

The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Youth Anxiety, Depression and Academic Performance

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Abstract: As children's psychological problems become more and more common, many papers focused on the impact of different parenting styles on the development of children's anxiety and depression. On how certain parenting practises affect the onset of children's psychological disorders, there is dispute, nevertheless. This paper gathered various papers that examined the relationship between parenting practises and children's anxiety, depression, and academic performance. The present study then analysed the key points of each paper, listed its benefits and drawbacks, and made recommendations for further study. According to most findings, if parents apply a harsh parenting style, there will be a negative influence on children's depression, anxiety and academic performance. Though it's possible that cultural variables still have a significant impact on the association between parental practises and children's psychological growth. Therefore, future research should concentrate on the effects of various parenting philosophies on kids' psychological growth within various cultural contexts.

Keywords: parenting styles, youth anxiety, youth depression, academic performance

1. Introduction

More parents and scholars are increasingly worried about psychological concerns in children as psychological issues receive more and more attention from the scientific community. Numerous studies have also been produced as a result of the occurrence of more youngsters having psychological issues. According to one study, mental, emotional, or behavioural disorders are present in 21.8% of American children between the ages of 3 and 17 partly due to the pandemic [1]. Many ideas for the origins of mental disease in children have come from the scientific community in order to lower the risk of mental illness in children and explore the causes of mental illness in children. The link between parenting practises and psychological issues in children is the one that has drawn the most attention from scientists [2,3,4]. While the majority of evidence supports a link between parenting practises and children's psychological issues, there is disagreement on how certain parenting practises impact the emergence of children's psychological issues. This paper analysed articles on parenting styles, child depression, anxiety disorders, and children's academic performance. Through better understanding of the connection between how parents raise their children and children's psychological development, strategies on children education and how to lower children's risk of developing related psychological disorder were suggested.

2. Parenting Styles

Parenting style refers to strategies and patterns that parents employ to nurture children and can provide a context for specific child-rearing behaviours. According to the interviews and observational studies of Baumrind, parenting styles ranged in terms of two dimensions including responsiveness and demandingness [5]. Responsiveness represents the development of individuality and autonomy by coordinating support and acquiescing to the child's demands which includes warmth, autonomous support, and rational expression [5]. Demandingness, on the other hand, refers to parents' expectations of their child to be a productive member of society through behavioural control, direct confrontation, maturity demands, and monitoring of the child's activities [5]. Later, in 1991, Baumrind modified her own model and proposed three different dimensions considered when conceptualise parenting styles, involving parent acceptance and involvement, level of control, and degree of autonomy granted [5]. Based on different levels of three dimensions, four parenting styles were suggested.

2.1. Authoritarian and Authoritative Styles

Parents who adopt authoritarian style are more likely to set up rigid rules for their children to abide by. In this parenting approach, children are not allowed to bargain. However, parents frequently fail to fully explain the rules to their children. This exemplifies a one-way communication between parents and children. In this style, parents demand their children follow a set of rules, and when children break the rules or make mistakes, they will get severely punished [5]. Parents, with this style of parenting, usually have high levels of both behavioural and psychological control over children, whereas low levels of acceptance, involvement and degree of autonomy granted [5]. Children who grow up with this kind of parent style often show low level of self-esteem, and social skills. However, unobservable and uncontrollable aggression remains a problem of children as there were no proper guidance of managing anger [5].

By contrast, authoritative parents exhibit a different pattern of raising children. Due to authoritative parents' clear expectations for their children and their willingness to explain why children are being punished, they often have an excellent relationship with their children. Relevant regulations are often applied as a reward rather than a penalty. This helps the children and parents communicate openly and frequently while also providing the youngster with some guidance on expectations and objectives [5]. This kind of parenting style can be achieved by considering high levels of acceptance and involvement combined with appropriate autonomy and both behavioural and psychological control [5]. Authoritative parenting results in a confident, well-behaved, and good motion-regulated children, which may lead to better goal accomplishment and school performance because their parents encourage high independence [5].

