

**WAR-RELATED TRAUMA AND PARENTING: INVESTINGATING THE IMPACT
OF WAR TRAUMA ON PARENTING STYLES OF AFGHAN IMMIGRANTS**

Dissertation presented to the Faculty of the
California School of Professional Psychology
Alliant International University

Sacramento

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Psychology

By

Masoud Ghafoer, M.A.

2018

This is a brief summary of the doctoral dissertation of Masoud Ghafoer. Only the chapter 2 and some other important aspects of the dissertation have been used in this summary.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between an individual's experience of war-related trauma and parenting style. More specifically, the study investigated whether parents' previous experience of war-related trauma predicted the parenting style of Afghan immigrants in the United States. A total of 85 first generation Afghan immigrants were recruited for this study. The results suggest that after controlling for the confounding variables (gender, education level, SES, and acculturation) there is a statistically significant relationship between parents' levels of war-related trauma and their parenting styles; higher levels of parents' war-related trauma are related to higher scores on the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. In contrast, lower levels of war-related trauma were found to be related to higher scores on the authoritative parenting style. Particularly, the results in regards to higher levels of trauma and authoritarian parenting styles are consistent with the findings in the literature. In addition, gender, education, and acculturation were found to be significant contributors to scores of different parenting styles.

In this chapter, a general overview of previous research studies is provided, as well as discussing the challenges and adversities faced by Afghan immigrant parents and their children. The reason for this general and broad overview is twofold: (a) To identify factors that have been found to be influential on Afghan immigrants, and (b) to demonstrate there is still a lack of specific research on war-related trauma experienced by Afghan immigrant parents and the relationship of such trauma to their parenting practices. After this initial overview, more specific factors will be discussed that have been found to have a direct influence upon the parenting practices of immigrants, such as the educational level of parents, socio-economics, immigration experiences, and acculturation levels.

Prevalence of Psychological Issues among Immigrants

Bronstein, Montgomery, and Dobrowolski (2012). et al. (2012) investigated the prevalence of PTSD in asylum seeking male adolescents from Afghanistan. Gernaat, Malwand, Laban, and Komproe, (2002) focused on the various psychiatric disorders among Afghan refugees (and other nationalities), especially depressive disorder and post traumatic disorder. They reported a high prevalence of these disorders (overall 42% prevalence of depression, anxiety and PTSD among those who had immigrated approximately six months prior to the study). The researchers also noted an even higher rate (66.2%) among those who had been resettled for two years after their immigration.

Gerritsen et al. (2006) investigated various physical and mental health issues experienced by immigrants after their resettlement in the Netherlands. The sample consisted of 410 asylum seekers and refugees, with Afghans forming over 50% of the study population, while Iranians and Somalians comprised approximately 30% and 20%, respectively. The researchers reported that participants from Afghanistan in particular had a higher risk of PTSD and

depression/anxiety symptoms. Many female participants displayed chronic conditions of PTSD and depression/anxiety, while a higher age of the participants was found to be correlated with poor general health. It was also found that a greater number of traumatic events correlated with negative health outcomes (Gerritsen et al., 2006). In this study, it was also found that participants' psychological issues ranged from a milder form of anxiety and cognitive confusion to actual cognitive disorientation and excessive paranoid syndromes.

The community of Afghans in California experiences significant cultural change and adjustment, which causes them a great deal of acculturative stress (Lipson & Omidian, 1997; Rahmany, 1992). Among the relocated Afghans, there are families that range from being very traditional to being more acculturated and modern. In California, most Afghan communities are found in the Bay Area, where Afghan refugees first resettled in the early 1980s. This population copes with many stressors that negatively affect their physical health and psychological well-being. Lipson and Omidian (1997) studied Afghan refugees and immigrants and identified four types of problems: (a) economic and occupational problems, (b) health-care access, (c) family and children's issues, and (d) immigration issues/ethnic bias. Examples of family issues included difficulties regarding learning a new language, cultural differences, and children becoming more vocal, which significantly changes the family dynamics. Given the fact that most of these studies were published more than a decade ago, any attempt to formulate ideas about the current situation of Afghan immigrants who entered the U.S. in more recent years based on such research can only be speculation at best.

In a study of 70 Afghan and other immigrants and refugees, Hynie, Guruge, and Yogendra (2013) found that the immigration process did indeed create an acculturation gap and role reversal between parents and children. The main question for these researchers was whether

these changes led to family conflicts and distress. Their findings indicated that children's responsibilities in the family were increased because of their immigration. In addition to normal duties and tasks that Afghan children had, such as doing household duties and going to school, they were also required to take on other family duties and responsibilities. These duties included service navigation, language interpretation, and providing financial and emotional support for other family members. However, the researchers concluded that these changes did not necessarily lead to conflict between parents and children, for the overall sense of family well-being was increased. Immigration and parenting will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Keresteš (2006) investigated the long-term effects of exposure to war on the aggressive and prosocial behavior of children and found that if children were exposed to stressful war events, this could have long-term negative effects on both aggressive and prosocial behavior. Further, the authors concluded that positive parenting could be a significant moderator between child's exposure to war and aggressive behavior. According to the reports of their teachers, children who experienced a greater amount of war-related trauma and perceived the parenting they received as less supportive also showed lower levels of prosocial behaviors. These findings emphasize the importance of parenting regarding the social, psychological, and emotional well-being of children.

Hadi, Lai, and Llabre (2014) studied various life outcomes of children who were exposed to the Gulf crisis in 1990 - 1991. Participants were 151 children who were assessed in two different phases. The participants were first studied in their childhood years. They were also observed 10 years later when the participants were young adults. The results of this study show that the experience of war and war-related trauma negatively affected the later educational and occupational outcomes of the participants (Hadi et al., 2014). For instance, those who were

significantly exposed to war were less likely to pursue higher education. The researchers concluded that, without any moderating factors or intervention, prolonged exposure to war may have significant long-term negative effects on children (Hadi et al., 2014). Consequently, the exposure of children to war and experiencing war-related trauma may also impact their parenting abilities as adults.

Smith, Perrin, Yule, and Rabe-Hesketh (2001) conducted a study with 339 children, their mothers, and their teachers. The researchers' goal was to investigate risk and moderating factors in the psychological reactions of children to war. The findings reveal that children showed high levels of post-traumatic stress symptoms and grief reactions, but normal levels of depression and anxiety. Data from the mothers also indicates high levels of post-traumatic stress reactions, but normal levels of depression and anxiety. It was found that the level of distress among children was related to their exposure to war and to maternal reaction.

War-related Trauma, Civilians and Parenting

Alemi, James, Siddiq, and Montgomery (2015) investigated factors associated with and predictive of psychological distress in Afghan refugees and immigrants who had been resettled in San Diego, California for nearly 17 years. The sample for this study included 130 participants, of whom nearly 57% were male. The age within the sample ranged from 18 to 85 years. Approximately 65% of participants stated they were married, while the remaining participants were widowed, divorced or never married. Alemi et al. (2015) found that psychological distress experienced by the participants commonly included symptoms similar to those of depression and anxiety, as well as somatic complaints and difficulties with regards to concentration.

Furthermore, Alemi et al. (2015) argued that high levels of psychological distress among female participants were partially due to these mothers having to manage cultural conflicts with their children. In addition, it was argued that the female participants faced more acculturation challenges than their male counterparts, which was also a contributor factor in their high levels of psychological distress. Finally, Alemi et al. (2015) found that results regarding psychological distress encountered by Afghan immigrants with long-term resettlement were very similar to outcomes of other studies of newly resettled Afghan immigrants. Alemi et al. (2015) concluded that this similarity in findings suggests that circumstances for some Afghan immigrants may not have changed even years after their resettlement. The relatively constant circumstances suggest that some psychological distress might be chronic rather than an acute condition for this population.

