

The Impact of Parenting Style Towards Ember's Character in Elemental Movie

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ABSTRAK

Pola asuh didefinisikan sebagai kombinasi strategi yang digunakan orang tua dalam membesarkan anak. Pola ini merupakan faktor krusial dalam membentuk perkembangan emosional dan psikologis anak. Dalam film animasi, pola asuh sering kali digambarkan melalui interaksi antar karakter, memberikan gambaran tentang bagaimana hubungan keluarga memengaruhi pembentukan identitas individu. Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak pola asuh terhadap karakter Ember Lumen dalam film *Elemental: Forces of Nature* (2023) yang disutradarai oleh Peter Sohn. Mengacu pada teori pola asuh dari Diana Baumrind serta kerangka pengembangan dari Maccoby dan Martin, penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan sastra psikologis untuk menganalisis pola asuh yang diterapkan oleh Bernie Lumen. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa Bernie secara dominan menerapkan pola asuh otoritatif, yang ditandai dengan harapan tinggi dan dukungan emosional. Pola asuh ini berkontribusi terhadap pembentukan tanggung jawab, regulasi emosi, serta peningkatan kesadaran diri pada karakter Ember. Namun, kecenderungan pola asuh otoriter dan permisif juga sesekali muncul, sehingga memicu konflik batin dalam diri Ember saat ia berjuang menyeimbangkan antara memenuhi harapan ayahnya dan mengejar

impiannya sendiri. Studi ini menyoroti bagaimana pola asuh yang ditampilkan dalam narasi film dapat merefleksikan dinamika kehidupan nyata, serta turut memengaruhi pembentukan identitas dan perjalanan emosional seorang karakter.

ABSTRACT

Parenting style, defined as the combination of strategies parents use to raise their children, is a crucial factor in shaping a child's emotional and psychological development. In animated films, parenting styles are often portrayed through character interactions, offering insight into how familial relationships influence identity. this study explores the impact of parenting style on Ember Lumen's character in Elemental: Forces of Nature (2023), directed by Peter Sohn. Using Baumrind's parenting theory along with Maccoby and Martin's framework, the research applies a psychological literary approach to analyze Bernie Lumen's parenting. The findings reveal that Bernie primarily demonstrates authoritative parenting, characterized by high expectations and emotional support, which contributes to Ember's growth in responsibility, emotional regulation, and self-awareness. However, occasional authoritarian and permissive tendencies also emerge, creating internal conflict for Ember as she struggles between fulfilling her father's expectations and pursuing her own dreams. This study highlights how parenting styles in film narratives can reflect real-life dynamics, influencing a character's identity formation and emotional journey.

INTRODUCTION

According to Baumrind (1991), parenting is defined as “the constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent's behaviours have expressed themselves.” Most parents aspire to provide the best for their children. Ensuring and supplying for their children in every form they consider ideal. Occasionally, these parental preferences sometimes conflict with the child's individual needs and desires, potentially causing the child to experience discomfort. Sometimes, there can be a misalignment between parental intentions and the child's comfort.

According to psychologist, parents are prone to transfer their own unfulfilled desires onto their children (Brummelman et.al, 2013). However, some parents appear to impose their own unrealized goals and aspirations onto their children, attempting to shape their child's paths without considering their

abilities, desires, or satisfactions in life. Additionally, these parents often seek to fulfil their own unachieved dreams through their children by paving a path without accommodating the child's capacities, preferences, and perceptions.

Baumrind identified three well-recognized parenting styles based on parental demandingness and responsiveness, which includes authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive parenting. According to Baumrind (1991), parenting style encompasses the overall approach parents use in raising their children, including the various techniques and strategies they implement to facilitate their child's socialization. This concept includes the parents' attitude, behaviours, and interactions with their children, which collectively influence the children's development and social competence. Baumrind's framework highlights how different parenting styles can impact a child's emotional, social, and overall development.