2.2. Other Parenting Styles

The remaining two parenting styles, permissive and uninvolved, largely differ in terms of level of acceptance. Permissive parents usually give the child a high degree of autonomy and acceptance, accompanied by low expectations [5]. Parent-child communication, in this type of parenting, is open, so the parent prefers the child to solve problems by themselves. This indicates that rules are often very limited in permissive parenting, which leads to a more friend-like approach between parents and children. In general, this kind of parenting results in children who are very socially competent and self-assured, but too much autonomy may also have a detrimental effect. The youngster will have a more impulsive, egotistical, and uncontrolled personality [6]. In addition, unhealthy eating habits and high risks of other health problems can be caused due to unlimited restrictions [6].

Low levels of acceptance, involvement, and both behavioural and psychological control may lead to uninvolved parenting [6]. Due to the parents' lack of involvement in the children's upbringing, this sort of parent typically offers the youngster a large level of independence. The parents often do not contact or speak with the children in any way beyond what is necessary to meet those basic requirements, which demonstrates that they do not employ any parenting techniques and offer nothing in the form of parenting. There are also relatively little, if any, parental expectations for the youngster [6]. Although children raised in this way will have high levels of self-awareness and problem-solving abilities, their social skills and emotional control will be low as a result of the parents' prolonged absence from their lives, making it challenging for them to achieve high levels of success in school and form positive social relationships.

3. Depression, Anxiety and Academic Performance in Youth

3.1. Depression in Youth

One of the significant emotional diseases that seriously impairs teenagers' development on all fronts—physical, emotional, social, and cognitive—is depression. According to the DSM-5, depression frequently shows itself as agitation, rage, and feelings of worthlessness. It may also cause issues with sleep, weight loss, or suicidal thoughts [7]. Depression symptoms can range from mild to severe. In general, moderate depression is difficult to diagnose, and as symptoms worsen, it can be challenging to treat. Therefore, early detection of depressed symptoms is essential. Previous research found that children might display irritation rather than sadness or depression, which was a key distinction between depressive symptoms in children and adults [7]. Gender, teenage hormonal changes, sleep and food problems, childhood trauma, parental disputes, peer conflicts, or bonding problems are a few typical reasons of depression in young people [7].

3.1.1. Effect of Attachment on Depression

While insecure attachment is linked to child psychopathology, namely internalising issues like depression, secure attachment is a protective mechanism that delays the development of psychopathology. There are different explanations for why the associations can be investigated between parenting styles and depression in youth. First the link between attachment security and depression can be explained by an individual's early attachment experiences and internal working patterns. The quality of early attachment experiences can shape an individual's broad relational expectations of self and others and influence the way they identify, interpret, categorise and evaluate attachment-related experiences. If individuals repeatedly experience a lack of reliable care, this may lead to dysfunctional cognitive patterns, such as questioning self-worth and doubts about the care of others. Such cognitive patterns would increase the risk of depressive symptoms. In particular, cognitive patterns of expectation of rejection or isolation may mediate the correlation between the feeling of insecurity and depression [5].

The co-occurrence of attachment problems and depression can be explained by the transfer of socio-ecological risk factors. These risk factors include low socio-economic status, debt, immigration status, inadequate housing, general health status and lack of family support systems. Many studies have found that risk factors from the socio-ecological context are transmitted intergenerationally. These socio-ecological risk factors predict the onset of attachment insecurity and depression in young people. As such, they take part in explaining the link between attachment security and depression [5].

3.1.2. Effect of Chronic Stress on Depression

The second explanation is the research on chronic stress. According to Bobby's attachment theory, infants and young children need caregivers to help them regulate their stress and emotions. Securely attached caregivers are effective in calming children, while insecurely attached caregivers are often difficult to calm. Lack of comfort can increase the risk of stress in childhood and depression. Chronic stress may be involved in depression and associated with neurological mechanisms [8].

The current study presents different explanations for the study of the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent depression, further demonstrating the existence of this relationship and highlighting that the risk of depressive episodes in adolescents can be reduced by further studying parenting styles.

3.2. Anxiety in Youth

One of the most prevalent mental issues in children is anxiety disorders, which for many adolescents seem to remain stable and difficult throughout childhood and adolescence [4]. A later decline in regard to a child's autonomy and an increase in anxiety because of hostile parents were predicted by higher levels of teenage anxiety. In addition, parental support and anxiety were expected to diminish one another. There is evidence that parenting affects children's anxiety, and that children's anxiety affects parenting as well. Anxiety-related characteristics, such as fear, might forecast overly protective parenting. Improved anxiety may result in more favourable assessments of parents, according to research on teenage anxiety therapy, which raises the possibility that better anxiety may affect parenting [9].