Other studies focus on parental role and parenting styles which have always been a significant factor in various aspects of the lives of children. For instance, in their study of nearly 3000 children who were exposed to war, Dekel and Solomon (2016) found that the nature of bonding between a mother and her children was one of the most significant predictors for the level of distress and life satisfaction of the children. Dekel and Solomon (2016) found that a higher quality of maternal care significantly contributed to lower distress and higher life satisfaction. On the other hand, the findings suggest that those who perceived their mother as less caring exhibited more distress and lower life satisfaction.

The experience of war by civilians encompasses more than experiencing negative psychological and mental outcomes. Many other areas of people's lives will be impacted by war and its adverse consequences. Hollifield et al. (2005) identified four distinct trauma categories: (a) physical trauma, (b) psychological trauma, (c) sexual trauma, and (d) combat trauma. These

four categories are consistent with the Comprehensive Trauma Inventory 104 that was used in this study.

Physical Trauma

Physical trauma experienced by civilians during the time of war is one of the most commonly reported types of traumatic event. In study of 129 Kosovar refugees after their resettlement in Washington and Michigan, Ai et al. (2002) found that a significant number of the participants reported experiencing war-related physical trauma. The results indicated that 38% of participants reported they had been beaten, while 30% reported they had sustained other forms of physical injury because of being exposed to war (Ai et al., 2002). It is also noteworthy that 85% of participants reported they suffered from lack of food during the war, while 79% reported being subjected to solitary confinement (Ai et al., 2002).

Psychological Trauma

Thapa and Hauff (2005) conducted a research among nearly 300 people in Nepal who had fled their homes and cities due to war between the government and other armed groups. The results reveal that almost all participants reported psychological trauma because of their displacement, and 53.4% of them reported symptoms of PTSD (Thapa & Hauff, 2005). The rates of anxiety and depression symptoms among the participants were 80.7% and 80.3%, respectively. Most of participants reported they felt miserable upon arrival at a new place, which was found to be associated with depression symptomology. On the other hand, the prevalence of PTSD symptoms was also high, and it was said that experiencing greater than three traumatic events was a significant contributing factor for PTSD symptomology. These findings are in accordance with Ai et al. (2002) who found a positive correlation between levels of trauma and the severity of PTSD symptomology.

Displacement during wartime is also believed to be one of the events that can be psychologically traumatizing and stressful. Many of the world's refugees have fled their home country due to armed conflicts. Whether people are internally or externally displaced (i.e. displacement within one's own country or in a different country), the potential traumatic effects are the same. Most of these displaced people experience loss of family, possessions and home, which result in negative psychological consequences. However, those who flee to a different country are more likely to experience challenges and adversities since they are in a foreign environment, which may have different language, culture, legal system, and expectations (Hulme, 2005).

Sexual Trauma

In an overview of existing literature about rape and sexual violence during war, Skjelsbaek (2001) stated that during wartime sexual violence against civilians may be used for various reasons. The potential victims of sexual violence among civilians during war include all women in the war-zone, as well as some targeted groups of women and men. It has been concluded by the author that sexual violence can be perceived as a weapon of war: there are strategic reasons for committing sexual violence against civilians. This strategic effect has been defined by Skjelsbaek (2001) as:

(a) reaffirming militaristic masculinity, and thereby focusing on the perpetrator, (b) attacking the ethnic/religious/political identity the woman is seen to embody, thereby turning the focus on the victim, and (c) masculinizing the perpetrators by empowering their identity and feminizing the victim by victimizing his/her identity, thereby focusing on the symbolic interaction between the perpetrator and the victim. (p. 226-227)

Wood (2009) revealed that sexual violence against civilians during wartime widely varies depending on the groups that are involved in a conflict. Wood (2009) argued that in various conflicts, for instance, the so-called Tamil Tigers and some other military groups, have rarely engaged in committing sexual violence against civilians. Wood (2009) claims that this is due to their strict military rules and harsh punishments. On the other hand, it has been reported that in the Bosnian conflict and the war in Rwanda, many military groups committed large scale sexual violence against civilians.

Considering the ongoing war in Afghanistan, and the variation in the amount of sexual violence against civilians, it can be said that Afghan civilians who have been experiencing war have also been subjected to sexual violence to at least some extent. Given the strict cultural and Islamic norms, values and rules in the Afghan society, sexual violence against civilians is strongly condemned by all parties involved in the conflict. Members of certain minority ethnic groups were in particularly high risk of sexual violence. Most of the civilians who did have the means to escape the (sexual) violence fled to safer places, either within their own country or to a different country.

Combat Trauma

It is generally known that soldiers are exposed to increased levels of trauma (both physical and psychological) while being in the battle field. Serious physical as well as psychological and mental health issues are common among soldiers and veterans. In a study of 2,863 veterans from the recent Iraq war, Hoge et al. (2007) found that over 17% of veterans reported being wounded or injured while fighting the war in Iraq. In addition to physical trauma and injuries, more than 16% of the participants met the criteria for PTSD. Hoge et al. (2007) found that the physical injuries of the veterans were associated with a higher rate of PTSD.

Those who were injured scored significantly higher on PTSD criteria (31.8%) compared to those who were never injured (13.1%) (Hoge et al., 2007).

In addition, Hoge et al. (2007) also found a strong correlation between PTSD and physical health measures. The researchers stated that those veterans who scored higher on PTSD had poorer physical health, more sick call visits, and more health-related absences from work, than those who did not.

The personal characteristics and psychological health of parents are important contributing factors which determine parenting styles (Belsky, 1984). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how various negative psychological and mental effects are caused by war-related trauma. Thus, the purpose of examining the previously-cited studies was to understand the prevalence of various psychological and mental health issues commonly experienced in immigrant Afghan communities. While it is of great importance to gain more knowledge about the prevalence of various psychological and mental issues that Afghan immigrants encounter, these studies do not provide or describe any possible relationship between war-related traumas experienced by Afghan immigrant parents and their parenting practices. Since experiencing war has been an ongoing experience for many Afghans, affecting an array of areas of their lives, the question is how parenting styles might be affected by these war-experiences. Again, the absence of research about this question highlights the need for studies that would fill the gap in the literature and provide data the relationship between war-related trauma and parenting practices in immigrant Afghan communities.

Therefore, the purpose of this current study is to investigate whether war-related trauma has an impact on parenting practices. If the existence of such a relationship can be demonstrated, it may permit parents who have suffered from war-related trauma to be able to benefit from

psychological and other family services. This may also help them to achieve a better understanding of trauma and its impact on their own parenting practices. Finally, the awareness of possible negative consequences of war-related trauma on parenting may motivate parents to seek out effective and appropriate ways to improve their own parenting styles.

Various factors may impact Afghan immigrant parenting practices. Therefore, there have been numerous studies conducted to find a correlation between various social constructs that impact parenting styles. Some of these major social constructs are gender, the socioeconomic status (SES) of parents, the educational level of parents, immigration, and their level of acculturation to the host culture.

Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Parenting

Family's socioeconomics have been linked to various aspects of childrearing practices. Family income, which is commonly used as a measure of the SES of a family, impacts the ability of a person to provide for themselves and their children. Those who live in poverty and are from low socioeconomic backgrounds are often concerned with the basic needs of housing, food, clothing, health and safety. It has been said that "parent- child relationships in the middle-class are consistently reported as more acceptant and equalitarian, while those in the working-class are oriented toward maintaining order and obedience" (Bronfenbrenner, Harding, & Gallwey, 1958, p. 420) (as cited in Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999). Hoff et al. (2002) referenced Hoffman's (1963) work, which suggested that parenting styles in higher SES families was, generally, democratic, which is a characteristic of authoritative parenting style. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) (as cited in Joussemet, Koestner, Lekes, & Landry, 2005) also point to a link between SES and more authoritative parenting styles (child-centered parenting). On the other

hand, these studies also show the relationship between low SES and more parent-centered (authoritarian) parenting styles.

In general, as Hoff et al. (2002) described, it is said that lower-SES parents are more concerned that their children conform to societal expectations, and they practice more parent-centered parenting style which is controlling, and authority driven. Further, these parents are also punitive when children do not obey their authority. In terms of other types of parent-child interaction, low SES parents tend not to engage in long conversations and expect their children to follow rules without question. In higher SES families, parents usually are more concerned that their children develop initiative, and they create a home atmosphere in which children can actively participate in family conversations and rule-making. These parents are usually not punitive, in terms of physical punishment, when children disobey. Higher SES parents are also more conversational and less directive of the behavior of their children.

Bradley and Corwyn (2002) showed that SES was associated with various health, cognitive, and socio-emotional outcomes in children. They argued that the effects of the SES of the parents begins prior to the birth of the children and continues into their adulthood. It has been said that the differences in access to material and social resources are powerful factors that influence parenting, and that socioeconomic status involves more than the income of a family. There are many other factors that determine the SES of a family, such as the level of education and occupation of the parents. This raises the question of to what extent the education of the parents may play a role in their parenting practices.

Education Level and Parenting

In one study with a large and diverse sample of adolescents in California, Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, and Fraleigh (1987) revealed that families with higher parental education tended to be lower in authoritarian and permissive parenting and higher in authoritative parenting than families with lower parental education. In another study of African-American participants, Bluestone and Tamis-LeMonda (1999) reported similar findings: maternal education was associated with child-centered parenting, which is a characteristic of authoritative parenting style. In another study of 30 mothers from low income neighborhoods, but with different levels of education in Cairo, Egypt, Von der Lippe (1999) found that mothers with low levels of education displayed and reported less authoritative parenting than did mothers with higher levels of education. Von der Lippe (1999) anticipated that educated working mothers would be less traditional and engage their children in more active competence training and would be more child-centered in their approach to parenting. The conclusion supported the notion that maternal education was indeed positively related to the authoritativeness of the mothers in that the higher their education, the more authoritative they were in their parenting (Von der Lippe, 1999).

Studies with other ethnic groups also point to the strong link between the education level of parents and their parenting styles. Chen and Dong, and Zhou (1997) conducted a study with Chinese participants and came to very similar conclusions as reported by Dornbusch et al. (1987), Bluestone and Tamis-LeMonda (1999), and Von der Lippe (1999); Maternal and paternal education was correlated positively with authoritative parenting, and negatively correlated with authoritarian parenting. It can be concluded that the existing literature on level of education of the parents and their parenting styles tend to support the notion that more highly educated

parents are more likely to adopt the authoritative parenting style, while less educated parents tend to operate according to the authoritarian parenting and/or permissive parenting style. Studies about parenting practices in some Middle Eastern countries suggest that parenting role of mothers plays a more prominent role than that of fathers.

Assadi, Smetana, Shahmansouri, and Mohammadi (2011) found that even though participants (middle Eastern- Iranian mothers) came from different educational backgrounds (less educated participants as well as highly educated participants), they all scored high on authoritarian parenting style. However, mothers with higher education reported that they allowed their children to have authority and control over their own personal issues, while respecting the boundaries of parental authority. Since this study only investigated the beliefs of the mothers about parenting and parenting styles and did not provide any data regarding the parenting practices of fathers, it is difficult to know about the educational level of the fathers and its possible impact on their parenting.

Parenting and Immigration

Ochocka and Janzen (2008) found that as immigrant parents undergo the process of immigration and acculturation, their behaviors and attitudes change significantly, which, in turn, alters their parenting practices. Even though immigration to a new country has its advantages and benefits (for instance, better economic, social, educational, and political situations), immigration is also associated with some challenges and disadvantages. Some disadvantages include negotiating and finding a balance between one's own values and the host country's values, identity challenges, stress related to acculturation, and differences in child-rearing beliefs and practices (Hatton & Bacic, 2001). Families are forced to adjust their new situation after their immigration if they want to minimize family conflicts and maximize potential of their children.

The parent-child relationship is likely to change as children become more vocal, express their opinions more freely, and behave more independently while acculturating more rapidly than their parents.

It will be appropriate to suggest that the impact of this change in the parent-child relationship will be even more significant when non-Western families resettle in Western countries instead of in their neighboring (non-Western) nations. The reason for this is that many other factors, such as huge difference in culture, values, language, and traditions also make it more complicated for non-Western immigrants to resettle in Western countries. Therefore, establishing an ethnic identity and accordingly adjusting parenting styles will be essential in reducing family conflicts and benefiting the well-being of children.

In a study of immigrants who had entered Canada in early 2000, Hatton and Bacic (2001) found that the immigration process had a significant impact on parenting abilities of the immigrant parents. A total of 231 parents (who came from different countries: Afghanistan, Iran, Russia, Somalia, China, India, Croatia, Philippines and Mexico) were included in the study. The findings suggest that the change in the environment of immigrants had made them not only question their parenting styles, but also question the values on which they had based their parenting style. In other words, the immigrants who are resettled in a new environment now face difficulties in terms of value differences between their culture of origin and their host culture, which can be a very challenging experience.

Even though some parents stated their immigration experience did not affect their parenting style, many parents indicated that they had made significant changes in their parenting styles. Most of these changes included the amount of time parents spent with their children and the nature of their interactions with them. Most of these parents stated that greater involvement

in the lives of their children because of their immigration had brought them closer together, and that they had established a closer and more intimate relationship with their children (Hatton & Bacic, 2001).

Immigrant parents identified some challenging outcomes because of immigration. These included challenges regarding learning a new language, cultural differences, finding a job, child care, and becoming familiar with laws regarding the disciplining of children (Hotton & Bacic, 2001). Many of the immigrant parents believe that their children matured rapidly since their resettlement in the host country and had gained confidence and became much more independent. In return, this change in the attitude of the children caused parents to adjust their parenting style accordingly to accommodate their children's needs. Many immigrant parents seek to find a different strategy to communicate, interact with, and parent their children. Reasoning, negotiating, and modeling are some of these strategies immigrant parents say they had to learn after their resettlement (Hotton & Bacic, 2001).

Keyes (2000), Bornstein, Hahn, and Haynes (2011), Ho (2014), and Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez (2003), have all investigated the immigration experiences and challenges of individuals, and argue that many immigrants experience different psychological and social issues that interfere with their daily functioning and parenting. Wojcik and Bhugra (2010) reported that ongoing stress, because of resettlement, is a significant issue among Afghan immigrants. Wojcik and Bhugra (2010) reported that such ongoing stress related to resettlement may significantly impact the ability of parents in childrearing, as well as causing various psychological and emotional difficulties.