Elemental movie tells the tale of Ember Lumen in finding her direction in her life, she is looking for her own dreams and passion. Ember, as the only daughter of immigrant parents of Bernie and Cinder, the very first fire people to ever land in Elemental city, cannot decide which path that she wanted in her life. Knowing that her father put up high expectations to Ember in pursuing the family business (fire shop). Raised under the strict and traditional values of her father, Bernie, she believes that her destiny lies in taking over the family business. Her father had always emphasized young Ember to run the shop when she grows up, not even asking her daughter what she wants to be according to her own passion and her own dreams. Being the good and dutiful daughter Ember is, she is aware of what her parents sacrificed for her, so to pay those sacrifices, she had to follow the path that her father already paved even though deep down she knows it isn't what she wants in her life. Which quoted in the script above:

EMBER

I don't think I actually DO want to
run the shop, okay? THAT'S what my
temper has been trying to tell
me... I'm trapped.

She gets off the bike and faces the shop. Wade joins her.

EMBER

(looking at Flame)

You know what's crazy? Even when I
was a KID, I would pray to the Blue
Flame to be good enough to fill my
father's shoes someday. Because
this place is his dream. But I
never once asked... what I wanted
to do.

(sigh)

I think that's because deep down I
knew it didn't matter. Because the
only way to repay a sacrifice so
big is by sacrificing your life
too.

Time passes and as Ember growing up, she finally discovers her passion and dream after a spark of series of adventures with Wade Ripple, a water element who is a complete opposite of her fiery nature. Through these experiences with Wade, she begins to see the world beyond her element. Ember discovers that her true passion does not in adhering to the expectations set by her family but forging her own path. Wade helps her to recognize that her dreams are not bound by tradition or elemental differences.

WADE

Listen LISTEN!! You've got an
opportunity to do something you
WANT with your life!
This stops her. She turns around.

EMBER

WANT? Yeah, that may work in your
rich kid follow-your-heart family.
But getting to "do what you want"
is a luxury. And not for people
like me.

WADE

Why not?? Just tell your father how
you feel. This is too important.
Maybe he'll agree.

EMBER

(scoff)

Oh, ha. Yeah.

Ember is hesitant to express her true feelings to her father, Bernie, because she is aware of the sacrifices her parents made for her future. Her father's parenting style has instilled her a deep sense of duty and obligation, but it has also stifled her ability to openly communicate her emotions. Ember's character is marked by a fiery temper, which manifests physically as she turns purple and causes explosions whenever she becomes upset. This volatility is a reflection of the intense pressure she feels to conform to her parents' expectations, and her inability to process her emotions in a healthy way.

The researcher aims to explore the correlation between Ember's upbringing and her personal development, offering a deeper understanding of the impact of parenting style depicted in the movie. As the researcher of this thesis, I choose *Elemental* movie because it provides a rich narrative platform to explore the complexities of parenting and its effect on a child development. The reason why the researcher is also interested in researching this topic is because the researcher feels a personal connection to Ember Lumen's dilemmas, prompting an interest in analyzing the parenting style depicted in the movie and how it effects on her personal development. This study integrates Maccoby and Martin's parenting style theory, expanding upon Baumrind's research, to understand parenting style and their effects on child development. Therefore, the purpose of this background research is for readers to receive an overview of the research on parenting styles affected Ember's personal development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research will be conducted using descriptive qualitative method to explain the parenting style impact towards a child's personal development in *Elemental* movie. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1995) define qualitative method as an approach that focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the participants involved, it produces descriptive data, qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of words. Written or spoken statements of people and observable behaviour. The qualitative method for this research will be applied by using the script from the *Elemental* movie.

RESULTS

In this finding, the researcher provides an overview of Ember Lumen's character that is portrayed in the movie. This research focuses on what type of parenting style and its Impact towards Ember Lumen in *Elemental: Forces of Nature* Movie (2023), directed by Peter Sohn. This research focuses on analyzing the type of parenting style depicted by her father, particularly through Ember's relationship with her father, Bernie Lumen, and how his parenting influences her emotional growth.

