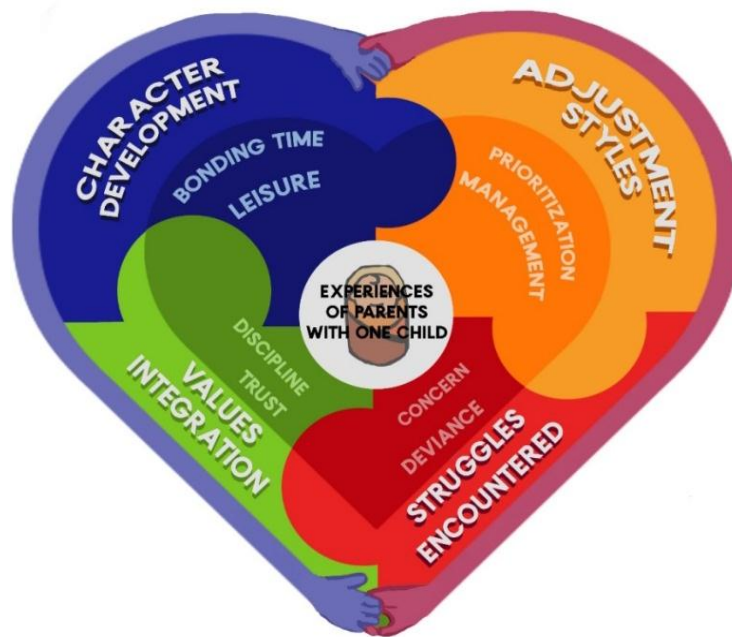


Figure 3:- Simulacrum Experiences of Parents with One Child.

Figure 3 shows the simulacrum that contains four major themes, such as: values integration, struggles encountered, character development, and adjustment styles.

Values integration enumerates the manners conformed to by the parents on how to inculcate positive traits to their only child. Struggles encountered are those unexpected events, problems met, and source of conflicts that arise from having a solo child. Character development refers to the changes or processes that a parent adopted and need for a child to undergo that make his or her personality. Adjustment styles refer to the behavioral processes and terms used by the parents under study to balance conflicting needs, and respond to the daily challenges of parents with one child. These emphasize the different effects these factors have towards parents who only have one child. Moreover, it shows the difficulties as well as the benefits that were found throughout the study.

Values Integration:-

The relationship between a parent and a single child will start on the very first day the baby was born. It grows and nurtures as time passes by. Values will eventually develop and will strengthen the bond between them. Along with the growing up stage of the child, the parent developed a mutual relationship between the child, where they have deep conventional talks to voice out their opinions among their family issues.

Parents are sure to put boundaries between their child's life and their own lives. In doing so, they are able to support their child as well as remind them about their own shortcomings. The findings mainly revolve around the concepts of trust and discipline.

There are parents whose children are trustworthy and reliable. If treated with respect, the child will respond responsibly and act accordingly to their parents' wishes. In relation to this, in having only one child, parents find it easier to keep the child in check and don't have to worry as much because their attention is focused on one child. Two parents addressed:

"I am very frank with my child if I don't like I don't like. In regards to admirers, I can see that she's avoiding them, as I instructed. That's why I don't believe it when people say otherwise because I have trust in my daughter.

"I talk to her every day. I do not know if she is getting tired of my constant reminders. Even though I only have one child, I did not think that she is a brat. She is well behaved, and I trust her. We agreed on no boyfriends to focus on your studies. I talk to her every night, and if I cannot, I would make sure that I would leave her a message so that she may read it when she does." P2

"She hasn't broken our trust to her. She's capable of making her own decisions in which she doesn't need our advice. There are times where she books Uber for me without me telling her. She's a smart and assertive girl, so there are times she forgets that I'm her mother. However, I deal with it by just telling her gently and explaining the situation to her, and we end up laughing it off." P6

Other parents don't quite converse with their child as much as some parents do. This could be the result of an age gap between parents and their child. Therefore, parents usually just ask the necessary information from their child if the time arises. A parent expressed:

"If it is necessary, I ask him about it like his crush or problems." P5

"Yes, because I can talk to him if I need his opinion about problems at the current or at this age." P5

Regardless of whether the parent has one child or not, normally, when the child is still young, the parent can't expect any serious talks from their child.

"No, we don't. Since my son is still young, he's not that into private talks. Sometimes maybe, but that's only because I came back, and that's part of growing up." P4

Some parents favor using both trust and enforcement to aid in their development of personal values. It's enforcement in terms of giving their child the trust they need, as well as reminding them of it. This is to set a boundary for the child. One parent said:

"Yes, it's really important because if you don't spend time with your children, especially with teenagers, they will start to long for love and attention, so we make sure to give it to her while at the same time, give her time with her friends. We trust her promises whenever they have a gathering, but if she breaks our trust, she will have to face the consequences. She has to keep the relationship stable without any secrets." P6

Parent's goal is to mold their child to be a good person in the future; one way to do this is to discipline them. They have this initiative to correct what is wrong and give them advice on how to be a better person as they grow up. They also give corresponding punishment to their child as to what degree of offense they did to teach them a lesson.

