

The Impacts of Over-protective and Supportive Parenting on Children's Self-efficacy: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract: Children's self-efficacy is an important topic that has been widely discussed in hopes of constantly increasing in developmental period of children. During this challenging developmental period, parenting styles and interactions play a vital role in influencing children's self-efficacy. The objective of this study is to examine how supportive parenting and over-protective parentings predict adolescents' self-efficacy respectively, along with the effect of gender and grade level. A survey was given to students in age 12-18, combining six-graders, middle school students, and high students. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) served as a basis to evaluate the questionnaire's results. The first hypothesis was that over-protective parenting will negatively predict children's self-efficacy, and supportive parenting is a positive predictor of self-efficacy. The second hypothesis was that demographic variables such as gender and grade might moderate the above correlation, indicating that females and younger schoolers are more vulnerable to the effect of over-protective parenting style which results in lower self-efficacy. The hypotheses were not fully supported by the statistic. Results confirmed that both over-protective and supportive parenting are significant predictors of children's self-efficacy while gender and grade level showed a slight difference.

Keywords: parenting style, self-efficacy, children

1. Introduction

1.1. Definition and Background

As society became increasingly concerned about children's development, research about how different parenting styles can affect children in judging their capability on performing tasks has become wide-spread. This sense of ability has been conceptualized as self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a term that describes the ability to predict and judge one's plausibility to accomplish a task [1]. When apply to children, relatively low self-efficacy might lead to negative pre-judgment on the possibility of completing the task well, ultimately causing low self-concept. Therefore, behavioral relationship expert Stephen Covey believes that if parents realize the importance of self-efficacy to their children when they are young, it will help the growth of teenagers.

1.2. Purpose

The present study tries to understand how parenting practices can influence children's self-efficacy. Based on the result of the present study, we can gain insights into how parenting practices can promote or hinder the development of children's confidence and resilience. The results will clarify the role of interventions in supporting parenting styles and help children improve their sense of well-being and achieve success. Moreover, this study can help parents, educators, and mental health professionals better understand how parenting affect children's self-confidence. It could also help them identify strategies to promote children's self-efficacy.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Parenting Methods and Adolescent's Self-efficacy

First, the way parents educate their children will affect their intellectual development. A positive sense of self- efficacy is very important to individuals. Even an intelligent person cannot achieve success if his or her sense of self-efficacy is low. Although it is understandable that parents have high expectations for their children, it is not the proper way to often say that children are not right, or even ridicule and satirize children. Too much criticism may make it difficult for students to establish positive senses of self-efficacy. If the child is considered as stupid, the child's sense of self-efficacy will become poor, which is a consequence that less confident and a sense of inferiority.

Secondly, the way parents educate their children will affect the development of their children's personalities and abilities, such as their temperament, personality, social adaptability, interpersonal skills, autonomy, and independence [2]. Self-efficacy and the total score of children's educational locus of control are negatively linked. Specifically, adolescents' general self-efficacy is significantly negatively correlated with their parents' parental control dimension and the total score of control sources. Adolescents' academic self-efficacy is significantly negatively correlated with their parents' educational effectiveness, "parental responsibility, parental control over their children's behavior dimension. Moreover, the total score of control source-adolescents' self-regulated learning efficacy is significantly relevant to their parents' educational effectiveness [3].

Autonomy promotion is another parental rearing method, which means parents encourage their children to be independent, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decision about what they want to do and how they do it.

2.2. Psychological Control by Parents

Parental Psychological Control Scale (PPCS) was used to measure the level of parental psychological control [4]. Olsen added additional five items to Youth Self-Report. Five separate dimensions of psychological control, including invalidating feelings, love withdrawal and personal attack [5]. Adolescents perceive their parents' excessive control over matters or actions in their personal lives as intrusive, and as a result, they may reject or disregard such restriction. Therefore, parental psychological control (PPC) over adolescent can be seen as disrespectful or intrusive. Furthermore, the results show that adolescents with similar motivation beliefs have different degrees of opposition to PPC. Overall, different levels of resistance to parents PPC will leads to greater change in parental control index.

2.3. Types of Parenting Methods

Family is the main living environment of children, and parents are the main breeders of children. Therefore, parents' rearing methods will affect children's development and have different impacts on

the cognitive, social, and behavioral aspects of primary and secondary students. Over-protection, as one of the parental rearing methods, refers to the behavior of parents' over-indulgence, over-care, over-pampering, and over-anxiety. In contrast to autonomy promotion, this type of parenting method lacks the granting of autonomy to children which limits children's abilities to develop skills in tackling life problems. According to research and reports, the overcontrol of parents served as one of the main factors that caused chronic anxiety in children. Anxiety is often accompanied by negativity which further results in low self-efficacy.