Elemental tells the story of Ember Lumen, a young fire element living in a multicultural city called Element City, where different elements such as fire, water, land, and air coexist. Ember is raised under a family-owned shop by her immigrant parents, namely Bernie and Cinder Lumen. Their parents carry their deep cultural values and expectation from the Fire Land, a place where they belong before they moved to Element City. Throughout her upbringing, Ember experiences the effects of her father's parenting style, which combines high expectations with emotional support, characteristics that often associated with authoritative parenting. However, other parenting style traits also emerge that the researcher found to be authoritarian, particularly when Bernie places a strong pressure on Ember to take over the family business without initially considering her personal desires.

The film explores how Bernie's parenting approach, emphasizing responsibility, hard work, and loyalty to the family. Both supports and challenges Ember's psychological development. His trust and encouragement help build Ember's self-confidence and work ethic, but the weight of expectation that she carried also causes internal conflict and emotional suppression. Which reflects the dual impact of parenting style can have, nurturing growth while potentially limiting autonomy. Bernie's relationship with Ember symbolizes the real-world challenges many young people face when trying to honor their parents sacrifices while forging their own path. This film provides a touching exploration of the balance between parental influence and personal freedom, along with self-discovery, which is why the researcher choose this film as it brought a topic of how parenting styles shape a child's identity and how it can impact their future aspirations.

Apart from exploring parenting styles and their impact, *Elemental* also brings attention to important themes such as cultural diversity, prejudice between different groups, and love across differences. The film portrays the struggles of maintaining cultural traditions in a new environment, and the challenges of overcoming stereotypes along with discrimination. Ember's relationship with Wade, a complete opposite of fire element also highlights this story that brings how love and understanding can bridge deep cultural divides, emphasizing the importance of emotional openness and personal freedom in finding in one's true path.

Analysis of parenting style depicted in *Elemental*

In this movie, the researcher found out several data related to parenting styles, particularly focusing on the dynamics between Ember and her father, Bernie. Throughout the film, Bernie demonstrates a blend of support, encouragement, and high expectations which shapes Ember's development. While his parenting is primarily supportive (authoritative), there are certain moments where his actions reflect a mix of different parenting styles, occasionally leaning toward authoritarian or permissive approaches. While Bernie offers emotional support, his expectation on Ember creates a complex dynamic that pushes Ember to question her own desires and ambition. As she navigates the delicate balance between honoring her father's wishes and her own path in life. Furthermore, the analysis of parenting style will be seen in the next data.

Ember's childhood dream shaped by Bernie's expectation

Bernie and Ember work on the shop sign together. Bernie writes "FIREPLACE" and Ember burns in a small flame design.

TIME JUMP, the SIGN hangs over the front door of the shop. Bernie climbs down the ladder and joins Ember. They admire the sign together.

BERNIE

This shop is dream of our family!

And someday it'll all be yours

Hers?? Ember's eyes grow in excitement. From that moment on,

THIS is what she wants -- to be a good daughter and to take over the shop.

This dialogue occurs when Ember is still a little, she and Bernie are creating the shop sign, which can be seen as a symbolic act of bonding. This shared act demonstrates a moment of harmony and emotional closeness between them. When Bernie declares, "**This shop is dream of our family! And someday it'll all be yours,**" it can be seen that Bernie has set out Ember's dream to take over the shop when she's older enough and hoping that she would carry on their legacy soon. Ember's reaction showing excitement marks a pivotal moment in her internal journey. She interprets his words not just as a statement, but as a personal mission, that she wants to be a good daughter, and taking over the shop becomes a core part of her identity. This moment is important because it shows how Ember's sense of purpose and self-worth begins to align with her father's expectations. She internalizes his dream as her own, not out of fear or pressure, but from a desire to make him proud. This reflects the power of parental influence in shaping a child's goals and emotional motivations, especially when those values are tied to love, tradition, and family pride. The parenting behaviour reflected in this scene leans primarily to authoritative parenting which the researcher implies as a supportive and nurturing, but there are also hints of authoritarian influence as well. Though Bernie is showing a loving and affectionate environment, he also introduces a strong expectation in her young age. This combination shows how even well-intentioned guidance can create internal conflict for Ember when later she seeks her own identity.

