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A STUDY OF PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTING STYLES AND THEIR OBSERVED IMPACT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

Undertaken by **Prasanna C** MSc Psychology, Jain University, Bengaluru, India

under the guidance of **Dr. Richa Gupta**, Associate Professor, Jain University, Bengaluru, India

Abstract:

The present study examined parental perceptions of parenting styles and their observed relationship with child developmental outcomes. The study focused on four parenting-style dimensions—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parenting—and three observed child-development domains—emotional regulation, social competence, and academic behaviour. Data were obtained from 96 parent responses recorded in the study questionnaire. Item-level responses were scored on a five-point response scale and composite mean scores were calculated for each parenting-style and developmental domain. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, Spearman's rank-order correlation, and multiple linear regression were used to analyse the data. Authoritative parenting had the highest mean score and was the predominant parenting-style classification in the sample. It was significantly positively associated with emotional regulation and social competence, whereas its association with academic behaviour was not statistically significant. Authoritarian parenting showed no significant bivariate associations with the three developmental domains, although it emerged as a significant predictor in the multiple regression model. Permissive and uninvolved parenting showed significant negative associations with social competence. The regression model explained 25.5% of the variance in overall child-development scores.

Index Terms—parenting styles, authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting, uninvolved parenting, emotional regulation, social competence, academic behaviour, child development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Parenting represents an important context in which children develop emotional, social, behavioural, and academic competencies. Parents differ in the degree of warmth, responsiveness, control, communication, monitoring, and autonomy they provide. These differences are commonly described through parenting-style frameworks. The present study considers four broad parenting-style dimensions. Authoritative parenting combines warmth and responsiveness with reasonable structure and explanation. Authoritarian parenting emphasises obedience, strict control, and limited negotiation. Permissive parenting is characterised by high accommodation and comparatively limited discipline or guidance. Uninvolved parenting reflects low emotional involvement and limited attention to the child's activities and needs.

Child development in the present study is represented through parent-observed emotional regulation, social competence, and academic behaviour. Emotional regulation concerns the child's ability to manage frustration and express emotions appropriately. Social competence includes friendship skills, sharing,

cooperation, politeness, and respect. Academic behaviour includes interest in schoolwork, independent task completion, and perceived school performance.

Need and Significance

Understanding how parents perceive and practise different parenting approaches is important because parenting behaviours may be associated with how children manage emotions, interact with others, and engage in learning. The study is relevant to psychological practice and parent education because it considers several developmental domains within the same framework.

Research Questions and Objectives

The study investigated the most prevalent parenting style among participating parents; the association between authoritative parenting and emotional regulation, social competence, and academic behaviour; the associations of authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parenting with child developmental outcomes; and whether the four parenting-style dimensions significantly predicted overall parent-observed child-development scores.

Hypotheses

H1: Authoritative parenting will be significantly associated with child emotional regulation.

H2: Authoritative parenting will be significantly associated with child social competence.

H3: Authoritative parenting will not be significantly associated with child academic behaviour.

H4: Authoritarian parenting will not be significantly associated with child developmental outcomes.

H5: Permissive parenting will show negative associations with child developmental outcomes.

H6: Uninvolved parenting will show negative associations with child developmental outcomes.

H7: The four parenting-style dimensions will significantly predict overall parent-observed child-development scores.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parenting-style research has historically examined the balance between parental responsiveness and behavioural control. Baumrind's work distinguished authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive approaches, while later frameworks incorporated uninvolved or neglectful parenting. Across developmental research, authoritative parenting has often been associated with adaptive child outcomes, although the strength and nature of these relationships may vary across contexts.

Authoritative parenting is generally characterised by warmth, communication, reasonable expectations, and consistent boundaries. Such parenting may support children's opportunities to develop self-regulation while maintaining predictable limits. Authoritarian parenting emphasises obedience and control; high control without corresponding responsiveness may limit opportunities for negotiation and independent emotional expression. Permissive parenting tends to involve warmth or accommodation alongside relatively low behavioural control, while uninvolved parenting is characterised by low responsiveness and low control.