There are times wherein the child will mature fairly quickly based on how their parents treat them. It may be an effect of respecting the child as well as putting them in line if the time arises. Proud parents have expressed:

"I'm fortunate to have, even though she is an only child, a well-behaved child. She is very respectful, maybe because of her upbringing. I didn't have problems in terms of disciplining my child."

"I did not have any trouble with my daughter before. Only this year in terms of admirers. I always reminded her no to do it because you still have to accomplish your dreams. I can say that she followed my wishes." P2

“I don’t have any particular hardships with my daughter. She knows how we are with her, and she’s a disciplined child. She always does her chores when she’s supposed to. There’s nothing when it comes to school as well; she’s responsible enough. Everything’s fine.” P6

“With our son, I don’t think we have much trouble. Because while he’s the first child of the family, so I have my parents to raise him. He’s kind.” P5

Some parents initiate different disciplinary actions towards their child. As there are two parents, it is usually the case that the child experiences conflicting disciplining styles; even more so if they are an only child. This allows the parents to give more understanding of their child. A few parents stated:

“Yes, because as a mother, I am a disciplinarian while his father spoils him, so that’s why we get misunderstandings back when my son was still young. But as time pass by, we learn how to meet halfway with regards to disciplining our son.” P1

“If ever there’s a problem, I just give her boundaries and grounds to follow. For example, if I asked her to do something and she hasn’t done it yet, I tell her to turn off her phone, and I explain to her why she has to do her work first. We ingrain it in her mind that we’re strict for a reason. My husband and I balance it out as well; he’s stricter, and I, on the other hand, am a bit more laid back. There are times I remind my husband to lessen it as well because children are different now, of course.” P6

“I implemented the physical punishment before because we got used to it, but since the new generation came, we became open to the psychological effect to the children, and so I found out that it is more beneficial to discipline him through the removal of privileges and rewarding system so as time-outs.” P3

Parents are human after all; it’s a given that there are instances wherein parents might feel remorse in dealing with their child’s shortcomings, although they try disciplining them regardless. Two parents have said:

“It hurts when you already see him cry. You will feel pity, but you have to stand for whatever is your decision; otherwise, he won’t follow you, but I explain to him afterward why I made that particular decision. I make sure to lighten up the mood to not worsen his tantrums because if you won’t, he will not stop crying.” P1

“Sometimes we felt bad for disciplining him, but we cannot remove it even though you are hurting their feelings. I try to interpret to them why we do it so that they will understand because I want to see him a good adult” P3

There are also parents who have a child who is simply easy to talk to and understand, therefore making it easier for them to communicate when it comes to disciplining their child. Some parents have said that all they do is just remind their child whenever deemed fit:

“If I say “no” to my child, then that is final, but I would explain and let him know why I say “no.” I bargain with my child that if he didn’t do these particular things again, I would promise him to buy what he wants. This is what I usually do when my child was still young.” P1

“If I see something wrong then I tell him and give him some simple reminders, I don’t know if it helps. For me, I try to recall his flaws for the last ten months. When I get home to the Philippines, I discuss it with him about it and tell him what he should and shouldn’t do. However, I do not impose that much on him. Because I know how kids now days are rebellious when they are being opposed, they tend to ignore you. What I do is just remind him from time to time.” P4

Although it is a big responsibility to raise a child, parents have proved themselves to be more than capable of dealing with their children and raising them to be good people. As values are the foundation for a child to grow up into a good-willed, working member of society, it’s imperative that the parents emphasize the importance in this aspect.

Struggles Encountered:

Indeed, even having a single child as compared to multiple ones is not an easy feat. A parent has to deal with the fear of deviance and rebellions, or the constant worrying and asking of what's happening to your child. Parents are sometimes anxious about how external factors (like being physically far away from them) can influence their child.

Unpredictable as the factors are, parents do try their utmost best in order to aid in the development of their children. However, parents would inevitably encounter problems with regard to dealing with their children.

Not all parents have the benefit of being able to live with their child. This is especially difficult for parents who have only one child, as they are unable to monitor their child appropriately. A few parents expressed:

“Regardless of the number of kids you have, problems will still naturally appear. But of course, when you only have one child, the struggle won't be that difficult. When you have financial problems, it will not be that difficult since you have fewer responsibilities. In my case, however, I'm starting to be scared, especially since she's turning 18, I'm starting to get paranoid. What if she engages in a relationship? What if she does not finish her studies? Those are my struggles.” P2

“Yes. I have a hard time imposing things on him because I am far from him. Because even if I do impose rules on him, I can't tell if he is following them or not since I'm far from him. In regards to discipline, I cannot do it as well since I cannot see what he's doing. I also can't advise him on who he befriends because I do not know. I only see his friends on social media. I'm having a hard time imposing some discipline on him.” P4

Some parents have qualms about dealing with their child. As the child is sensitive, some parents might let themselves be controlled by their child. This allows the parents to be distressed as if doing whatever they can to their child wouldn't be able to help. Two parents attested:

“I don't want these hardships affecting our relationship because I cannot afford it. Since I'm far from him, if my son is mad at me, then he might not want to talk to me. He might ignore my calls and messages, and I don't want that.” 5.2 P4

“... I know how kids nowadays are rebellious when they are being opposed, they tend to ignore you. What I do is just remind him from time to time.” 5.1 P4

Other parents might just simply worry about the child's safety, as is every parent's concern. One parent expressed her concern about what her child might encounter outside. Otherwise, it's not that much of a concern for this parent:

“Well, his father is more protective, but there are worries about our child now and then. But we don't worry that much. As much as possible, we should know where he is going, what he would do, what time he is going home, but we are not really that paranoid since there is only one child to think about. But I understand the worry of other parents since they only have one child, but the worry might be within themselves when they grow older. That's my only worry when he grows older, and he is alone with no other siblings.” P5

Regardless of whether parents have one child or not, problems will be bound to enter their lives, whether they want to or not. It is the parents' responsibility to be able to shape their child, despite any tribulations that may follow.