Acculturation and Parenting

The definition of acculturation created by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, p. 149) (as cited in Berry, 1997), describes acculturation as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (p. 7). Even though this description was written many decades ago, it is an accurate and inclusive description that is still being used in research studies. Various studies indicate that the level of acculturation of parents who resettle in a new country impacts the ability of those parents to parent their children. In a study of nearly 300 Vietnamese parents who were resettled in the United States, Nguyen (2008) found that most Vietnamese parents tended to use the authoritarian parenting method, in which dictatorial approaches are enforced. The study suggests that this parenting approach may lead to family conflicts and mental health issues because of its ineffectiveness in the new environment.

In addition, Nguyen (2008) indicated that according to reports from adolescents, their fathers have not acculturated to the U.S. culture and continue to practice the traditional authoritarian parenting style. These findings also suggest that the amount of time spent in the U.S. was not a significant factor in changing parenting style. In addition, low levels of acculturation of the father (resulting in continuous use of the authoritarian parenting style) was a significant contribution to low levels of adolescent self-esteem and high levels of depression when compared with those who perceived their fathers as using the authoritative parenting style.

In a similar study with Turkish immigrant mothers residing in Australia, Yagmurlu and Sanson (2009) investigated acculturation attitudes of mothers and the correlation between their interaction levels with Australian society and their parenting values and behaviors. This study included 58 participants who were assessed for their levels of acculturation and parenting styles.

Findings supported the existence of the relationships hypothesized by the researchers between acculturation attitudes and parenting behaviors. The authors concluded that mothers who had higher levels of acculturation with Australian society were more likely to be using more authoritative parenting approaches (such as reasoning), and less authoritarian parenting approaches (such as obedience-demanding behavior) (Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009).

In a review of the existing research about acculturation and its impact on parenting, Ho (2014) found that acculturation had significant influences on parenting beliefs, attitudes, and practices, as well as parent-child relationships among Chinese immigrants. Ho (2014) believed that differences in acculturation levels between parents and their children correlated with negative child outcomes. In their study of Mexican immigrant parents residing in the U.S., Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez (2003) studied the relationship between acculturation, gender, and parenting. The results of this study suggest a positive relationship between the ability of parents to help, monitor, support, the language spoken at home and the academic motivation of adolescents. The impact of gender on parenting styles will be discussed in the next section: Gender and Parenting.

Finally, in a study of Asian-American college students, Park et al. (2010) examined the relations between perceived parenting styles and family conflict. The researchers viewed family conflict because of strong adherence by parents to their native culture (and thus low levels of acculturation). Among the participants, the dominant parenting style was reported to be the authoritarian style. Furthermore, the researchers found that lower levels of family conflicts were reported as the level of acculturation increased (as evidenced by changing of parenting styles from authoritarian to more permissive and authoritative). These authors claimed that parenting styles have a direct influence on behavior of children and other social outcomes.

Gender and Parenting

Gender has been shown to be a factor impacting parenting styles. According to McKinney and Renk (2008), significant differences exist between fathers and mothers in their parenting. These researchers claim that these differences manifest in the amount of time mothers and fathers spend with their children. It is argued that generally fathers spend less time taking care of their children compared to mothers. Mothers and fathers may also demonstrate differences in their parenting styles. In general, mothers are claimed to provide more warmth and support and to generally have closer relationships with their children than do the fathers (Holmbeck, Paikoff, and Brooks-Gunn, 1995) (as cited in McKinney & Renk, 2008). Given that research suggests mothers demonstrate more warmth and closeness to their children than fathers, it can be said that generally mothers tend to be more authoritative and/or permissive than fathers. However, significant cultural differences also exist regarding gender roles and parenting.

McKinney and Renk (2008) studied a total of 475 (151 male and 324 female) American college students to investigate how they viewed the parenting styles of their parents. Most students identified as Caucasian, while the remainder came from various other cultural backgrounds. According to this study, mothers and fathers were reported to use different parenting styles. The results reveal that most students reported that their mothers demonstrated a more authoritative style whereas fathers demonstrated a more authoritarian parenting style. The findings supported the hypothesis that mothers would adopt a more authoritative style of parenting relative to fathers, and that fathers would adopt a more authoritarian style of parenting relative to mothers. According to the responses of participants to the Parental Authority Questionnaire, mothers received higher scores on authoritative parenting than did fathers, whereas fathers scored higher on authoritarian parenting than did mothers.

Assadi et al., (2011) examined the beliefs of 426 Iranian mothers (residing in their home country) about legitimate parental authority, parenting styles, and adolescent–parent conflict. Participants came from diverse educational, social and economic backgrounds. The researchers focused on the beliefs of mothers about parenting and how they viewed the home contribution and responsibilities of their children. The results showed that most Iranian mothers adopted the authoritarian parenting style and reported moderate levels of conflict with their middle adolescents. Most of the mothers believed that their children should have some control over personal issues, but everyday conflicts were reported to be about the boundaries of parental authority. While the researchers did not collect any data regarding the parenting practices of fathers, it was said that traditionally, mothers spend significantly more time with children than fathers do. This suggests a less active role of fathers in parenting their children.

Similar findings were reported by Kauser and Pinquart (2016), who examined the beliefs of adolescents about the parenting practices of their parents. The researchers collected data from five schools in Lahore, Pakistan. In addition to the results indicating that authoritative parenting is inversely linked to juvenile delinquency, students also reported differences in parenting styles of mothers and fathers: mothers were reported to use more authoritarian parenting than fathers, while the reverse was true of permissive parenting. One can conclude that strong cultural norms and values exist regarding gender roles and parenting styles. Generally, it can be said that mothers in Eastern societies (such as Iran and Pakistan) tend to adopt the authoritarian parenting styles, even though fathers are likely to be more permissive and less authoritarian. In the Western countries (e.g. the United States) studies suggest that mothers tend to be more authoritative than fathers.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Parenting

Even though there is a lack of empirical research that investigates the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) on parenting, Davidson and Mellor (2001) examined various child reports of parenting behaviors of fifty children of Australian Vietnam veterans with and without PTSD. In addition, the researchers also examined another group of children (33 children) of civilians whose parents suffered from PTSD. The researchers found that those children who had a father with PTSD were more likely to have poorer parent-child problem-solving. In addition, the researchers also found that these children had poor communication, and affective involvement with their fathers in comparison with children whose father did not suffer from PTSD. Since this study was based on children's report on their perceived parenting, it did not examine parents' report on their parenting practices. However, the author of this current study believes that certain characteristics of the parent-child interaction that were identified in the study can be typical of the authoritarian parenting style. For instance, poorer parent-child problem-solving, poor communication, and affective involvement are considered to fall under the umbrella of authoritarian parenting style, as it is described in more details in the "parenting styles" section.

Gewirtz, Polusny, DeGarmo, Khaylis, and Erbes (2010) examined the linkage between the change in PTSD symptoms and parenting behaviors among 468 Army National Guard fathers. The researchers first collected data prior to the soldiers deployment and one year after their home return. Besides other factors (e.g. couple adjustment), the researchers focused on perceived parenting behaviors of soldiers that had one or more children. The researchers concluded that an increase in PTSD symptoms from before deployment and one year after home return were associated with lower levels of effective parenting. Though, in this research, the

researchers did not identify any specific parenting style (e.g. authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) that would have been associated with increasing PTSD symptoms.

