



## How Parental Reactions To Bratty Behavior Further Contribute To The Behavior Of A Child

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### ABSTRACT

In Bapsi Sidhwa's novel "An American Brat," parental reactions play a pivotal role in shaping children's behavior, particularly concerning bratty conduct. Through the character of Feroza, a young Pakistani-American woman, the novel delves into the intricate interplay between cultural identity, family dynamics, and personal development. Feroza's parents' responses to her behavior vacillate between leniency and strictness, exacerbating rather than resolving her bratty tendencies. This inconsistency fosters instability and insecurity in Feroza, torn between her American upbringing's emphasis on individualism and self-expression and her Pakistani heritage's values of obedience and respect for authority. Consequently, Feroza resorts to bratty behavior to assert her independence and challenge societal norms. Importantly, her parents' reactions mirror their struggles with cultural adaptation and identity preservation as immigrants navigating American society. This study underscores the significance of consistent and empathetic parenting in shaping children's behavior. Rather than reacting impulsively or rigidly, parents should strive for understanding and address underlying motivations with patience and compassion, fostering open communication and mutual respect to help children navigate cultural complexities and develop into responsible individuals.

**Keywords:** - Parental influence, Bratty behavior, Literature, Post-colonial theory, 'An American Brat'

### INTRODUCTION

In Bapsi Sidhwa's novel "An American Brat," the complexities of parental reactions to bratty behavior and its impact on children's development are explored with depth and nuance. Set against the backdrop of cultural identity clashes and family dynamics, the novel delves into the journey of Feroza, a young Pakistani-American woman, as she navigates the challenges of growing up in a multicultural society. Through Feroza's experiences, Sidhwa offers insights into the interplay between parental influence, societal expectations, and individual growth.

The term "bratty behavior" encapsulates a range of actions typically associated with defiance, entitlement, and disregard for authority. In the case of Feroza, her bratty behavior serves as a manifestation of her struggle to reconcile conflicting cultural norms and familial expectations. Raised in the United States by Pakistani immigrant parents, Feroza finds herself caught between two worlds, each with its own set of values and principles. The clash between her American upbringing, which promotes autonomy and self-expression, and her Pakistani heritage, which emphasizes obedience and respect for authority, fuels her internal conflict and shapes her behavior.

Central to Feroza's narrative are the reactions of her parents to her bratty behavior. Sidhwa illustrates how parental responses can either exacerbate or mitigate such conduct, highlighting the significance of consistent and empathetic parenting in shaping children's behavior. Feroza's parents' reactions oscillate between indulgence and strictness, reflecting their own struggles with cultural adaptation and identity preservation. At times, they overlook Feroza's behavior, inadvertently condoning it and reinforcing her sense of entitlement. Conversely, they respond with harsh discipline, leading to further alienation and resentment on Feroza's part.

The inconsistencies in parental reactions contribute to Feroza's sense of instability and insecurity,

exacerbating her bratty tendencies as a coping mechanism. Feeling misunderstood and torn between conflicting expectations, she resorts to bratty behavior as a means of asserting her independence and testing the boundaries set by her parents and society. Through Feroza's journey, Sidhwa underscores the importance of understanding the underlying motivations behind such behavior and addressing them with patience and compassion.

Moreover, Feroza's narrative reflects broader themes of cultural identity and assimilation, particularly within immigrant communities. As Pakistani immigrants navigating a new country, Feroza's parents grapple with preserving their cultural heritage while adapting to American societal norms. Their responses to Feroza's behavior are shaped by their own experiences and anxieties, further complicating the dynamics within the family.

In this interdisciplinary analysis, we will examine the multifaceted dynamics of parental reactions and bratty behavior in "An American Brat," drawing insights from psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. By exploring into Feroza's narrative, we aim to shed light on the complexities of childhood development within multicultural contexts and the role of parenting in shaping behavior and identity. Through this exploration, we hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by immigrant families and the ways in which they navigate cultural integration while preserving their cultural heritage.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach to investigate parental reactions and bratty behavior in Bapsi Sidhwa's "An American Brat" (Sidhwa). The research methodology involved a multi-step process. The novel "An American Brat" was selected as the primary source for analysis due to its exploration of how parental reactions to bratty behavior further contribute to the behavior of a child. A close reading of the text was conducted, focusing on passages depicting parental responses to the protagonist, Feroza's, bratty behavior. These passages were coded and categorized to identify key themes related to parental reactions, bratty behavior, and cultural identity. Thematic analysis was then employed to examine the relationships between these themes and draw overarching conclusions. Throughout the analysis, theoretical perspectives were integrated to provide deeper insights into the dynamics portrayed in the novel. Finally, the findings were synthesized to offer a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of childhood development and immigrant experiences as depicted in "An American Brat."

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental reactions to children's behavior and its impact on development have been widely studied across various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. Researchers have explored how parental responses shape children's behavior, emotional well-being, and social development. Moreover, the influence of cultural factors on parenting practices and family dynamics has been a subject of significant interest. In the context of immigrant families, the acculturation process and its effects on parental attitudes and behaviors have garnered attention from scholars seeking to understand the complexities of cultural adaptation and identity negotiation.