Character Development:

Raising a child is, in truth, not an easy task. One must dedicate his time to not only communicate with his children but also to form a deep relationship with them and mold them to become better people. Parents are often away from their child; it is either the child is in school or the parent is away working at their jobs for supporting the child's needs. As the parents shared their thoughts:

“Even though I know he's a teenager since he's turning 13 this year. Still, I make it a point to converse with him daily. I can also help him in his assignment since he's grade 7 now. “P4

“I always fetched her from school when I was still in the Philippines, and we have nightly talks about life. Even working here far from my family with the help of technology, we were able to continue our talks. However, I did not

force her to tell me all of her problems because my wife is there. However, I miss monitoring my child from time to time.” P2

“It’s because of us only having one child that we have more time for her since she’s the center of the family, and she gives us joy. Both of us, husband and wife, are the ones managing the time, but I usually manage more since my working time is the same as hers (daughter). I manage my time with her thorough communication, scheduling, planning events between us. My family is still happy even though she’s an only child.” P6

Bonding time with a child is the single most crucial aspect of a child’s development, as it leads to the improvement of their inner selves. They will be able to see that they can rely on their parents for future problems and seek advice.

Consequently, due to the struggles encountered by parents in parenting their only child, the time spent away is instead devoted to their job. Due to this, the parent/s have trouble reaching out to their child, therefore possibly weakening the bond between parent and child.

“It does affect, now that I am far from him. The bonding is different when you’re with him the whole time and when you’re not. Now that I am far from him, we only talk through phones, and we don’t have time to go out together, not unless I am on vacation.” P1

“When I was still in the Philippines, we go out once every two or three weeks and every holiday. Now since I am here, I can only go with them when I come home.” P2

Having one child certainly has benefits that exceeds just the financial aspects that come with it, also while taking into account the emotional and mental health of the child. Additionally, it can also benefit the parents in terms of the parents’ own time to be able to check on themselves more often. Parents don’t just have their child to deal with, so it is essential that they also give time for themselves. One parent expressed:

“Less stress because if you only have one child, you can have the time to check for yourself, unlike if you have children, you prioritize more your child rather than yourself.” P1

Developing a child’s character is a challenging task because of the various factors that come into play with the process of their growth.

It brings concern to those parents who live with their only child. With a single child, parents should be able to spend more time with their child. However, as not everyone is fortunate enough, there are still parents who have only one child that lives away from them. This may lead to hampering the child’s development early on.

On the other hand, since there are no perfect families, everyone in the family can change and adapt to their given situations in an attempt to further their growth.

Adjustment Styles:

Not everyone is born with a natural adept to the roles they are suddenly given to fill in life. As such, parents, no matter how much they prepared for it, are no exemption. Even their ways don’t correspond to their child’s needs. Therefore, they need to undergo the grueling task of trial and error just to find that pleasant sweet spot on how to parent their child. It’s hard for new parents to manage their time and priorities, seeing that they can no longer do what they used too when they didn’t have children yet. The same thing can be said about veteran parents. They also often find difficulty in time management and priorities.

The common misconception that parents with only one child have more time for the child seeing as they don’t have to juggle between kids. This concept has been tested and proven that it is not always the case. These findings mainly revolve around management and priority.

Management is a critical skill in being able to balance time between different priorities. Parents are trained to practice this skill as much as possible in order to spend their time more wisely. In between jobs, their child, and themselves, they have to learn how to balance their time and efforts. Other parents stated that:

“It is really important when I had my son. I used to work as a Supervisor in a supermarket back in the Philippines. My work started at eight o’clock in the morning, and I need to prepare everything before I leave home. The nanny is the one who takes care of my child, she is well-instructed for giving the milk and the preparation of my child’s things for the whole day, and I make sure that he takes a bath before he goes to school.” P1

“In the context of education, you will spend less on schooling. Since I only have one child, I want to choose the best school for her regardless of the price. Therefore, in my case, I did not consider the number of children to affect my financial problem.” P2

On the other hand, having one child doesn’t always make things easier. There are parents who have trouble with dealing with their priorities; as heavy as they are. Two parents have stated that it doesn’t take much effort to spend time with family or to face problems ahead for their family; as it is already a given to learn how to balance priorities:

“Having one child or none at all is not a factor in how one should handle or balance their problems. Because handling more than one child is part of your routine. You can’t say it bothers you facing your problems, because I don’t consider it as a factor in balancing your problems.” P4

“Yes. You don’t have to struggle physically to spend time to your family, child, and other relatives and to other activities. Another is the financial resources. Compared to parents with children you don’t need a lot of financial resources. Emotionally, it gives you peace of mind because less effort is needed compared to raising a child.” P3

Taking care of the child should always be the top priority before anything else. In the aforementioned themes, there is a significant effect when parents put more effort into taking care of their families, no matter how big or small.