Lee, Park, Park, and Park (2010) investigated the relationships between parenting behavior (as well as other factors) and PTSD among mothers who defected from North Korea. The researchers collected data from 105 mothers regarding their PTSD levels and parenting behaviors. The results revealed that nearly 80% of the participants suffered from moderate to severe PTSD which was experienced by the participants for the past three months. The researchers identified that the authoritative parenting behavior was negatively associated with PTSD (as well as some other variables). Further, the data revealed that the ignorant/controlling parenting behavior had the highest score in the study.

Similar to the above mentioned study, Van Ee, Kleber, and Mooren (2012) examined the parent-child interaction in relationship with maternal posttraumatic stress symptoms. Nearly 50 asylum seeker mothers were investigated on their parenting behavior and PTSD symptoms. The participants had one or more children between 18 and 42 months. Besides higher levels of PTSD among mother resulting in higher levels of psychosocial issues of children, the researchers also found that relationship between maternal PTSD symptoms and certain parenting practices. So did the researchers find that higher levels of maternal posttraumatic stress symptoms were associated with higher levels of hostile, insensitive, and unstructuring interactions between mothers and their children. Eventhough, the researchers did not use the terms authoritative, authoritarian and permissive to describe different parenting styles, it can be said that “hostile”, “insensitive” and “unstructured” parenting behavior are considered to be characteristics of the authoritarian parenting style.

Cultural Differences and Parenting Styles

Numerous studies (Chang, 2007; Varela et al., 2004) suggest that there are considerable cultural differences regarding parenting styles. Even when cultures share similarities in other social and familial aspects, parenting styles may be different. Dwairy et al., (2006) examined parenting practices in various Arab countries. The researchers collected data from nearly 3,000 individuals who came from eight different Arab countries (Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, Lebanon, Palestinian, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Palestinians in Israel). The results revealed that parenting styles varied significantly across countries.

Dwairy et al. (2006) identified three different combinations of parenting (“parenting patterns”) depending on participants’ specific culture. Each of these parenting patterns was argued to represent a combination of different parenting styles rather than one specific parenting style. The researchers argued that the main differences in parenting among various Arab countries were due to the sociopolitical system in each country, and the level of Western influences in these countries. For instance, in more liberal and democratic countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Algeria, participants were found to have a flexible pattern of parenting which included a combination of authoritative and permissive parenting styles. The researchers further argued that the controlling parenting pattern (a combination of authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles) was mainly found among non-democratic countries such as Saudi Arabia and Palestine. The researchers stated that people from these countries tended to have high regards towards their collectivistic cultures, which would make it more likely for them to reject any parenting styles that emphasize flexibility, individualism and permissiveness.

Finally, the inconsistent pattern of parenting (a combination of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles) was found primarily among participants from Yemen, and

Palestinians who were Israeli citizens. The researchers argued that this finding was because the various society aspects in Yemen, such as social and political situations, have been significantly changing. The researchers believed that this change encompassed moving from a tribal society to a more democratic one. The inconsistent parenting pattern may then be a reflection of these societal changes. The researchers further found that, like Yemen, Israeli Palestinians also demonstrated the inconsistent parenting pattern. It was argued that this is due to Israeli Palestinians are Arabs with deep cultural values in terms of collectiveness and authority, despite the fact that being Israeli citizens had exposed them to more Western values such as individualism.

Chang (2007) investigated cultural differences between Asian and American values regarding parenting styles. The researcher believed that the traditional emphasis of Asians on interdependence and family harmony may influence the type of parenting style they choose. The results showed that, generally, Asian parents reported higher scores for the authoritarian parenting style than their Caucasian counterparts. The results also suggest that there are no significant differences between race and authoritative parenting style. Furthermore, authoritative parenting was found to be associated with higher self-esteem and satisfaction among children.

The relevance of different parenting styles for this study is that it provides a framework for determining what the preferred parenting style is for Afghan parents, and whether this parenting style is impacted by the parents having been exposed to war. Because there is a lack of specific studies among Afghans, in general, it will be beneficial for the current study to gain more knowledge and insight regarding childrearing practices among Afghan immigrants.

Parenting Types

Baumrind (1991) investigated the relationship between parenting styles and competence and substance use by adolescents. Different parenting styles were identified based on parental commitment and their balance of *demandingness* and *responsiveness*. It was found that *authoritative* parents (who are highly demanding and highly responsive) were significantly more successful in protecting their adolescents from problem drug use, as well as boosting children's competence levels.

Baumrind (1966, 1968) and Maccoby and Martin's (1983) model of different parenting styles has been widely cited in the literature to describe different parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive). For this study, these parenting styles are used. According to Baumrind (2013), parental *responsiveness* and *demandingness* are important dimensions in these parenting styles. *Responsiveness* refers to the ability of parents to show acceptance, attunement, warmth, and support for the needs of their children (Baumrind, 2013; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). *Demandingness* refers to parents' control or parental power assertion (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). It is believed that the *demandingness* of parents is qualitatively different depending on specific parenting style and must be distinguished from it. For instance, Baumrind (2012) says that *confrontive control*, which is defined as being firm and directly asserting power, is associated with positive outcomes for children because it is goal oriented and uses reasoning.

On the other hand, Baumrind (2012) also argued that *coercive control* is a negative type of power assertion that is intrusive, harsh, and punitive, and is associated with negative outcomes for children. Baumrind (2013) also described a third type of control, *psychological control*, which is argued to be covert and manipulative. By investigating different levels of *responsiveness* and *demandingness* of parents, one can determine their specific parenting style.

Summary of the Literature Review

The impact of war-related trauma on parenting styles has not been widely researched. However, the relationship between war-related trauma and the prevalence of various psychological disorders has been intensively researched. Some studies (e.g., Bronstein et al., 2012) of individuals and groups who have been exposed to war indicate that the prevalence of anxiety, depression and PTSD is high among those who immigrated because of war. Parenting is argued to be a major moderator between children's exposure to war and their social, psychological and mental development (Smith et al., 2001). The socioeconomic status of parents, their level of education, immigration and acculturation are factors that are known to have a significant influence on parenting (Assadi et al., 2011; Hoff et al., 2002; Ochocka & Janzen, 2008; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009). Studies of SES and parenting indicate that parents with low SES are more likely to practice authoritarian parenting style, while high SES parents are reported to be more likely to use an authoritative parenting style (Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999). In addition, parental education is positively correlated with authoritative parenting style, while having negative correlation with authoritarian parenting (Hoffman, as cited in Hoff et al., 2002; Sears, as cited in Joussemet et al., 2005). Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to use reasoning and verbal communication with their children than their counterparts with lower education. The other two main factors influencing parenting styles are immigration and acculturation.

Immigration is an impactful process in the lives of many immigrants. Even though relocation may *ultimately* have positive outcomes in terms of better social, political, and economic situations, it also imposes a huge amount of stress upon immigrants (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). Many immigrants are faced with various challenges including learning a new

language, cultural differences, finding a job (Wojcik & Bhugra, 2010), and adjusting and changing their parenting styles. Being able to spend more time with their children has been identified as a major change in the parenting patterns of immigrants (Hatton & Bacic, 2001).

Immigration and acculturation are closely related, because ultimately it is the level of acculturation that plays a major role in how successful one's immigration will be. High levels of acculturation are correlated with the use of authoritative parenting styles, while low acculturation levels are linked to an authoritarian parenting style (Nguyen, 2008; Park et al., 2010; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009).

The Importance of the Current Study

Because there is a lack of research specifically pertaining to the Afghan immigrants' war-related trauma and their parenting practices, gaining more knowledge about this topic will benefit the field of Marriage and Family Therapy. The current study is an important first step in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy because it will increase knowledge and awareness about the effects of war-related trauma and its relationship to the Afghan immigrants' parenting practices. The increased knowledge gained from this research can be utilized in developing more culturally sensitive services provided to the Afghan community.