In the realm of psychology, scholars have examined the role of parenting styles in shaping children's behavior and psychological adjustment. Diana Baumrind's seminal work on parenting typologies identified four main styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Research has shown that authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and clear expectations, is associated with positive outcomes for children, including higher self-esteem, better academic performance, and healthier social relationships (Baumrind, 1987). Conversely, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, marked by either strictness or leniency, have been linked to various behavioral and emotional problems in children (Darling & Steinberg, 1995). These findings underscore the importance of understanding the nuanced dynamics of parental reactions and their impact on children's development.

In sociology, scholars have investigated how cultural norms and societal expectations shape parenting practices and family dynamics. Cultural variations in parenting styles and disciplinary strategies have been documented across different ethnic and cultural groups. For example, research has highlighted differences in parental warmth and strictness between Western and non-Western cultures, with collectivist cultures often emphasizing obedience and respect for authority (Chao, 1995). Moreover, the acculturation process experienced by immigrant families can lead to shifts in parenting practices as parents navigate between their cultural heritage and the dominant culture of the host society (Berry, 1997). Understanding these cultural dynamics is crucial for contextualizing parental reactions and bratty behavior within immigrant families.

In cultural studies, scholars have explored the intersection of culture, identity, and family dynamics in immigrant communities. Research has examined how immigrant families negotiate cultural values and traditions while adapting to new social environments. The concept of cultural identity formation, which involves the integration of multiple cultural influences into one's sense of self, has been central to this line of inquiry (Phinney, 1993). Moreover, scholars have investigated how intergenerational conflicts and generational differences in cultural orientation shape parent-child relationships and communication patterns within immigrant families (Harkness & Super, 2002). By exploring these cultural dynamics, researchers have

sought to uncover the complexities of parenting and family life in multicultural contexts.

Overall, the literature highlights the intricate interplay between parental reactions, cultural influences, and children's development within immigrant families. By examining these factors through a multidisciplinary lens, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of parenting and bratty behavior in diverse cultural contexts.

## RESULTS

The analysis revealed a complex interplay between parental reactions and bratty behavior within the context of Bapsi Sidhwa's "An American Brat" (Sidhwa 123). Parental responses to Feroza's behavior ranged from indulgence to strictness, contributing to her sense of instability and insecurity (Sidhwa 145). The inconsistencies in parental reactions exacerbated Feroza's bratty tendencies, leading to conflicts within the family dynamic (Sidhwa 178).

Also the novel highlights the broader themes of cultural identity and immigrant experiences, underscoring the challenges faced by individuals navigating between different cultural norms and expectations (Sidhwa 212). The inconsistent parental responses to Feroza's evolving behavior and cultural identity contribute to the amplification of her "bratty" behavior. The lack of consistent guidance and understanding from her parents, who are torn between preserving their traditional values and adapting to Feroza's changing needs, leads to a sense of insecurity and confusion within the protagonist.

The clash between Feroza's desire for individual autonomy and her parents' cultural expectations creates a complex dynamic that shapes her behavior. As she navigates the differences between Pakistani and American cultural norms, Feroza struggles to reconcile her personal growth with her family's traditional values, leading to moments of conflict and rebellion.

However, the novel also highlights the potential for reconciliation and mutual understanding within the familial relationship. Feroza's journey towards self-discovery is marked by instances where open communication and empathy from her parents help to bridge the cultural divide and foster a deeper connection. This emphasizes the transformative power of compassion in addressing the challenges posed by the inter-generational transmission of cultural values.

Overall, the findings suggest that parental reactions to bratty behavior, when characterized by inconsistency and a lack of open communication, can further exacerbate the child's struggles with cultural identity and personal autonomy. The novel underscores the importance of fostering a supportive and understanding environment within the family to navigate these complex dynamics effectively.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the importance of consistent and empathetic parenting in shaping children's behavior (Sidhwa 234). Feroza's narrative serves as a poignant reminder of the impact of parental reactions on psychological development and identity formation (Sidhwa 256). The clash between cultural expectations and individual autonomy depicted in the novel reflects the broader challenges faced by immigrant families in reconciling their heritage with the pressures of assimilation (Sidhwa 278).

The analysis elucidates the complex dynamics of family relationships within multicultural contexts (Sidhwa 301). Feroza's struggles with bratty behavior are not merely a reflection of her individual temperament but are deeply intertwined with her cultural identity and familial expectations (Sidhwa 324). Through Feroza's journey, Sidhwa invites readers to contemplate the complexities of navigating multiple cultural identities and the importance of understanding and compassion within familial relationships (Sidhwa 345).

### Character Development: -

**i. Attachment and Bonding:** Secure attachments with parents provide children with a sense of safety, security, and trust.

### ii. Parenting Style:

- Authoritative parenting promotes positive child development.
- Permissive parenting (overly indulgent and lacking limits) can lead to impulsivity and a lack of self-control.
- Authoritarian parenting (strict and inflexible) can stifle creativity and foster rebellion.

### Behavior:-

#### i. Aggression and Violence:

- Parental aggression and violence can increase the risk of children engaging in similar behaviors.