Parents are used to skillfully juggling between work and family together without lacking in either one. Three parents have stated:

“Whatever is my problem, I leave it at home. I don’t bring my problem in my workplace because I need to consider that my job is also to take care of a child, so I had to be stress-free.” P1

“Regardless of the number of kids you have. Stress in the workplace is the same. I think what you meant was, when you are exhausted in the work pace and you come home to a handful of hard-headed kids. So that would add to your stress compared to having only one child.” P3

“No, when I’m at work already, I manage my obligations within the house before leaving. I play ahead of time in my head, so I settle matters first. But when I arrive at the house, I forget about work. Sure, I might have brought work with me now but I still prioritize my family. Work can be removed but family can’t, it’s always there. Family is important.” P6”

Health is the most important thing at the end of the day. Parents will have their days wherein they won’t be able to attend to their child no matter how they try. However, having only one child appears to give these parents a slight advantage health-wise. A parent attested:

“I check my health everyday not because I only have one child, but because it’s my responsibility to take care of myself. If you really love your child, you would take mind of your health because you need to sustain yourself in order to do your responsibilities to your family.” P2

Despite the disadvantages and advantages of having only one child, at the end of the day you do only have one child to pay attention to. Be it with work and health, it is much easier to deal with the child; as stated by a parent:

“There’s a disadvantage and advantage if there is only one child; of course, you only have one to think about. But then your priority will be towards the child just like every other parent with one or more children. Your priority will be towards your child rather than your work. But the advantage is that if you only have one child, you only have one to think about rather than more children, thus fewer worries towards your child while working.” P5

Parents are human before anything else. They will get frustrated at times, they will get hurt and lash out, and they will have their shortcomings that may affect their child. No matter what obstacle will come in their way, parents will always try again and again for their child.

Those who have only one child seem to have a lighter load in comparison to other families who have more children. Financially speaking, it is much lighter and less stressful. However, at the end of the day attitude-wise, it is all a matter as to how the parents deal with themselves and their child.

Discussions:-

Parents with only one child are not born out of unfavorable circumstances. Some do it out of family planning, while some do it out of pure preferences. Studies show that only 13 percent of the first generation of one-child families - 1980s generation- show any intent to have a second child (Shanghai Daily Publishing House, 2017). Reasons for this vary, such as if the mother has the stamina to cope with a second child, the family's social and economic conditions, and whether someone will help take care of the infantile before he/she is old enough to go to kindergarten. (Xinhua News Agency, 2017). Another factor to consider is financial state many couples felt they "don't have the courage or willingness" to have a second child due to the high costs of giving birth and raising their firstborn, Chen Xiaoxia, a director at the All-China Women's Federation, was quoted by the China Youth Daily as saying on Thursday. (South China Morning Post Publishers Limited, 2016).

Values Integration:

The teaching and learning activities done between the parent and their only child has been a tunnel to transmit the values, parents as the source, which are necessary for the child's growth. Whereas parents' participation is crucial to the development of the child, and they are their first teacher (Keith, 1986; Chaudhry, A.Q. et al. 2015). Values are essential to the lives of individuals and groups (Roest et al. 2006; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1994; Prioste, A., Narciso, I., Gonçalves, M., M., & Pereira, C. 2016). Parents implicitly influence children by serving as role models or conveying values about what is necessary (Dunn et al., 2003; Parke et al., 2003; Persson, Kerr, & Stattin, 2007; Kang H. et al. 2017). These values reflect the child's upbringing and the parent's continuous support to their one and only child.

Parenting is a major influence on the production of socially appropriate and capable behavior by children. Nonetheless, several studies have reported connections between parenting factors, including behaviors (i.e., supportiveness, hostility; Domitrovich & Bierman, 2001) and emotional style and expressivity (i.e., positive and negative affect; Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998), and later on social (Danzig et al. 2015). A common assumption is that the nature of parent-child relationships forms the child's context for appropriate attitudes and values (Biglan et al. 2012; Patterson et al. 1989; Woodward et al. 2018).

Moreover, parental trust refers to parents' and child's mutual understanding and respect (Armsden and Greenberg 1987; Sugimura, K. et al. 2018). Previous studies have shown that parental trust has made a positive contribution to the formation of adolescent identity (e.g., Crocetti et al. 2010; Sugimura, K. et al. 2018). The trust of the child in their parents has been positively related to parental interaction (Ling et al. 2015). Studies have consistently shown that parental confidence is a necessary condition for the development of mature identity (Årseth et al. 2009; Sugimura, K. et al. 2018). Parental attitudes, beliefs, and values play a crucial role in influencing disciplinary behavior, and these attitudes and beliefs are affected by many factors (Siriwardhana, D., & Weerasinghe, M. 2015). Showing socially appropriate responses is a vital component of the early success and improvement of a child (Danzig et al. 2015).