Ember's early ambition to take over the shop

In the early scene, there are warm and close relationship between Ember and her father, Bernie. The following moment takes place during the opening day of the shop, where young Ember eagerly imitates her father, showing signs of admiration and early attachment to the family business.

INT. BERNIE'S SHOP

Opening day. A fresh pot of Lava Java is ready to serve.

A CUSTOMER enters, blown away by the decor. Bernie, Cinder and Ember light up!

BERNIE

Welcome!

CINDER

Welcome!

BERNIE

Everything here authentic.
 FIRST CUSTOMER
 Then I've got to try the kol-nuts.
 BERNIE
 Kol-nuts coming up!
 Ember sits on the counter next to Bernie. Imitating him, she taps on her own homemade toy register.
 LITTLE KID EMBER
 Kol-nut coming up!
 BERNIE
 (laugh)
 Good daughter.
 Together, Ember and Bernie prepare the order, squeezing logs in their palms to make bite size pieces of coal.
 Ember hands them to the customer.
 LITTLE KID EMBER
 Some day this shop will all be
 mine!
 Bernie tousles her flame.
 BERNIE
 (laughs)
 When you are ready.

This scene occurs at the opening day of the family new shop. The atmosphere is filled with excitement as they welcome their first customer. Based on the interaction above, Bernie is showing behaviours that aligns with a blend of authoritative and permissive parenting characteristics. In the sentence it shows that he laughs and praises Ember by saying **"Good daughter"** and tousles her flame, which the researcher implies as showing approval and affection. When Ember says, **"Some day this shop will all be mine!"** Bernie responds with affection, **"When you are ready."** This exchange highlights Ember's early desire to take over the shop, reflecting her internalization of her father's expectations, much like in the previous scene where she first embraced this idea. The way she imitates Bernie's actions and repeats his words shows how deeply she looks up to him and how much she wants to fulfill the role he envisions for her. Though their interaction sound lighthearted, it emphasizes the emotional connection between father and daughter, while also subtly introducing the pressure Ember feels to live up to the family's legacy. This interaction further emphasizes the strong bond between Ember and Bernie, built on mutual respect and affection. Bernie's encouragement, however, carries an underlying expectation that Ember must be prepared to carry on the family legacy.

This dynamic, while nurturing, also highlights the weight of the expectations placed on Ember at a young age. The scene reflects the complexity of parenting, where love, encouragement, and high hopes for the future are intertwined, creating both a source of support and potential internal conflict as Ember grows older. In this scene, Bernie shows a mix of nurturing support and high expectations, blending different parenting styles. His encouragement and belief in Ember's future, along with his response, **"When you are ready,"** reflect authoritative parenting, where he has high hopes but also shows warmth. However, his clear expectation that Ember will take over the shop hints at authoritarian parenting, suggesting a rigid view of her future. Lastly, Bernie's playful and affectionate behaviour, like calling Ember a **"good daughter,"** reflects permissive parenting, where Ember has some freedom to express herself.

Impact of Bernie's Parenting Style

In this research, the researcher found several data related to the parenting style experienced by Ember Lumen. These findings illustrate how Ember's interactions with her parent shaped her emotional development, sense of responsibility, and personal identity. The data collected highlights both the supportive and challenging aspects of her upbringing, showing a complex dynamic between encouragement and pressure. Through these observations, the researcher aims to explain how parenting influenced Ember's behaviour, decision-making, and emotional resilience throughout the story. Furthermore, the explanation is divided into several points, such as:

Ember's Struggle to Meet Her Father's Standards

FLARRIETTA
 When you gonna put Ember out of her
 misery and retire, huh? Finally put
 her name on the sign out there?

BERNIE

Ah, she take over when she's ready.