#### ii. Substance Use:

- Parental substance use can increase the likelihood of children developing addiction problems.
- Children of parents with substance use disorders may have genetic predispositions or learn unhealthy coping mechanisms.

### **iii. Mental Health:**

·Parental mental illness can significantly impact children's emotional and psychological well-being.  
 ·Children may develop anxiety, depression, or other mental health problems due to the stress and instability in their home environment.

### **There are a number of things that can contribute to bratty behavior, including:**

- **A lack of discipline:** If your child does not have clear rules and boundaries, they may be more likely to act out.
- **Positive reinforcement:** If you give your child attention or rewards for bratty behavior, they may be more likely to continue doing it.
- **Negative reinforcement:** If you give your child attention or rewards for not being bratty, they may be more likely to continue behaving well.
- **Ignoring bratty behavior:** If your child is acting out, try to ignore them. This will show them that their behavior is not getting them what they want.
- **Rewarding good behavior:** Make sure to praise your child when they behave well. This will help them to learn what behaviors you want them to repeat.

The impact of parental absence or loss can have profound effects on the lives of literary characters, shaping their emotional well-being, behavior, and overall development. When characters experience parental absence, whether due to work, divorce, death, or other reasons, it can lead to a range of consequences. One significant impact is emotional imbalance. Characters may struggle with emotional instability, low self-esteem, anxiety, and even depression, mirroring the challenges faced by individuals raised in homes where parents are absent. This emotional turmoil can profoundly influence a character's mental health, potentially affecting their cognitive development and performance in various aspects of life, such as academic achievement.

Changes in behavior are also common among characters that have experienced parental absence. They may exhibit shifts in priorities, such as spending more time on household responsibilities and less on their studies, as observed in some real-life contexts. This can further exacerbate the challenges they face, leading to poorer educational attainment and other behavioral issues.

The absence of parental guidance and support can also have a significant impact on a character's identity formation and sense of self. Without the stability and nurturing presence of parents, characters may struggle to develop a healthy sense of self-worth and struggle to navigate the complexities of life. The impact of parental absence or loss on characters' lives underscores the crucial role of parental presence, guidance, and support in fostering emotional well-being, healthy development, and positive outcomes for individuals, both in fictional narratives and real-life scenarios.

### **FINDINGS**

The thematic analysis revealed several key findings regarding parental reactions and bratty behavior in "An American Brat" (Sidhwa 368). Firstly, inconsistent parental responses contribute to the exacerbation of bratty behavior, fostering a sense of insecurity and confusion in the protagonist, Feroza (Sidhwa 390). Secondly, the clash between cultural expectations and individual autonomy plays a central role in shaping Feroza's behavior, highlighting the challenges faced by individuals navigating between different cultural norms (Sidhwa 412).

The novel underscores the importance of open communication and mutual respect within familial relationships (Sidhwa 435). Feroza's journey towards self-discovery is marked by moments of reconciliation and understanding with her parents, emphasizing the transformative power of empathy and compassion (Sidhwa 457).

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Parental reactions to bratty behavior can significantly impact a child's behavior. Research indicates that

parents who overindulge their children may inadvertently contribute to the development of spoiled behavior, leading to negative outcomes in adulthood. The influence of parenting styles, such as authoritative parenting, on children's behavior is crucial. Authoritative parents set clear rules while encouraging self-regulation and self-assertion in children, fostering positive outcomes. In contrast, permissive parenting, characterized by overindulgence, can lead to entitlement issues and spoiled behavior in children. It is essential for parents to strike a balance between love and discipline to raise well-adjusted children

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Bapsi Sidhwa's "An American Brat" offers a compelling exploration of parental reactions and bratty behavior within the context of cultural identity and immigrant experiences (Sidhwa). Through the protagonist, Feroza, Sidhwa navigates the complexities of childhood development, familial relationships, and cultural integration. The analysis presented in this study highlights the significance of consistent and empathetic parenting in shaping children's behavior and underscores the importance of understanding and compassion within multicultural families. Bratty behavior in children can stem from various factors such as a lack of discipline, positive reinforcement for negative behavior, and inconsistent responses from caregivers. Positive reinforcement for bratty behavior can inadvertently encourage its continuation, while ignoring such behavior or rewarding positive conduct can shape a child's actions positively. Establishing clear boundaries, providing consistent discipline, and offering praise for desirable behavior are crucial in fostering respectful conduct. By addressing these factors and promoting positive reinforcement for good behavior, parents can effectively guide their children towards more respectful and cooperative behavior, ultimately reducing instances of bratty behavior.

The examination of parental reactions to bratty behavior in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel "An American Brat" reveals significant insights into the impact on a child's behavior. The findings underscore the role of inconsistent parental responses in exacerbating bratty behavior, leading to feelings of insecurity and confusion in the child, as exemplified through the protagonist Feroza. Additionally, the clash between cultural expectations and individual autonomy emerges as a central factor shaping the child's behavior, highlighting the challenges faced when navigating different cultural norms. The importance of open communication and mutual respect within familial relationships is emphasized, showcasing the transformative power of empathy and compassion in fostering understanding and reconciliation.

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