Furthermore, parental training performance also predicts the severity and persistence of outsourcing problems for children. Harsh and aggressive parents have children whose externalization issues have risen in severity over time (Kim et al. 2003; Rhoades et al. 2017). Parents who minimize their use of extreme, inconsistent discipline have children whose externalization issues are deteriorating over time (August et al. 1999; Rhoades et al. 2017). Parenting has strong instrumental connotations and is widely believed to contribute to the path and outcome of child development and adjustment by controlling most child-environmental experiences and helping to shape the adaptation of children (Bornstein et al. 2018). Parental involvement and stability are correlated with positive outcomes in children, such as improved self-esteem and emotional well-being, while adverse consequences such as depression, anxiety, and violence are associated with parental rejection, permissiveness, and rigidity (McKinney et al. 2016; Nunes and Mota 2017).

Mainly, Disciplining is one of the significant parenting components. The formal definition of disciplining refers to the system of teaching and nurturing that prepares children to gain skills, self-control, self-direction, and care for others. The word discipline also relates to the strategies that are used to eliminate or reduce unwanted behaviors (Siriwardhana, D., & Weerasinghe, M. 2015). In addition to this, discipline is essential for the proper development of the child and requires a continuous process of teaching a child the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. The purpose of discipline is to turn a child's impulsive or instinctive behavior into a controlled and meaningful practice (Smith et al. 2005; Petrovic, M., Vasic, V., Petrovic, O., & Santric-milicevic, M. 2016). The use of cognitive-behavioral parenting strategies is, therefore advocated, to discipline children (Porzig-Drummond, R.,2015).

Parents choose their methods for discipline (McKinney et al. 2018). The use of effective parental discipline techniques can be conceptualized as a result of two broad factors: (1) knowledge of effective discipline (those discipline behaviors empirically supported as beneficial to the well-being of children) and (2) ability to implement (the ability of parents to use those skills in real-world settings) (Rhoades et al. 2017). It is significant that children also influence the behaviors of parenting (through evocative rGE, see below and Deater-Deckard and O'Connor 2000; Klahr and Burt 2014; Neiderhiser et al. 2004; Woodward et al. 2018). Studies have found that particular features of children such as language and cognitive abilities, personality, and behavioral disorders are associated with parenting activities (Fulgini et al. 2004; Kendler et al. 1997; Verhoeven et al. 2007; Woodward et al. 2018). Discipline methods based on interaction and nonviolent conflict resolution are associated with increased moral development and prosocial behavior, whereas discipline practices marked by excessive force and command are related to emotional and behavioral issues (Flouri and Midouhas 2017; Pinquart 2017).

The concept of positive parenting incorporates core elements of different parenting conceptualizations and behaviors such as comfort, approval, commitment, and responsiveness (Baumrind, 1971; Schofield, T. J., et al., 2014). As stated by Phillips, B. A., Connors, F., & Curtner-Smith, M. (2017), good parenting is vital for a child's development. Parent values of conservation (e.g., conformity) were positively associated with increased parent-adolescent interaction and contact was significantly associated with increased monitoring information for both genders (Cottrell et al. 2007; Devi, A.N. et al. 2017). Manhas and Roshan (2015) reported high confidence and contact with mothers and fathers among adolescents. Parents high on these parenting dimensions display above-average levels of affectionate intimacy, approval, engagement, and love for their children (Rohner, 1986; Schofield, T. J., et al., 2014). It is a tremendous and challenging responsibility of parenthood to raise children to be satisfied and successful people because children learn from watching others and not just from listening to adults (Krug et al. 2002; Smith et al. 2005; Petrovic, M. et al. 2016). Also, emotional support creates a trustful and meaningful relationship between parent and child (Steinberg and Silk 2002; Damsgaard et al. 2014), which is reflected in the relationships between children and others (Smith et al. 2005; Petrovic, M., et al. 2016).

This study addressed the gap by exploring how negative (conflicting) and positive (enriching) parents experience work and family roles related to the internalization and outsourcing of children's problem behaviors through their association with parent-child relationship quality (Vieira, J. M., et al. 2016). According to the study of Prioste, A., Narciso, I., Gonçalves, M.,M., & Pereira, C. (2016), considering the associations between values and parenting (Grusec 2002), and between parenting behaviors and child's adjustment (Campbell and Gilmore 2007), positive parenting seems to be a key variable for promotional, preventive and therapeutic interventions with families. Positive and consistent parenting activities are correlated with positive mental health outcomes and can improve the effect of deprivation and insecurity on child development in very complex contexts (Britto et al., 2017; Knerr et al., 2013; Giusto et al., 2017). Thus, taking into account the associations between values and parenting (Grusec 2002) and between parenting behaviors and child adjustment (Campbell and Gilmore 2007), positive parenting seems to be a key variable for family promotional, preventive, and therapeutic interventions. On the other hand, values affect relationships and developmental tasks over the life span and over the generations (Prioste, A., et al. 2016).

Struggles Encountered:

Worry and deviance are not only the struggles parents with one child would deal with. Lee (2017) states that "children are vulnerable members of society" but mentions that their rights as a member of society only come as an afterthought. Parents may have to find ways on how to deal with their child, especially since they do not have a sibling to talk to.

Compared to non-only children, only children tend to avoid difficulties and problems. They also have low confidence and mental stress, a high depression trend, little happiness, and a sense of security (Fan, 2016). According to Fang (2018), growing up with siblings is the fundamental difference between only children and sibling children, which has long been thought to be the factor that affects only children's behaviors and their interactions with parents.