For autonomy-supportive parenting, the role of parents shifts from managing children's behavior to guiding their intentions to behave well and positively. Autonomy, by definition, is the ability to make own decisions or choices without being influenced by others [6]. In the psychological context, autonomy becomes a crucial factor in children's development, especially in late childhood and early adolescents. It is the idea of regulating self-initiation, at the same time acknowledging others' opinions without being emotionally affected or pressured. Autonomy-supportive parents successfully fulfilled this requirement by offering meaningful feedback and attainable expectation that allows children to master their worlds by solving problems and making decisions. Thus, children's satisfaction with their lives improves, as their basic psychological need of trust is fulfilled.

Shih defined encouraging autonomy as "individuals in an authoritative position, from the perspective of others, provide opportunities to start and choose themselves, provide meaningful reasons for requests, acknowledge the feelings of others, and minimize the use of pressure and requirements". Another study found that independent support is a gradual process in the family, starting from late childhood and adolescence, and increasing sharply after 15 years old [7]. There is an evidence that the environment characterized by autonomous support positively impacts adolescents' overall well-being, academic engagement, emotional regulation skills, and social behavior [8].

2.4. Current Study

Prior studies revealed that the influence of supportive parenting on children's self-efficacy is relevant which indicates a positive correlation [9]. Since this type of parenting always encourages children to perceive autonomy, their increased sense of confidence leads to a higher level of self-efficacy which also facilitates their learning process and performance. Conversely, psychologically controlling parenting demonstrates the opposite effect on destructing children's self-efficacy which could even lead to depression or anxiety. Adolescents in this type of parenting environment feel pressured to meet up the expectation and struggled to seek approval. Their autonomy needs have never been perceived which is deeply dampened, thus deteriorating their self-belief, and further lowering their self-efficacy. Research has also shown that over-protective parenting results in decreases in children's capability on adapting to a new environment, which is another possible consequences of low self-efficacy.

However, most of the present studies focus exclusively on secondary or high school students which neglects the population of middle school students. This phenomenon is understandable since teenagers in secondary or high school experience frequent and rapid changes in both physical and psychological aspects. As a result, researchers are lending more lenses toward this population. Besides, self-efficacy is often used as a measure to explain behaviors and sophisticated psychological phenomena. Hence, a few studies conducted for evaluating variables that affect self-efficacy. Another limitation is that a majority of research conclusions are based on the findings being conducted in Western families. Studies on Asian families are relatively rare. However, over-protective parenting is a very common parenting style that can bring valuable insights to the field under proper and adequate studies. To make up for the aforementioned deficiencies, the present study tried to clarify the differences between two parenting styles (i.e. over-protective and autonomy-supportive styles),

and adolescent self-efficacy. The research will be conducted on a sample of Chinese students and families by using both test methods and questionnaires.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

From January to February 2023, the study subjects were the sixth-grade students of Hainan Maple Leaf School and the second and first-grade students of Hainan Overseas Chinese Middle School. There are three grades of students in the sixth grade, the second grade, and the senior grade. According to the actual situation, two classes are randomly selected as the representative samples in the sixth grade, and two classes in the second and senior grades are selected as the representative samples, with a total of 270 students. In order to make it easier to understand the class code later, we choose to convert the class code here. Details about the participants is shown in Table 1 & 2 below.

Table 1: Class name replacement.

Original class name	Class name after replacement
Class 2, grade 6	Class 1, grade 6
Class 4, grade 6	Class 2, grade 6
Class 3, grade 8(key class)	Class 1, grade 8
Class 8, grade 8(ordinary class)	Class 2, grade 8
Class 6, senior 1(key class)	Class 1, senior 1
Class 9, senior 1(ordinary class)	Class 2, senior 1

Table 2: Information of gender and grades.

		Grade			
		Grade 6	Grade 8	Senior 1	Total
Gender	Male	50	46	43	135
	Female	40	44	47	135
	Total	90	90	90	270

3.2. Sampling Method and Measures

This study adopts stratified sampling and random sampling. When selecting the grades of the subjects, three representative grades at different levels were selected to avoid the errors in the questionnaire results caused by incident and different personalities at different ages. Stratified sampling is adopted for the students of three different grades. During data processing, screening out the null value of demographic variables or the regular answer questionnaire is necessary, and number the valid questionnaire.