Child development is multidimensional. Emotional regulation enables children to manage frustration and adapt to challenges. Social competence supports friendships, cooperation, empathy, and respectful interactions. Academic behaviour includes motivation, attention, task completion, and engagement with school-related activities.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposes that parenting-style dimensions are associated with child-development outcomes. Parenting styles constitute the predictor variables, while emotional regulation, social competence, and academic behaviour constitute the outcome variables. The study is correlational and therefore examines statistical relationships rather than causal effects.

Research Gap

The present study examines four parenting-style dimensions and three parent-observed developmental domains within the same dataset. Rather than focusing on a single developmental outcome, the study considers emotional, social, and academic functioning together.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design. The design was selected because the study sought to describe parenting-style patterns and examine statistical relationships between parenting dimensions and observed child-development outcomes.

Participants

The dataset comprised 96 parent responses. The demographic profile included parent gender, parent age group, educational qualification, family type, number of children, age group of the child considered for the survey, and child gender.

Variables

The predictor variables were authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parenting. Outcome variables were emotional regulation, social competence, and academic behaviour. A composite overall child-development score was also used.

Instrument and Scoring

The questionnaire contained four parenting-style sections with four items each and three child-development sections with three items each. Responses were coded on a five-point scale. For each construct, a composite mean score was calculated from its corresponding items. Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of the construct represented by the item set.

Data Analysis

Coding and descriptive statistics were used to summarise demographic variables and construct scores. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to examine internal consistency. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine associations between parenting-style dimensions and the three developmental domains. Multiple linear regression was used to determine whether the four parenting-style dimensions significantly predicted overall parent-observed child-development scores. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

The study involved parent-reported questionnaire responses. The analysis was conducted at the aggregate level for academic research purposes. Personal identifiers were not reproduced in the dissertation tables or narrative results. Findings are interpreted as associations within the study sample and are not presented as evidence of causal effects.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

Table 1. Demographic profile of participants

Variable	Category	N	%
Parent gender	Female	86	89.6
	Male	8	8.3
	Prefer not to answer	2	2.1
Parent age	41–50	54	56.2
	31–40	22	22.9
	51–60	16	16.7
	22–30	2	2.1
	60 and above	2	2.1
	Postgraduate degree	60	62.5
Education	Undergraduate degree	20	20.8
	Professional qualification	14	14.6
	Prefer not to answer	2	2.1
	Nuclear family	80	83.3
Family type	Joint family	12	12.5
	Single parent family	4	4.2
Child age	16 and above	44	45.8
	11–15 years	34	35.4
	6–10 years	14	14.6

	1–5 years	4	4.2
Child gender	Male	58	60.4
	Female	32	33.3
	Prefer not to answer	6	6.2

The sample was predominantly female (89.6%). The largest parent age group was 41–50 years (56.2%), followed by 31–40 years (22.9%). Postgraduate degree holders represented 62.5% of the sample, and 83.3% reported living in nuclear families. Among the children considered, 45.8% were aged 16 years and above and 35.4% were aged 11–15 years. Male children constituted 60.4% of the sample.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of parenting-style and child-development scores

Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Authoritative Parenting	96	4.427	0.505	3.00	5.00
Authoritarian Parenting	96	1.917	0.660	1.00	4.25
Permissive Parenting	96	2.516	0.644	1.00	3.75
Uninvolved Parenting	96	1.927	0.832	1.00	4.25
Emotional Regulation	96	3.594	0.719	2.00	5.00
Social Competence	96	3.969	0.849	2.00	5.00
Academic Behaviour	96	3.872	0.842	1.67	5.00
Overall Child Development	96	3.811	0.656	2.00	5.00

Authoritative parenting recorded the highest parenting-style mean ($M = 4.427$, $SD = 0.505$). Social competence recorded the highest developmental-domain mean ($M = 3.969$, $SD = 0.849$), followed by academic behaviour and emotional regulation.

Table 3. Reliability coefficients of study constructs

Scale	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Authoritative Parenting	0.659	Marginal
Authoritarian Parenting	0.748	Acceptable
Permissive Parenting	0.495	Low
Uninvolved Parenting	0.740	Acceptable
Emotional Regulation	0.710	Acceptable
Social Competence	0.887	Good
Academic Behaviour	0.868	Good

The reliability analysis showed acceptable-to-good internal consistency for authoritarian parenting, uninvolved parenting, emotional regulation, social competence, and academic behaviour. Authoritative parenting showed marginal internal consistency, while permissive parenting showed low internal consistency. Findings involving the permissive score should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

Table 4. Distribution of dominant parenting styles

Parenting style	N	%
Authoritative Parenting	92	95.8
Authoritarian Parenting	2	2.1
Permissive Parenting	0	0.0
Uninvolved Parenting	2	2.1

Based on the highest composite parenting-style score for each respondent, authoritative parenting was the predominant classification for 92 respondents (95.8%). Authoritarian and uninvolved parenting each accounted for 2.1%, while no respondent had permissive parenting as the highest composite style.