Additionally, there are two types of discipline; these are extinction and punishment. Extinction includes time-out and privilege removal. Punishment is two types; verbal reprimands and physical pain inflicted (Siriwardhana & Weerasinghe, 2015).

However, it is conceivable that adolescents who are constantly exposed to punitive parenting at home may learn that aggressive behavior towards their peers is a suitable response to conflicts with their peers (Hong, 2017). In cases where authoritarian parenting behavior manifests itself in an excessive number of rules and potential rule enforcement, delinquent behavior may exist or increase (Baumrind, 2005).

Several theories may explain the developmental link between corporal punishment and the development of physical aggression. First, social cognitive theories of aggression suggest that children or adolescents may imitate parents' use of aggression (i.e., corporal punishment) to solve problems (Anderson and Huesmann, 2003).

Consequently, an increasing number of Australian government and professional organizations are advocating the use of cognitive-behavioral parenting strategies, as opposed to physical punishment, to discipline children (Porzig-Drummond, 2015).

Lastly, in one direction, adolescents respond to corporal punishment by affiliating with deviant peers, and subsequently show increased physical aggression; in the other direction, aggression urges adolescents to join deviant peer groups, in turn leading parents to decrease their corporal punishment (Zhu et al., 2017)

As Siriwardhana (2015) stated further, parental attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions play a crucial role in influencing disciplinary practices, and these attitudes and beliefs are affected by many factors.

In addition, the way parents balance work and family is linked to their parent-child relationships, which in turn is linked differently to the behaviors of their children (Vieira et al., 2016).

Parental observation is one way that family rules are established (Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Church et al., 2015). Nevertheless, as teenagers grow older, family management practices such as parental supervision decline as parents place fewer constraints on the actions of adolescents and are exposed to external influences (Wang, Dishion, Stormshak, & Willett, 2011; Church et al., 2015).

Curfews can affect teenage habits, including the reduction of delinquent behaviors. By observing and monitoring young children, parents are in a position to set limits and may prevent or restrict the use of substances. (Barnes et al., 2006; Steinberg, Fletcher, & Darling, 1994). Evidence has shown that males with limited family rules, curfew requirements, and parental supervision are at the highest risk of delinquency. No definite association between parental control and misconduct has been observed over time for females (Church et al., 2015).

Finally, permissive parents tend to track children less than restrictive parents, resulting in teenagers who are more likely to engage in risky behaviors. (Borawski et al., 2003) Therefore, when parents are aware of their child's activities, young people are less likely to experience problematic behaviors (Church et al., 2015).

Character Development:

Character development is core in constructing a moral society and also shaping an individual (Lickona, 1996; Park, 2009; Maass 2018). Character is usually defined as the respect an individual has for the rules of the community and cultural surroundings (Lerner, 2007; Lerner et al., 2006; Phelps et al., 2009; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Snyder & Flay, 2012; Maass 2018). Character education has diverse aspects that are said to make it most effective for children. The parental involvement is one of the most crucial components to the development of the children's character (Berkowitz, 2011; Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Brannon, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2009; Lickona, 1996;

Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2007; Ponzetti, 2005; Franciamore 2014) as well as the educators, administrations, and guardians (Risberg, Curtis, & Shivers, 2014; Forness 2017).

Parents support their children in different ways for the skills that they are enhancing through guidance and feedback (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Maass 2018). Parents who usually explain their parental ways with their child are more likely to have an empathetic child (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Maass 2018). Primarily, parents and families act as moral centers for children, due to their home settings, it is there where children first socialize, and it becomes their first social learning center (Ponzetti 2005; Franciamore 2014).

It is within their family belief's that values are passed on to children (Barni, Ranieri, Scabini, & Rosnati; 2011 Franciamore 2014) which is affected by the quality of parent-child relationship for it determines whether or not the child will accept the values being taught to them (Barni et al., 2011; Franciamore 2014)

The adolescent is known to be the most laborious and most confusing stage in life for the children as well as their parents (Bee 1998; Tabak & Zawadska 2017).

“Social factors (mostly family factors) influence the processes of biological development and are the beginnings of socially determined pathways to health in adult life” (Wadsworth, 1997; Tabak & Zawadska 2017). Family interactions that allow adolescents to express their thoughts, feelings while having a close relationship with their parents generates higher self-esteem, better psychological competence, less depression, enormous ego, and identity development (Smemanta et al. 2006; Tabak & Zawadska 2017). Other characteristics are positive care, and satisfaction in life, vigor, mastery, and social cheerfulness are both indirect and direct and are mediated by self - esteem (Fadda, Scalas, & Meleddu, 2015).

Positive parenting, due to its nature of being warm and supportive, can be associated with academic achievement, psychosocial development, emotional stability, and the development of the child into a capable adult (Madden et al., 2015). A crucial element of PP is transferring constructive emotions as well as verbal and non-verbal announcements that confirm to the child that he/she is qualified and valuable (Dallaire et al., 2006; Tabak & Zawadska 2017). The quality of the existing relationship between parent and child serves as a guide that can be applied to their relationship with the people in the future. Working as partners, children and their caregivers must achieve the fundamental objectives that will serve as the basis for their future mental and physical development (Sweet & Appelbaum, 2004; Shafie, 2017). Culture encompasses both the behavioral and the values aspect of a culture, and it consists of the beliefs and values that impact practices, norms, customs, psychological endeavors, educational institutions, and organizations (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, and Nisbett 1998; Shafie, 2017). A strong and healthy attachment to a primary caregiver seems to be correlated with a high likelihood of a healthy relationship with others. In contrast, a weak attachment to a mother or primary caregiver appears to be related to a host of emotional and behavioral dilemmas later in life (Sroufe and Jacobvitz 1989; Shafie, 2017). Any differences between the caregiver and the child that disrupt or interrupt the relationship may have unfortunate consequences (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005, 2014; Shafie 2017).