3.3. Academic Performance

The most notable family elements, which allude to how parenting styles play a part in family education, were shown to be by previous research to be among the numerous variables that might impact children's academic performance [10]. Parenting styles that are more responsive may cause children to be more interested in their learning goals, which will improve their performance [10]. Conversely, strict parental supervision may encourage children to disregard their parents' expectations of academic success and lower academic achievement [10].

4. The Effect of Parenting Style on Children Depression

As adolescents go from infancy to adolescence, the risk of having depression considerably rises, according to prior epidemiological research. Current cross-sectional studies have found that parenting styles play a significant role in the development of depression in children, for example, hostile and negative parenting styles may result in depression in children compared to warm and positive parenting styles. However, previous research does not explain in detail how specific latitudes and behaviours of parenting styles influence the development of depression in children, suggesting that the current findings do not predict the likelihood of depression in children based on parenting styles. Additionally, previous studies have used cross-sectional studies and lack the evidence to support longitudinal studies [8].

Thus, to address the limitations of the previous studies, the study used behavioural observational measures of parenting and a large community sample of young people over a three-year period. The study focused on observed positive and negative dimensions of parenting to predict the occurrence of depressive episodes. Parent-child conflict was considered a negative behaviour. Children's chances of developing depression are increased by parental criticism and conflict, but when parents become more supportive, children's chances of developing depression decrease [8].

Participants, including 585 youth recruited from different grades, were recruited in the study. Parenting behaviours were recorded in the study. These parenting dimensions were coded using approved parent-child coding techniques by trustworthy and impartial raters. Higher scores indicated behaviours that were strongly indicative of the parental behaviour seen during the encounter. Global codes were awarded on a scale of 1 to 5, with higher scores suggesting the behaviours. Parental involvement and affirmation, such as validating remarks and praising or recognising the kid, were indicators of parental support. Parents who mirrored their child's emotion, and used appropriate social cues showed high levels of responsiveness. Parental criticism included disapproval, insults, blame, or unduly critical behaviour, whereas parental conflict was indicated by hostile or angry outbursts [8].

The results demonstrated that there was no significant difference between the mean levels of parental support, responsiveness, criticism, and conflict in gender. In addition, after adjusting for carer and child's history of depression, the conflict between parents throughout early time of children affects juvenile chance of having a bad time during this period. Nonetheless, parental conflict and supportiveness cannot sufficiently predict the presence of depression in youth [8].

The most observable strength is the behavioural observation and clinical interviews to prospectively examine the relationship between parenting style and development of depression. The study's 36-month longitudinal approach and sizable population sample helped the results be more broadly applicable. This inquiry gave a thorough evaluation of the impacts of parental support, responsiveness, criticism, and conflict on youth's likelihood of developing clinically severe depression by overcoming the constraints of cross-sectional and monomethod questionnaire studies including self-reporting bias which may occur in previous studies. In order to increase confidence in the observed correlations and their influence on young people's risk of having depressive start over three years, the analysis additionally took into account the youths' history of depression before the research and their carers' history of depression [8].

However, the limitations of the study cannot be ignored. Firstly, the study observed parenting behaviours for a short period of time (5 mins) and only in conflict settings, which may not fully represent all other contexts. In addition, parenting behaviours were only assessed once in the study which may not be generalised to the real-life situation due to the reason that child-rearing is a dynamic process including different parenting behaviours in different stages of development. Moreover, the effects of genetic issues were ignored, which may be also involved in depression. Therefore, parenting behaviours should be assessed through different settings and further studies are required to support the relationship between how parents raise their children and depression in youth without the influence of genetic issues. [8]

A recent study also supported the same idea. The study conducted by Wang et al in 2021 indicated four parenting. Among four different parenting styles, children of care-autonomous parents had a decreased risk of depression, while children of indifferent and undifferentiated parents had a higher risk of depression by analysing the sample [11]. In addition, cross-sectional method used in the study provides another perspective. There were also some limitations that should be identified. First, the data collected in the study is mostly from the perspective of adolescents, which may bring biases to the results because they may not provide reliable information. Thus, it is vital to collect information from both parents' and children's perspective to increase the reliability of the results.