Ember's face briefly sinks. Not the answer she wanted. She hides the disappointment, puts her shields up and covers:

EMBER

And speaking of "ready," we are
MORE than ready for you to actually
BUY something, if you'd ever get up
off your lazy ash.

The dialogue tells that Ember still have to work more to catch on her father's standard to be able to take over the shop, especially to be able to take good control on her fiery temper. Her temper has been always got out of her control and it could cause big trouble to the shop. That's why, Bernie's statement "she'll take over when she's ready" sets vague expectations for Ember, leaving Ember unsure of when she will actually meet his standards. This ambiguity can cause uncertainty and pressure, leading to feelings of inadequacy or disappointment. Ember's disappointment and guarded reaction indicate that while she is motivated to meet her father's expectations, she also feels the weight of those expectations without the emotional assurance she craves. This could lead to challenges in her personal development, such as difficulty in expressing vulnerability or seeking help when needed, as she might feel need to appear strong and capable at all times. Her reaction of hiding her disappointment and "putting her shields up" suggest that she has internalized the high standards set by her father, which can lead to self-imposed pressure to meet those expectations, even when she feels uncertain or unprepared. Over the time, this can contribute to stress, self-doubt, and a reluctance to express her true feelings, as she strives to meet her father's expectations without feeling fully supported.

Ember's Overwhelmed with Expectations and Emotional Vulnerability

He turns to see Ember outside, desperate, pleading to the closed door, more to herself, her light private, prismatic, vulnerable.

EMBER

The shop is my dad's dream, if I'm
the reason it gets shut down it
will kill him.

INSIDE, Wade's face looks pained, empathetic.

WADE

Aw.

EMBER

He will never trust me to take
over.

In this scene, Ember's words and actions reflect the deep impact of her father's parenting style on her emotions and self-perceptions. She feels an overwhelming sense of responsibility for the success of her father's dream, since she clearly knows that her father had always been looking up for her to take over the shop when he retires. This caused Ember to internalize the idea that she must meet the expectations to maintain her father's approval and happiness without considering her own happiness. Ember's fear that her father will never trust her to take over the shop reveals her deep anxiety about failing to live up to her father's standards. This fear is common in children with authoritative parenting, which can lead to low self-esteem when they perceive themselves as failing short. The description of Ember as "desperate, pleading to the closed door, more to herself, her light private, prismatic, vulnerable." Highlights her emotional vulnerability. This vulnerability is a direct result of the pressure to succeed that authoritative parents can sometimes impose. Despite feeling deeply anxious and uncertain, Ember tries to keep these feelings hidden, possibly because she feels that showing vulnerability would be seen as weakness or failure in her father's eyes.

DISCUSSION

In this movie, there are several conflicts related to parenting arise, particularly between Bernie (Ember's father) and Ember herself. The conflict that the researcher highlight is the type of parenting that is depicted in the movie and how it is impacting on Ember's personal development. The researcher found that Bernie's type of parenting style is dominant in authoritative parenting style, where it is characterized by a balanced approach that combines warmth, support, clear expectations, and guidance without control. By using Diana Baumrind theoretical framework regarding parenting style, which includes authoritative,

authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting style, we can see that Ember are experiencing authoritative parenting style from her father.

In the findings that the researcher has found, the conflicts surrounding authoritative parenting manifest primarily between Bernie and Ember, centered on Bernie's expectation vs. individual desires as Ember struggles to align her own dreams with her father's aspiration for her to take over the family shop. This creates an emotional burden for Ember which leading her to feel guilty and pressured, she even labelled herself as a bad daughter when she questions her own path. The tension between seeking independence and maintaining connection with her father further complicates their relationship, as she fears disappointing him if she chooses a path that diverges from his father's expectation.

Additionally, communication misunderstandings arise, exemplified when Ember finally reveals her true feelings about the shop, highlighting the need for an open dialogue. Lastly, the movie illustrates the challenge of balancing love and responsibility, where Bernie's nurturing support is sometimes overshadowed by the weight of expectations placed on Ember. These dynamics emphasize the complexities of authoritative parenting, showcasing its potential to foster both personal growth and relationship tension.