There has been a wealth of research indicating that parental involvement facilitates children's motivation and achievement (e.g., Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Hango, 2007; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Izzo, Weissberg, Kaspro, & Fendrich, 1999; Keith et al., 1998; Wu 2014). Some researchers have stated that the Chinese parental value of academic success, parental education aspiration and expectation, and parental belief in their child's learning in the ability of the child's learning may also contribute to their involvement. (e.g., Chao 1994; Chao & Tseng, 2000; Pomerantz, Ng & Wang, 2008; Wu, 2014).

Parental involvement (or lack of participation) and its effect on student achievement continued to draw federal, state, and local school policymakers and public stakeholders' attention for decades before the 21st century (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Gilbert 2017).

The impact of digital information technology is enormous on different facets of modern-day life. It has also affected early childhood education, be it from an academic perspective or a character education perspective. (Tu, Chou, and Lee, 2013). Viewing (or playing) violent content increases the likelihood of developing violent behavior, especially when combined with other risk factors, including pre-existing aggressiveness or violence in the home (Common Sense Media, 2013; Robidoux, Elington, & Laurer 2019).

Adjustment styles:

Parents did not develop the wisdom and skills that come with raising a child in a single setting. It is an art that was honed and tested throughout the years. However, this art was never perfected. Unfinished though it maybe it still plays a vital part in the development of your child.

The common misconception that parents with only one child have more time for the child seeing as they don't have to juggle between kids. This concept has been tested and proven that it is not always the case. For adolescents, more engaged maternal time was related to fewer delinquent behaviors, and involved time with parents together was related to better outcomes (Milkie, et. Al., 2015). Overall, the amount of mothers' time mattered in nuanced ways, and, unexpectedly, only in adolescence (Milkie, et. Al., 2015). The shift to more time-intensive and child-centered parenting in the United States is widely assumed to be positively linked to healthy child development. Still, implications for adult wellbeing are less clear (Musick, et. Al., 2016). Women spent extra time than men in parent-child activities for all work categories, and they were more conscious of the spouse's work hours. While men were substantially more active than women in non-family leisure, considering both individuals' and their spouses' work schedules (Gracia and Kalmiin, 2015). The number of time mothers spends with their children is associated with less delinquency reported by their adolescents (Fogel, 2016). Also, the number of times mothers and fathers spent together with their children is related to several adolescent outcomes: fewer externalizing problems, higher math scores, less substance use, and less delinquent behavior (Fogel, 2016).

Parental adjustment styles can be or are being formulated based on the child's personality and his/her overall development. Parents develop ways for the betterment of the child, with the consideration of the child's psychological needs. For decades, parenting has been characterized in terms of broad global styles, with authoritative parenting seen as most beneficial for children's development (Smetana, 2017). Authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles prompt the adoption of life goals and psychological wellbeing of adolescents with fathers' negative parenting, possibly reducing adolescent wellbeing (Roman, et. Al., 2015). secure attachment of parents to the child provides a template for successful romantic relationship development and thereby contributes to more significant psychosocial adjustment of the child (Kumar and Mattanah, 2016). Parental warmth, behavioral control, harsh control, psychological control, autonomy granting, authoritative, and permissive parenting predicted change in externalizing problems over time. With associations of exteriorize issues with warmth, behavioral monitoring, harsh control, psychological control, and authoritative parenting being bidirectional (Pinquart, 2017). Parents across the globe could be recommended to behave authoritatively, although authoritarian and permissive parenting is, to some extent, tolerable in a few cultural contexts (Pinquart and Kausar, 2018). Parents reported on their general psychological flexibility, parenting-specific mental flexibility, parenting practices, and their child's or adolescent's internalizing and externalizing problems. Findings were consistent across child age groups and demonstrated that higher levels of parenting-specific psychological flexibility were indirectly related to lower levels of youth internalizing and externalizing problems through adaptive parenting practices (Brassell, et. Al., 2016). Children's and adolescents' decision making, however, often is thought to be associated with parenting (Davids, et. Al., 2015). Family dynamics add to the development of the essential components of adult creative producers along with the ability to allocate significant time in self-imposed, talent developing process and study; a preference for heterodoxy and independent thinking; enduring skills for stress, anxiety, and intellectual intricacy; and a penchant to express and resolve emotional problems through creative work in a chosen domain (Olszewski-Kibilius, 2018). Family relationships had direct effects on child-to-parent violence, and power-assertive discipline showed a mediating force in that association. It seems that affectivity and quality of family relationships are the most important aspects of preventing violent behaviors (Ibabe and Bentler, 2016). Intervention programs must involve parents to make them cognizant about the important role they play and to improve their parenting styles, as the adolescent stage of a child is very crucial and critical, due to their often sensitive and rebellious attitudes towards society (Gomez-Ortiz, et. Al., 2016).