Nevertheless, some studies reported different results compared to the aforementioned studies. One study proposed by Fagan in 2022 demonstrated that there was no significant association between harsh criticism of parents or neglect and depression in children. The results surprisingly found that compared to parenting styles and mother-children relationships, father-child relationship played a more important role in the risk of depression in children regardless of their living arrangement [12]. Another surprising result was that father-child closeness can be increased by harsh discipline of father, whereas harsh discipline of mother can negatively impact mother-child relationship. This finding

suggested that fathers in the current study are more likely to administer harsh and strict discipline in the presence of warm and caring fathers. One drawback that should be taken into account is that these results can only be generalised to low-income families, which is too particular and makes it difficult to create a model that can explain other scenarios in real life.

5. The Effect of Parenting Style on Children Anxiety

The data compiled in this research shows that, internationally, the proportion of kids experiencing psychological issues—including internalised psychological disorders like anxiety in kids—is rising year after year. The likelihood of developing long-term psychological issues as an adult rises when these psychological issues manifest earlier in life, which has a long-lasting unfavourable effect on children's psychological and behavioural development. Previous studies indicated that parenting behaviours, especially for psychological control, was identified as one of the most significant factors that may lead to different kinds of psychological and behavioural problems in children. The reason is that parental psychological control refers to the psychological means used by parents to ignore or invade their children's emotions, for example, self-expression, ways of thinking, and attachments to close people due to parents view their children more as their own property instead of an independent person. This psychological control may make children feel guilty when they do not comply with their parents' demands resulting in greater possessiveness in parents [2].

This paper included 95 studies focusing on the psychological control of parents and children's anxiety and depression. A moderate relationship between presences of anxiety and depression in youth and parental psychological control was identified in the study. Additionally, since the random effect model was indicated in the study, it can provide a less biased theory across different cultures and can be generalised to most population due to the reason that the effect size cannot be considered as homogeneous. Furthermore, moderators, involving cultures, parenting genders, and child genders, were also emphasised in the study [2].

The results of this paper demonstrated that If parents employ parenting styles involving high levels of psychological and behaviour control, the risk of the presences of depression and anxiety in children will increase. One explanation of this can be parental control including limiting the thinking of children, controlling their emotions and expressions, and shaping their behaviours might make children feel guilty and self-penalised [2].

There were some limitations that should be indicated. First, although the results suggested there was a relationship between psychological control and depression and anxiety in children, most studies used were cross-sectional research which cannot confirm this association. Second, because depression and anxiety were evaluated via questionnaires, which required a high degree of psychological control, it was challenging to determine the true levels of the various variables due to the significant likelihood of the presence of self-reporting bias. Finally, the participants recruited in the previous study were 10-20 years old because participants should be able to report their own depression and anxiety levels [2].

Another systematic review investigated the correlation between how parents educate their children and children depression, anxiety, and suicide thoughts and revealed similar findings [3]. The study suggested a connection between warmth from parents and internalising symptoms in children and adolescents that was negative. They also discovered a connection between psychological control and severe control and the emergence of depressive and anxious symptoms. Regarding behavioural control, and in keeping with other meta-analyses, the findings revealed that, despite the average impact size being extremely small, this practise was negatively related to both depression and anxiety. Additionally in line with previous meta-analyses, they discovered a link between internalising symptoms in teenagers and autonomy grant. The references used for this article span a wide time period, and some of the earlier publications offered may be time-limited and may result in errors in

the analysis of the final results. This review also has certain restrictions. Additionally, the majority of the publications employed questionnaires to gather data, which somewhat undermines the validity of the information. Therefore, further studies should aim to investigate the relationship between different cultures and use different methods including observation to collect more reliable data.

6. The Effect of Parenting Style on Children Academic Performance

Academic success is directly correlated with family education, which includes parent-child interactions, parental participation, and parental aspirations for education. According to different levels of responsiveness and demandingness, parenting styles can be classified as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Among three different parenting styles, authoritative, involving high levels of responsiveness and demandingness, were regarded as the most effective parenting styles in the education of children by previous studies from European countries. However, other studies from China may indicate authoritarian parenting style have larger positive effect on children's academic performance, whereas authoritative and permissive parenting styles may even lead to a negative effect on the performance. Therefore, this study used a larger sample in China and measured different parenting styles separately in order to further investigate the effect of different parenting styles on children's academic performance and give suggestions for Chinese parents to choose proper education methods [13].