Ember's development under Bernie's authoritative parenting style showcases the interplay of attachment, self-identity, and emotional regulation. Bernie's warm and supportive environment fosters her emotional security, crucial for healthy psychological growth, allowing her to explore her interests and build her self-identity. As she navigates the expectations her father places on her, she exhibits traits of both resilience and internal conflict and guilt when realizing her true desires may not align with her father's expectations. This journey highlights the importance of self-identity, as Ember learns to reconcile her identity with family expectations.

After experiencing her father's authoritative parenting style, Ember comes to several important realizations. She understands that while Bernie has always supported her and set high expectations, the pressure to fulfil his dreams has overshadowed her own aspirations. As she confronts her feelings about taking over the family business, she realizes that the shop is not her true passion. This moment of self-discovery empowers her to acknowledge her desire for autonomy and the need to pursue her own dreams, rather than simply fulfilling her father's expectations. She recognizes that Bernie's intentions were rooted in love and support, but they unintentionally led her to doubt her own desires. In the end, Ember learns that she can honour her family's legacy while also carving out her own identity and path, illustrating her growth and the complexity of their relationship.

A psychological approach emphasizes the importance of analyzing characters motivations, emotions, and relationships to gain a deeper understanding of their development within a narrative. By applying this approach, it allows the us to explore the complexities of Ember's character and her relationship with her father, through the lens of authoritative parenting. Though this lens, we can see how Ember's father's authoritative parenting influences her struggles between his expectations and her desire for independence. The approach highlights her emotional growth as she learns to balance her father's dreams with her own aspirations, showcasing the complexities of their parent-child dynamic. By examining Ember's coping mechanism, we gain insight into her internal conflict and resilience, revealing how she navigates the pressure to meet her father's high standards. By analyzing Ember's experiences and emotional responses, we gain a deeper understanding of the movie exploration of how parenting styles affect personal development.

CONCLUSION

The problem formulated for this study are the type of parenting style that is portrayed in the movie *Elemental* and how does it contribute to Ember's personal development. In this study, the researcher uses one main theory to answer the research question which are Parenting Style Theory by Diana Baumrind.

Based on the findings and analysis on the *Elemental* movie, the researcher found that Ember is predominantly experiences an authoritative parenting style from her father, Bernie. However, at some certain moments, Bernie also exhibits characteristics of other parenting style. So, his overall parenting isn't rigidly confined to a one style, while it is primarily authoritative, marked with nurturing support, clear expectations, and open communication, there are instances where he shifts into permissive style, particularly in offering emotional protection, and an authoritarian style, especially when setting high expectations. This complex combination reflects a flexible yet imperfect parenting dynamic that significantly impacts Ember's development.

While the authoritative elements of Bernie's parenting encourage positive outcomes such as responsibility, ambition, and perseverance in Ember, they also introduce challenges. His high expectations, especially his desire for her to inherit the family shop, place pressure on Ember to meet standards that do not align with her true aspirations. Although Ember deeply values her parents' sacrifices and initially feels

obligated to follow the path they laid out, the emotional burden eventually leads her to recognize that she has sidelined her own dreams. Bernie's fluctuating parenting approaches, including moments of permissiveness and authoritarianism contribute to both the positive and negative dimensions of Ember's personal development.

The high expectations imposed by Bernie drive Ember's growth in independence, competence, and resilience, but they also foster internal struggles such as self-doubt, anxiety, guilt, and difficulty in expressing her true feelings. Not only that, the difficulty in openly discussing her true emotion shows that she struggles with these emotions internally. Furthermore, Ember felt compelled to suppress her own desires to meet her father's expectations, delaying the exploration of her own aspirations. As a result, her development is marked by a tension between fulfilling family obligations and discovering her true identity, a conflict she must resolve to achieve personal growth.

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