3.3. Parental Control Index

This study will use parental control index as an indicator of parenting style. This index is extracted and transformed from the PPCS which is generally used to assess how parents use psychological control strategies on their children and the degree toward them. The scale has been used in various studies as an indicator of the relationship between children's outcomes and parental psychological control. Possible child outcomes can be anxiety, depression, and academic performance. Some studies

have suggested that high levels of psychological control could exert a negative influence on children, such as lower self-esteem, higher levels of anxiety and depression, and poorer academic performance.

3.4. General Self-efficacy Scale (GSES)

GSES is a psychometric scale designed to assess individuals' self-efficacy or their belief in their ability of coping with a variety of tough situations in life. The scale was developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem in the late 1970s and has since become a widely used tool in psychology research. The scale consists of 10 items that measure an individual's perceived ability to perform various tasks and deal with difficult situations. Four-point scale ranging from "not at all true" to "exactly true" was rated. So far, the Chinese version of GSES has been proved to have great validity and reliability [1].

4. Hypothesis

The study adopts a test method and questionnaire for research. Researchers argue that parental support is beneficial for children's lives and "parental manipulation of the child's sense of self by means such as guilt induction and love withdrawal [10]. Savard found that psychological control and autonomy support will have two completely opposite effects. Therefore, the study speculated that the overprotective education model will cause a low sense of self-efficacy, which will greatly reduce the self-confidence of children, and it is not only conducive to the solution of the problem, but serious words will also make children commit anxiety disorders and other mental illness. On the contrary, supportive parenting education model can improve children's self-efficacy. Therefore, based on the above prediction conclusions, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study:

H1. Over-protective parenting could predict self-efficacy.

H2. supportive parenting could predict predictor of self-efficacy.

H3. Over-protective and supportive parenting have opposite effects on children's self-efficacy.

5. Results

Until February 9th, 11 pm, we received the responses to the questionnaire with a total of 130 participants.

5.1. Equation and Analysis

Variables measured in the present study include children's gender, grade, and the way their parents encourage autonomy or over-protection education. Linear regression model is used, and the academic performance is supposed to be related with.

5.2. Correlation

We received the responses to the questionnaire with a total of 130 participants. When examining the influence of children's perceived parenting styles on their self-efficacy level, over 60% of children reported having relatively authoritative parents, as indicated in their ratings on scenarios. As a result, this group of participants generally rated 2 or 3 for questions given "whether you have had the experience of traveling alone or attending summer camp alone" and "whether you can manage your life and study well when your parents are not around" (see Figure 1 & 2). Although there is an adequate sample size to draw out a direct correlation, it should be noted that supportive parenting and children's self-efficacy are statistically significant (see Figure 3 & table 3). Over-protective parenting demonstrated some correlation with self-efficacy but the results were not as significant as supportive parenting indicates (see Table 4).