The results found that parenting styles have effects on children's performance. According to data, the parenting styles were predominately authoritarian and neglectful. The largest positive impact on children's academic achievement comes from authoritative parenting, whereas the strongest negative influence comes from negligent parenting. Nonetheless, children, whose parents applied authoritarian parenting style, have the highest grades among the participants compared to other students. In addition, authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles have stronger effects on children who have lower academic performance. These results were consistent with the previous studies conducted in China [13].

There were two main limitations that should be indicated in this study. First, this study only focused on the influences of parenting styles on children's academic performance. Other factors, for example teaching methods in school, and peer pressure, were not controlled in the study, which may also affect the conclusions. Therefore, further research should also eliminate the effect of other confounding variables when examining the effect of parenting styles. Second, the participants recruited in the study were students from grade 8 by using cross-sectional method, which suggested that the results cannot be generalised to the population of other ages. Thus, it is vital to further investigate the longitudinal effect of how parents educate their children would affect children's achievements in school from different grades [13].

7. Discussion

From the literature analysed above, the first thing that can be ascertained is that the majority of the literature gave supportive evidence of the relationship between how parents raise their children and children's depression, anxiety and academic achievement [2,3,10,11] with only a few suggesting that there is no observable association between different styles and children's depression, anxiety [13]. In terms of the specific effects of parenting styles on children's depression, anxiety and academic performance, most of studies agreed that there would be a negative influence on both children's psychological and behavioural development if parents apply a harsh parenting style. However, there are also different views that suggest that harsh parenting may have different effects, for example, harsh parenting by fathers may increase the father-child relationship, while harsher parenting by mothers may increase the risk of the child suffering from related psychological disorders [12].

There were several possible explanations for the different viewpoints proposed by previous studies. First, the association discussed in this paper will be greatly influenced by different cultures and family backgrounds. For example, most European studies demonstrated that authoritative might lead to less risk of depression and anxiety in youth, whereas Yang & Zhao indicated that children in China with parents who adopted authoritarian parenting style may have greater academic achievements [8]. Due to the restrictions of time, different parenting styles and societal expectations for children may have been understood differently at different eras of economic growth and social development, which may have resulted in different study findings at different eras. Therefore, further study is required to determine how various generations and cultures affect the link between parenting practises and kid” levels of anxiety, depression, and academic success.

There were some limitations should be noted. First, most studies evaluated in this paper applied cross-sectional method to collect data which may not show a comprehensive viewpoint. This may be partly because parenting style may not be consistent during the whole period of children-rearing. Parents may adopt different parenting styles which may lead to bias to previous studies. Thus, further longitudinal studies are required to ensure different effect of parenting styles. Second, most studies used questionnaire in the study which may lead to self-report bias and social desirability bias, which may not reveal the situation of how parents treat their children in real life. Therefore, other objective method, for example, observational method, should be used in the future studies to investigate parenting styles.

Through investigating the effect of parenting styles on children’s depression, anxiety and academic performance, strategies maintaining children’s physical and mental health could be better developed. Parents can increase their responsiveness and involvement with their children to create a better home environment, which will help reduce the risk of mental illness in children and improve their academic performance, despite the conflicting findings of various studies on the effects of various parenting styles. In addition, the study of parenting styles on children’s physical and mental health will not only create a good family education but will also shed some light on the way schools educate their students. In essence, both family education and school education require the same level of involvement and responsiveness from parents and teachers, so that they can better focus on the children’s thoughts and adjust their parenting and teaching methods in time.

8. Conclusion

Taken together, although previous studies demonstrated a relationship between parenting styles and children’s depression, anxiety, and academic performance, the effects of different parenting styles may vary due to cultural factors and social economic factors. Future studies should apply longitudinal and other objective methods to further determine the effects of parenting styles. High levels of responsiveness and involvement from parents are required in children’s mental and behavioural development despite different effects of parenting styles.

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