Parents are often the first people who teach their children to know the fundamental aspects of life around them and how to interact with it, with the consideration of parental adjustment and academic competence. Children spend a lot of time with their parents, who are the first agents that educate them (Checa, 2017). The parenting style implemented in the family influences other contexts outside the home, such as the school (Gutierrez, 2017). Associations of academic achievement with general parenting dimensions tend to be smaller than associations of school-specific parental engagement, which have been addressed in previous meta-analyses (Pinquart, 2016). Mothers' authoritarian parenting, mothers' permissive parenting, and relationship quality with father were

differentially related to academic engagement depending on emerging adults' gender (Waterman and Lefkowitz, 2017).

At times, parental adjustment styles are centered upon cultural backgrounds or the demographics of the parents, with the thought of "this culture is best for the child." Challenges faced by African immigrants in parenting their children in destination countries include lack of informal/community support, access to services and lack of formal support, cultural conflict in parenting, fear related to social services, and language barriers (Salami, et. Al., 2017). the link between particular parenting behavior and youth adjustment was magnified in cultural contexts in which the parenting behavior was more normative (Lansford, et. Al., 2018).

A study was conducted by Piquart and Kauser (2018), testing whether associations of parenting styles with internalizing problems, externalizing problems, and academic achievement vary between ethnic groups in western countries, between different regions of the globe, and by the level of collectivism/individualism of individual countries. More ethnic and regional similarities than differences were identified. In western countries, associations of authoritative parenting with academic achievement were stronger in non-Hispanic, White families than in Asian minorities. In these countries, associations of authoritarian parenting with academic achievement were less negative in Hispanic families than in non-Hispanic, White families. Authoritative parenting was correlated with at least one positive child outcome, and authoritarian parenting was associated with adequately one negative outcome in all regions of the globe, with some regional variation. Finally, associations of authoritarian parenting with child outcomes were weaker in countries with a higher individualism score, as were associations of authoritative parenting with academic performance.

Conclusion:-

Parenting is a significant influence on children's development of socially appropriate and responsible behavior. Nonetheless, several studies have recorded the correlation between parenting variables, including attitude and emotional style and expressiveness, and later child social development and outcomes (Danzig, et al. 2015). The way parents communicate with their children can yield both positive and negative outcomes (Masud, et al. 2019). However, different parenting styles and behaviors (including warmth and reasoning) are thought to be connected to the development of child empathy (Wagers, et al. 2019).

Certainly, parent's socialization to a child is involved. This requires both disciplining and monitoring from childhood to adulthood to encourage and prevent certain behaviors in the child. In the field of child development, discipline applies to strategies for shaping character and promoting self-control and appropriate action (Papalia et al. 2006, Ibabe, I., & Bentler, P. M. 2016). Whereas, parent-child conflict is characterized by unpleasant experiences where the parent and child have adverse effects and attitudes towards each other (Weaver et al., 2014). More precisely, conflict arises when a parent and a child show resistance and opposition (Huang, Teti, Caughy, Feldstein, & Genevro, 2007 & Garcia, et al. 2017). For instance, there is significant empirical evidence of the effect of adverse parental parenting behaviors (physical punishment, punitive methods and contradictory approaches to discipline) on antisocial behavior (e.g., Gershoff 2002; Patterson 1982) and the violent behavior of children against their parents (Brezina 1999; Straus and Stewart 1999; Ulman and Straus 2003, Ibabe & Bantler 2019). Workplace constraints can have a differential impact on the ability of mothers and fathers to choose how they allocate time for childcare and work (Argyrous, Craig, & Rahman 2017).

Nonetheless, the shift to more time-intensive and child-centered parenting is widely assumed to be positively linked to healthy child development (Musick, et. Al., 2016). Moreover, the quality time spent in bonding with your child can go a long way towards laying the foundation for a loving relationship. With the love and attention that the child receives, not only will he or she blossom, he or she will help build a relationship of trust that will allow the child to trust you. Amid all the fun and games, this bonding time will also give you a lot of coaching moments where you will be able to teach your child essential lessons (Singh 2019).

Parents' job is to provide an introduction to the world that eventually prepares the child for complete independence and the ability to follow whatever path they choose (Psychology Today, 2019). Such child independency is acquired through the parent's approach; ensuring a quality time, family management and prioritization, and administering discipline and trust. Thus, the child's cognitive abilities and love are independent measures of successful parenting (Woodward, et al. 2018). However, "behavior problems" have a significant impact on the child's physical and social

development. It's a massive source of frustration for parents. The parent-child relationship is compromised and causes family conflict and disharmony (Jogdand & Naik 2014).

Even though all the effort to be a parent, it is understood that certain qualities and characteristics can be formed by these experiences. As based on the simulacrum of the study, the interconnectivity and unity of the different situations that a parent would experience are (1) values integration, (2) struggles encountered, (3) character development, (4) adjustment styles. These are all of the benefits and struggles that a parent with an only child would encounter.

Since parenting one child is a fresh topic, there is limited research, and some of which are outdated. Related studies conducted by future researchers can dive more into the struggles of parents. They could expand on searching their underlying causes to limit them to having only one child, their strategies to cope, and environmental factors that would count as struggles.

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