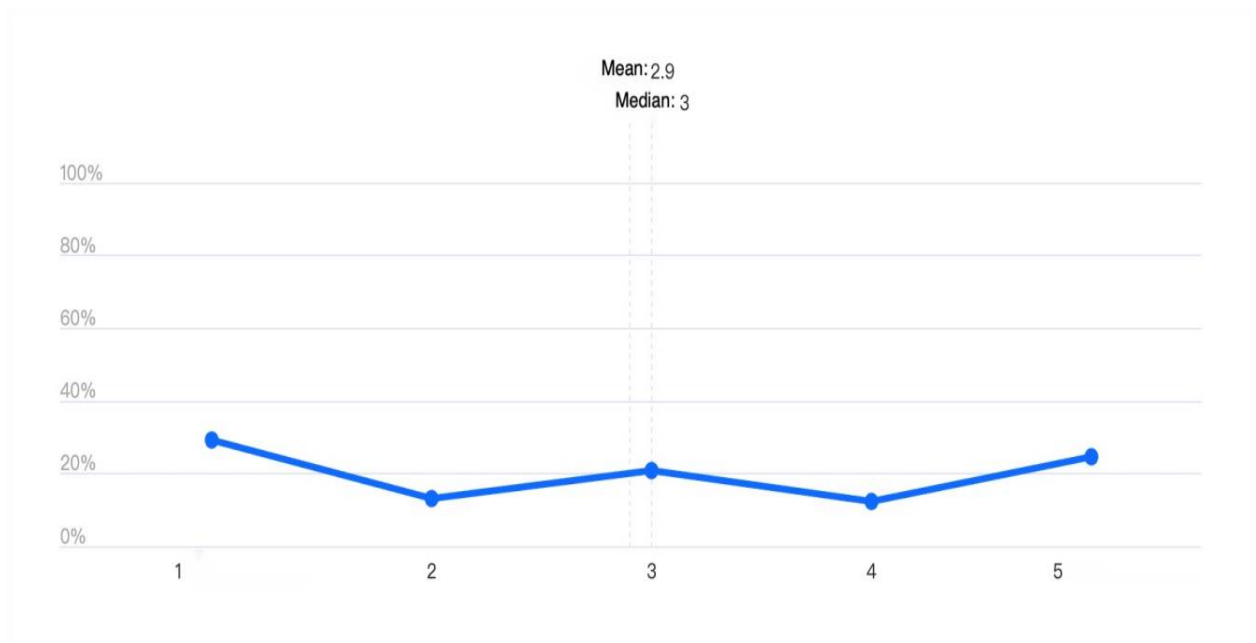


Figure 1: Number of response of the question “whether you can manage your life and study well when your parents are not around”.

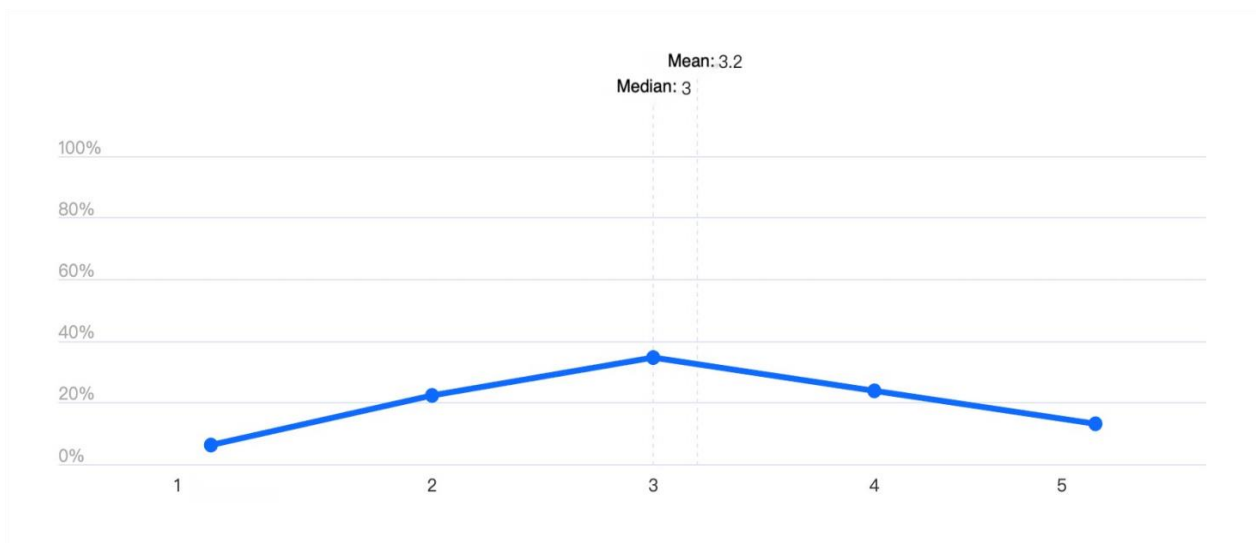
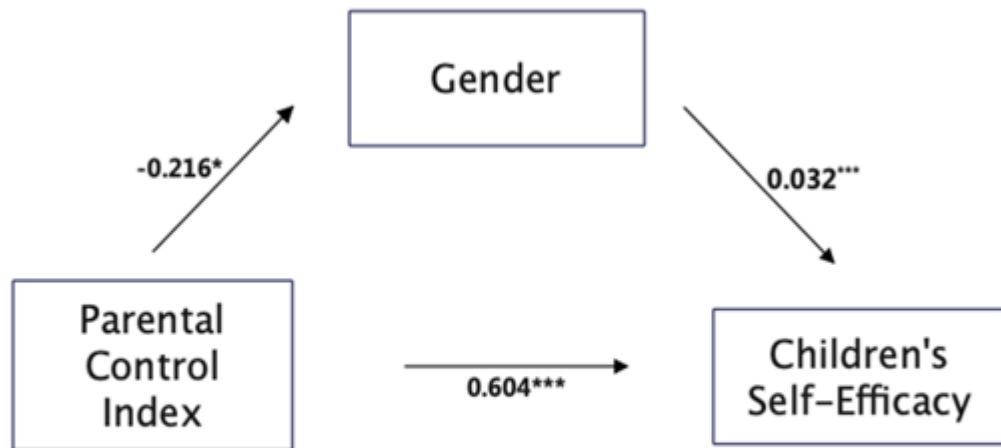


Figure 2: Number of response of the question “whether you have had the experience of traveling alone or attending summer camp alone”.



* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 3: Relation between parental control index, gender, and children's self-efficacy.

Table 3: Fits of linear regression model.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	376.689	2	188.345	40.942	<.001b
Residual	584.241	127	4.600		
Total	960.931	129			

a. Dependent Variable: Children's Self-Efficacy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Control Index, Gender

Table 4: Relation between children's self- efficacy, gender and parental control index.

		Children's Self-Efficacy	Gender	Parental Control Index
Pearson Correlation	Children's Self-Efficacy	1.000	.032	.604
	Gender	.032	1.000	-.216
	Parental Control Index	.604	-.216	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Children's Self-Efficacy	.	.358	<.001
	Gender	.358	.	.007
	Parental Control Index	.000	.007	.
N	Children's Self-Efficacy	130	130	130
	Gender	130	130	130

Table 4: (continued).

Parental Control Index	130	130	130
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Gender and grade level were also considered in this evaluation, however, not all of the demographic variables were significantly related to self-efficacy. Previous results have shown that lower grade students have poor self-efficacy, but further research is needed to better understand these two variables, so the results of the study are unclear.

6. Discussion

Our research focuses on the impact of parental encouragement, autonomous education, and self-protective education on children's self-efficacy, and whether children's self-efficacy is influenced by gender and grade. This is the first few studies to compare the respective impact of overprotective parenting and supportive parenting on children's self-efficacy that conduct research on groups of Chinese students. The finding of our study can serve as a general guideline for parents to follow when educating their kids. Further, it provides close insight into the correlation between parenting styles and perceived children's self-efficacy. Gender and grade level were also considered in this evaluation, however, not all of the demographic predictors variables were identified as significant predictors of self-efficacy. Previous results have shown that lower grade students have poor self-efficacy, but further research is needed to better understand these two variables, so the results of the study are unclear.

Our findings suggest that parents' overprotective education is negatively correlated with children's self-efficacy. In addition, it is recognized that parental control and self-support for children mediate the relation between parenting and self-efficacy. Results of the present study is consistent with another published study that shows that parental warmth and support are beneficial for children's self-evaluation, and on the other hand parental control is negatively correlated with self-evaluation. The correlation analysis between variables indicates the relation between children's self-efficacy, gender and parental control index. According to our research results, the fertility rate itself has an energy of 0.604, which has little impact on gender, with a phase impact of 0.032. The parent-child relationship index is one of the main indicators that measure how a child raises a child, how he/she feels, and how he/she conducts statistics.

6.1. Future Direction

The contribution of this study is as follows: there are few studies on the effect of psychological control on parents' self-esteem. It affects children's self-esteem in different educational models. Explore and find the appropriate educational model to increase children's self-esteem.

The results of the present study are generally in line with previous studies, which indicated that educational methods can affect children's self-evaluation. Together, those result suggests that parenting style seem to be an important factor influencing self-efficacy in different samples. Specifically, the samples of this study include students of different ages (sixth, junior high, high school students). Therefore, the result of this study reflects the connection between the education method and the self-evaluation of the elderly rather than the previous study.

6.2. Limitations

The sample relatively small and homogenous which favors more female participants instead of male participants. This is a limitation of this study. Since our sample cannot represent larger population,

the generalizability of the study findings is limited. Moreover, since the type of data we collected is self-reported, it was lack of subjectivity. Thus, the samples may be more prone to bias, as the participants may not be representative of the larger population and may have certain characteristics or perspectives that differ from the broader population. This can limit the validity and reliability of the study results.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study improves the current understanding of how supportive parenting and overprotective parenting can affect children's self-efficacy in either positive or negative ways. Our findings suggest that supportive parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and autonomy support, is associated with higher levels of children's self-efficacy. In contrast, over-protective parenting, characterized by control, criticism, and over-involvement, is associated with lower levels of children's self-efficacy. Moreover, gender is not a determinant of self-efficacy although it can influence children's self-efficacy beliefs in certain domains due to socialization and cultural expectations. Notably, it is important to notice that self-efficacy can be affected by a plenty of variables, including social support, personal experience, and domain-specific knowledge and skills. Future research can continue to investigate influential mechanisms of the relationship between parenting types and self-efficacy.

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