Based on personal experience of the author, Afghans traditionally tend to avoid mental health services and/or family counseling. The increased knowledge and awareness gained from this study may lead to the development of different perspective by Afghan immigrants regarding the seeking of professional assistance as it pertains to child rearing practices.

Process Model of Determinants of Parenting as Theoretical Foundation for Current Study

For this study, the theoretical foundation of Belsky's (1984) process model of determinants of parenting (PMDP) were utilized to investigate the impact of war-related trauma

on parenting. According to Belsky (1984), the PMDP suggests that there are three main factors which determine how people parent their children. These three determinants of parenting are the personality traits of parents, child's characteristics of individuality, and the broader social context in which parent-child relationship takes place. According to this theory, there are direct and indirect factors that impact parenting. For instance, one direct way of impacting parenting is when parents receive positive comments from their relatives regarding how well they are parenting their children (Belsky, 1984). In addition, when a parent receives generally positive comments (that are not directly related to parent-child relationship) from other people this may also have a positive, but indirect, effect on the parenting behavior of the person.

The third and broader social context component of the PMDP describes factors that influence parenting in the context of the social environment and interactions of people. Belsky (1984) describes marital relations, social networks (relatives, friends, etc.) and the relations of parents regarding their occupations as examples of these interactions. As previously noted, war impacts various aspects of the lives of people, including social, occupational, and other relationships. Investigating the impact of war on parenting through the lens of Belsky's PMDP is an appropriate approach, for war-related trauma fits well under the umbrella of the broader social context of the model.

It has been established that various factors impact parenting generally: (a) SES (Bronfenbrenne, as cited in Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999; Hoffman, as cited in Hoff et al., 2002; Sears, as cited in Joussemet et al., 2005), (b) the education level of parents (Assadi et al., 2011; Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999; Chen et al., 1997; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Von der Lippe, 1999), (c) gender (Assadi et al., 2011; Holmbeck, as cited in McKinny & Renk, 2008; Kauser & Pinquart, 2016; Mckinny & Renk, 2008), (d) immigration (Bornstein et al., 2011;

Hatton & Bacic, 2001; Ho, 2014; Keyes, 2000; Ochocka & Janzen, 2008; Plunkett et al., 2003; Wojcik & Bhugra, 2010), (e) acculturation (Nguyen, 2008; Park et al., 2010; Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009), and (f) trauma (Alemi et al., 2015; Davidson & Mellor, 2001; Dekel & Solomon, 2016; Gewirtz et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2010; Van Ee et al., 2012).

One can speculate that these factors also impact parenting styles of Afghan immigrants in the U.S. Many Afghan immigrants have been exposed to war to at least some extent. The question remains how the experience of war and possible war-related trauma has impacted their parenting styles. Belsky's (1984) PMDP provides a lens through which war-related trauma and its possible relationship with parenting can be conceptualized and analyzed. Conceptualizing various variables that were discussed in the literature review (SES, education, gender, acculturation, immigration, and war-related trauma) through the theoretical lens of Belsky's model enables us to have a better understanding of the relationship between various influencing factors.

First, it can be said that the broader social context includes variables such as SES, acculturation, immigration and war-related trauma, which have been demonstrated to impact parenting to some extent. By conceptualizing the purpose, hypotheses, and research question of this current study according to the process model of determinants of parenting (PMDP) (Belsky, 1984) various hypotheses can be formulated, and some speculations can be made, as it is discussed later in this chapter.

Secondly, war-related trauma has been linked to various negative social, personal, psychological and educational negative outcomes. By considering war-related trauma as part of the broader social context, it can be said that experiencing war has an impact on parenting styles.

The result of this study is an important step in investigating such an impact, as it is shown and discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

Another variable that can be included in the broader social context is immigration. Most Afghans who have left their home country have done so because of war and its negative impact on their lives (Donini, 2006). In other words, wars significantly increase the likelihood that people will immigrate and resettle in different countries. Immigration often means experiencing significant life changing events, which, in turn, may alter family relationships and dynamics. This change in family relationships and dynamics may then lead to changes in parents' styles of parenting. Immigration also impacts other areas of the lives of people: for instance, this may motivate them to learn new languages, modify their parenting style, take up a new occupation, or make numerous other types of changes. These changes are all part of the acculturation process which is considered to fit under Belsky's broader social context.

Finally, as discussed earlier, the broader social context includes SES as a factor which impacts parenting styles. Figure 1 provides a visual representation for these relationships and conceptualizations of different variables. The plus sign (+) indicates a positive correlation, whereas the negative sign (-) suggests a negative correlation between variables.

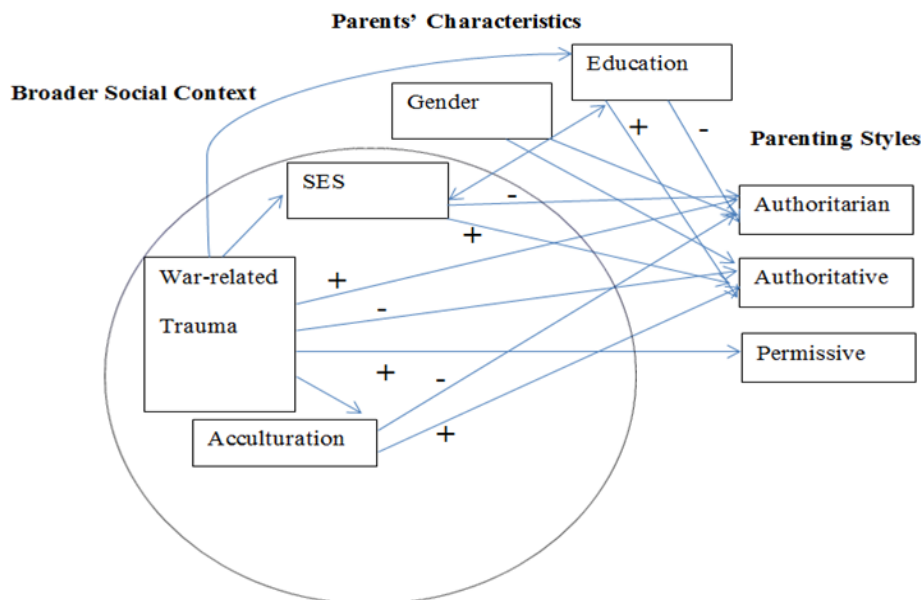


Figure 1. Gender, SES, War-related trauma, Education, Immigration, and Acculturation as variables impacting parenting styles.

It is worth mentioning that, the relationship between some variables has been established in the previous research, while for some other variables this relationship is unknown due to the lack of existing literature. The proposed conceptualization of these variables and their relationships are therefore speculations made by the author. For instance, as discussed earlier in this chapter, it has been shown (to some extent) that trauma in general impacts parenting and that the correlation between trauma and authoritative parenting style is negative. On the other hand, a positive correlation between trauma and authoritarian parenting style has been found. It is also believed that the longer the exposure to war, the less likely it will be that parents use an authoritative parenting style, and the more likely they will be to use an authoritarian parenting style. The relationship between parents' experience of war-related trauma and their permissive parenting style is argued to be positive. The exact relationships between these variables are described and discussed by the results of the current study, as shown and discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

Hypotheses

The goal of the current study was to investigate how the level of war-related trauma of parents impacts their parenting styles. More specifically, the research question of the study was: “Is there a relationship between war-related trauma and different parenting styles?” The following hypotheses were formulated for the current study:

Hypothesis 1. After controlling for gender, education, SES, and acculturation levels, higher levels of war related trauma will be predictive of higher scores on the authoritarian parenting style.

Hypothesis 2. After controlling for gender, education, SES, and acculturation levels, lower levels of war related trauma will be predictive of higher scores on authoritative parenting style.

Hypothesis 3. After controlling for gender, education, SES, and acculturation levels, higher levels of war related trauma will be predictive of high scores on permissive parenting style.

The main purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between war-related trauma experienced by parents and their parenting styles. Data from a total of 85 participants (first generation Afghan immigrants residing in the Greater Sacramento area) was collected and analyzed by using different surveys. The comprehensive trauma inventory 104 (CTI-104) was one of the instruments used, which was very inclusive and broad that asked participants to answer items related to their experiences of various war-related events. Higher scores on this measurement (across all subscales) indicated high levels of trauma. The results indicate that while some participants scored high on certain subscale, other participants scored higher on different ones. This indicates that experiencing war is very personal and unique to individuals.

Further the results of the analysis show that participants scored 20 and higher (highest score on a subscale was 53 for the Psychological Injury) on six different subscales indicating high trauma experiences on these areas. The six different subscales included a) Psychological Injury (53), b) Detention/Intentional Abuse (48), c) Witness Injury/Abuse/Death (35), d) Separation/Isolation (26), e) Betrayal (24), f) Deprivation/Discrimination (21), and g) Difficulty During Migration (20).

The majority of participants were male, who identified as Tajik, had 3 children while not receiving any financial assistance. Further, the results of this study indicate that authoritarian parenting style had the lowest scores: 14.1% of participants reported high scores on the authoritarian parenting style. This is rather surprising given the traditional, collectivistic and authoritarian nature of the Afghan families. However, the results also showed that gender, education and acculturation were statistically significant contributors to the authoritarian parenting styles scores. Low scores on the authoritarian parenting style can be explained by the

results suggesting that gender, education and acculturation were all negatively correlated with the scores of authoritarian parenting style. Gender accounted for 5% of the variance of the authoritarian parenting style, while education and acculturation accounted for 13% and 15% respectively. Nearly 58% of participants reported higher scores on education scale (college 37.6% and university 20%), and over 40% of participants scored high on the acculturation scale.

The results of the impact of gender, education and acculturation on the authoritarian parenting style suggest that being a female, more educated and acculturated predicted lower scores on the authoritarian parenting style. Further, war trauma scores were found to be statistically significant contributor to the scores of authoritarian parenting style. The results indicated a positive correlation between war trauma and authoritarian parenting style score with 9% of the variance of this parenting style being accounted for by war trauma. As it was hypothesized, the results show that higher levels of trauma experienced by parents predicted higher scores on the authoritarian parenting style. As for the authoritative parenting style, the results show that the only statistically significant contributors were education and war trauma. Education was found to be positively correlated with the scores of authoritative parenting style: 22% of the variance in the authoritative parenting style was accounted for by the education scores. The majority of participants reported an education level of college and higher.

In addition, the results of the descriptive statistics indicate that participants' stay in the United States ranged from 3 – 50 years, with an average stay of 12.67 years. As previously noted, acculturation was found to have negative correlation with the scores of authoritarian parenting style: more acculturated parents are less likely to score high on authoritarian parenting style. Further, participants might have developed the authoritative parenting style because of their changing life environment. This is in accordance to other studies (e.g. Hatton & Bacic,

2001; Ochocka & Janzen, 2008) that suggest parents who immigrate to different countries undergo significant changes in various aspects of their lives including changes regarding parenting practices. The finding that the majority of participants have reported higher scores on the authoritative parenting style might be also explained by the findings of Qayumi et al. (2014) who stated that many Afghan parents are willing to learn about better and more modern ways to raise their children.

As for the correlation between war trauma and the scores of authoritative parenting style, the results show that war-related trauma scores have a negative correlation with the authoritative parenting style. This means that participants' lower levels of trauma were predictive of higher scores on the authoritative parenting style scale. On the other hand, if participants would score higher on the trauma scale, their scores on the authoritative parenting scale would decrease. Results show that after controlling for gender, education, SES, and acculturation levels, war-related trauma scores contributed significantly to higher authoritative scale scores. In fact, the results indicate that 24% of the changes in the authoritative parenting style scores are accounted for by the scores from war trauma scale.

Finally, the third hypothesis was confirmed by the results of the analysis, indicating there was a positive correlation between war-related trauma scores and permissive parenting scores: participants who scored high on the war-related trauma scale, also scored high on the permissive parenting scale. Results show that after controlling for gender, education, SES, and acculturation levels, war-related trauma scores contributed significantly to higher permissive scale scores. The results indicate that 23% of variance of permissive parenting style scores was accounted for by the results of war trauma. Some possible explanations for this finding may include that participants who reported high scores on permissive parenting were not acculturated enough.

As Hynie et al. (2013) found in their community-based qualitative study with 70 newcomer refugee families (Afghan, Karen and Sudanese participants) one of the significant changes in participants' lives involved role reversals between immigrant parents and their children. This role reversal was argued to be due to parents' low levels of acculturation, while their children were more acculturated to their host culture. The role reversal between parents and children, and parents' low levels of acculturation, might have contributed to parents' permissiveness as it relates to their parenting practices. Parents may become more permissive as their children take over some of their roles in the family.

The other statistically significant contributors in permissive parenting scores were education and acculturation. Education was found to be a significant contributor by impacting the variances in permissive parenting scores with 19%: higher education levels predicted lower permissive parenting scores. Acculturation was also found to be statistically significant by positively correlating with the permissive parenting scores. The results indicate that 3% of scores of permissive parenting style is accounted for by acculturation. After the authoritative parenting style scores, participants scored high on the permissive parenting style (17.1%). High scores on the education scale, along with high scores on the acculturation scale explain relatively higher scores on permissive parenting style.

The results of current study show that war trauma had most impact on the authoritative parenting style (24%) followed by the permissive (23%) and finally the authoritarian parenting style with 9% of its variance accounted for by war trauma. Further, the findings of this study are consistent with previous research regarding the relationship between trauma and parenting styles. As previously described, limited studies have shown correlations between parents' psychological trauma (PTSD symptoms) and their parenting styles; poor parent-child problem solving and

communication as well as lack of affective involvement because of higher PTSD symptoms (Davidson & Mellor, 2001), and ineffective parenting because of changing PTSD symptoms (Gewirtz et al., 2010). Further, Lee et al. (2010) found that mothers with high levels of PTSD were more likely to have an authoritarian, and sometimes permissive, parenting style (characterized by controlling and ignorant behavior of parents). Higher levels of PTSD were also found to be associated with hostile, insensitive, and unstructured parenting behaviors and parent-child interaction (Van Ee et al., 2012).

Further, the results identified education, acculturation, and gender as significant contributors to the scores of different parenting styles. For the variances in the scores of authoritarian parenting style, acculturation was the strongest predictor (15%), followed by education (13%), war trauma (9%), and gender (5%). For the scores of authoritative parenting style, war trauma seemed to be the strongest predictor by accounting for 24% of its variances, followed by education (22%). Finally, war trauma seemed to be the strongest contributor to the variances in the scores of permissive parenting style (23%), followed by education (19%) and acculturation (3%). The results did not show any statistically significant contribution of the scores of socio-economic status (SES) on any of the parenting style scores.

By conceptualizing the significant contributors to parenting styles and their impact according to the Belsky's (1984) process model of determinates of parenting (PMDP), different aspects of this study's results can be discussed. Belsky's PMDP suggested that three main determinates of parenting existed: (a) the personality traits of the parents, (b) individual characteristics of the children, and (c) the broader social context in which parent-child interactions took place. As previously mentioned, the results of current study showed that

gender, education, acculturation and war-related trauma were significant predictors of different parenting styles.

According to Belsky (1984) parents' characteristics are significant determinants of parenting. Since parents' gender is considered to be part of their personal characteristics, it has been argued to impact parents' child rearing abilities. In the current study, gender was found to be a significant predictor only for authoritarian parenting style scores. However, the results of current study show that only 5% of authoritarian scores variance was impacted by gender. It is hard to conclude whether this impact is larger, or rather small, given that gender is only one of many other characteristics of parents (i.e. personality, education, intelligence, etc.) impacting parenting (Van Bakel & Riksen-Walraven, 2002).

On the other hand, education that is believed to be another characteristic of parents, was found to be a significant predictor of parenting in the current study with a much larger effect size. In the current study, this parental characteristic (education) was found to be significant predictor for the scores of all three parenting styles, confirming Belsky's belief of parental characteristics being the most effective domain in parenting. This domain has been argued to be more influential than the other two domains: child characteristics, and the broader social context. However, the claim that parental characteristics would be most effective in parenting was not empirically supported by Van Bakel & Riksen-Walraven (2002).

As previously noted, experiencing war was considered to fall under the domain of broader social context of parenting. The results of the current study found that war trauma was a significant predictor in all three parenting styles. This finding is in accordance to the Belsky's (1984) process model of determinants of parenting that suggested such a relationship would exist between parenting practices and the contextual environment in which parenting took place.

However, according to this current study's findings, SES, which was argued to be part of the broader social context, was found to have no significant contribution to any parenting styles scores.

As far as to the researcher's knowledge, the current study was the first to investigate a connection between war-related trauma and different parenting styles by utilizing the CTI-104 (Hollifield et al., 2006) and the PSDQ (Robinson et al., 2001). Previous research has identified a connection between PTSD and developing a specific parenting style. However, as previously stated most of these researches (Davidson & Mellor, 2001; Gewirts et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2010; Van Ee et al., 2012) did not specifically focus on the three different parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive). Furthermore, these researches mainly investigated symptoms of PTSD which may or may not have included the broad range of experience of war-related trauma, as measured by the CTI-104.

Clinical Implication

This study has important clinical implications in the field of mental health, as well as for Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT). The study findings provide various mental health professionals with more knowledge about the predictors of the parenting styles of Afghan immigrants. In addition, these mental health professionals will be able to conceptualize the nature of the authoritarian, as well as permissive parenting styles of Afghan immigrants with a better understanding of the impact of war trauma on these parenting practices. One of the factors that was found to impact all three parenting styles, as the results of current study have shown, was parents' past experience of war trauma. This deeper knowledge and understanding about parents' past war trauma and its impact on their parenting practices will be beneficial in building rapport with this group of immigrants.

Gaining more insight into how war trauma is related to different parenting styles will enable various mental health professionals to provide counseling and therapy services in a more efficient fashion. For instance, most of these parents may not be aware of the connection between their past experience of war –related trauma and their current parenting styles. Therefore, providing psycho-education in light of current study’s results to Afghan immigrant parents about how experiencing high levels of war trauma impacts their parenting practices will be very effective in increasing their knowledge and awareness.

Furthermore, the results of the current study have identified that the war trauma along with gender, education, and acculturation were significant influential factors on parenting styles, while SES showed no impact. This study confirms that for immigrant communities, previous experience of trauma, education, and level of acculturation are the most significant predictors of parenting styles, while gender appeared to impact only the scores of authoritarian parenting style. Having knowledge of the most impactful and influential variables on parenting will enable mental health providers and Marriage and Family Therapists to provide appropriate and more effective therapy services by specifically focusing on these influential factors that impact parenting. Though, it is impossible to change some of the impactful factors on parenting (e.g. parents’ past experience of war, SES, education level etc.), educating parents on these factors will have a positive outcome.

When mental health professionals have knowledge about difficulties and challenges that most of the immigrant families have endured (or those who are still dealing with these challenges) they will be more likely to discuss these adversities with the immigrant families in a meaningful and therapeutic manner. This will significantly help the therapy process in terms of developing empathy and trust.

Further, the results of current study indicated that a significant number of participants reported high levels of acculturation, while their average stay in the U.S. was just over 12 year. Since acculturation showed a negative correlation with the authoritarian parenting style, it is important for the mental health and MFT professionals to understand that immigrants who have resettled in the U.S. in the recent years may have low levels of acculturation. This low level of acculturation may lead to parents having a tendency to use more authoritarian style of parenting.

In addition, the results of the current study may have clinical implications beyond areas described above. The results of this study may have implications in regards to development of trauma-informed services for individuals and families who have suffered war trauma. Elliott, Bjelajac, Falot, Markoff, and Reed (2005) described trauma-informed services as programs in which the impact of trauma and violence is taken into account when providing services to individuals and groups. This means that service providers have an accurate and deep understanding of the impact of trauma on individuals and, therefore, the service delivery is consistent with the individual needs of this population. It is further argued that lack of understanding of the impact of trauma on people's lives, basically means denying and not recognizing that trauma has an impact on people's well-being.

Further, Ko et al. (2008) also emphasized the need for incorporating trauma-informed services when working with traumatized individuals and families in order to improve the quality of services and provide them with the care they need. The results of this current study can be used in program development based on trauma-informed services. These programs may include services in schools of immigrants' children, health care providers, and other agencies that deliver services to individuals with high levels of trauma. Some examples of such services may include

making sure that children are screened for trauma exposure in schools, and that trauma-informed services and other resources are available for these children and their families.

Finally, the results of current study may be incorporated into an information toolkit that can be used by various service providers: educators, health care providers, mental health provider, as well as family members. This information toolkit may include facts and other aspects of trauma and its impact on individuals' psychological and mental well-being, suggestions for educators on trauma-informed services, and information about trauma in simple language for immigrant families. Further, since many immigrant families and individuals (i.e. Afghans) are hesitant about utilizing mental health and psychological services, developing a trauma toolkit for healthcare providers might be very helpful, since these service providers are easily accessed by immigrants. Some helpful elements that should be incorporated in these information toolkits may include data about trauma prevalence among immigrants, its impact on individuals and family relationships (i.e. parenting practices).

Conclusion

Data from 85 first generation Afghan immigrants residing in the Greater Sacramento area was collected and analyzed to investigate possible relationships between parents' experiences of war trauma and their parenting styles. Results of a hierarchical multiple regression analysis indicated that after controlling for some covariates (i.e. gender, education levels, SES, and acculturation) statistically significant relationship existed between the independent (war trauma) and dependent (parenting styles) variables. The results suggest that parents who scored higher on the trauma scale also scored high on the authoritarian and permissive scale, suggesting a positive correlation between these variables. On the other hand, lower levels of trauma were associated with higher scores on the authoritative parenting scale. Particularly, the results in

regards to higher levels of trauma and authoritarian parenting styles are consistent with the findings in the literature. In addition, gender, education, and acculturation were found to be significant contributors to scores of different parenting styles.