Table 5. Spearman correlations between parenting styles and child-development outcomes

Parenting style	Outcome	Spearman ρ	p	Decision
Authoritative	Emotional Regulation	0.310	0.002	Significant
Authoritative	Social Competence	0.411	<0.001	Significant
Authoritative	Academic Behaviour	0.155	0.131	Not significant
Authoritarian	Emotional Regulation	0.028	0.788	Not significant
Authoritarian	Social Competence	0.054	0.602	Not significant
Authoritarian	Academic Behaviour	0.093	0.369	Not significant
Permissive	Emotional Regulation	-0.199	0.052	Not significant
Permissive	Social Competence	-0.222	0.030	Significant
Permissive	Academic Behaviour	-0.083	0.421	Not significant
Uninvolved	Emotional Regulation	-0.133	0.195	Not significant
Uninvolved	Social Competence	-0.280	0.006	Significant
Uninvolved	Academic Behaviour	-0.127	0.219	Not significant

Authoritative parenting showed significant positive relationships with emotional regulation ($\rho = .310$, $p = .002$) and social competence ($\rho = .411$, $p < .001$). The relationship with academic behaviour was positive but not statistically significant ($\rho = .155$, $p = .131$). Permissive parenting showed a significant negative relationship with social competence ($\rho = -.222$, $p = .030$), while its relationship with emotional regulation approached but did not reach the .05 criterion. Uninvolved parenting was significantly negatively associated with social competence ($\rho = -.280$, $p = .006$).

Table 6. Multiple regression predicting overall child-development scores

Predictor	B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Authoritative Parenting	0.473	0.125	3.801	<0.001	[0.226, 0.721]
Authoritarian Parenting	0.374	0.101	3.687	<0.001	[0.172, 0.575]
Permissive Parenting	-0.033	0.122	-0.268	0.790	[-0.275, 0.210]
Uninvolved Parenting	-0.204	0.105	-1.942	0.055	[-0.412, 0.005]

The multiple regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 91) = 7.787$, $p < .001$, and explained 25.5% of the variance in overall child-development scores. Authoritative parenting was a significant positive predictor ($B = 0.473$, $p < .001$). Authoritarian parenting also showed a significant positive unique coefficient in the fitted model ($B = 0.374$, $p < .001$). Permissive parenting was not a significant predictor ($p = .790$), while uninvolved parenting approached but did not reach statistical significance ($p = .055$).

Hypothesis-wise Interpretation

Table 7. Hypothesis-wise interpretation

Hypothesis	Decision	Evidence
H1	Supported	Authoritative parenting positively associated with emotional regulation ($\rho = .310$, $p = .002$).
H2	Supported	Authoritative parenting positively associated with social competence ($\rho = .411$, $p < .001$).
H3	Supported by non-significant finding	Authoritative parenting not significantly associated with academic behaviour ($\rho = .155$, $p = .131$).
H4	Supported by non-significant bivariate findings	Authoritarian parenting showed no significant bivariate associations; regression coefficient was significant when other dimensions were controlled.
H5	Partially supported	Permissive parenting negatively associated with social competence; other outcomes were non-significant.
H6	Partially supported	Uninvolved parenting negatively associated with social competence; other outcomes were non-significant.
H7	Supported	Four parenting-style dimensions significantly predicted overall child-development scores ($R^2 = .255$).

Discussion

The findings indicate that authoritative parenting was the most strongly endorsed parenting pattern in the sample and was positively associated with selected developmental outcomes. Authoritative parenting showed significant positive relationships with emotional regulation and social competence. These findings are consistent with the conceptual view that parental warmth, communication, explanation of expectations, and appropriate structure may provide children with opportunities to develop emotional and interpersonal competencies.

The hypothesis concerning authoritative parenting and academic behaviour was supported by the non-significant finding. Although the direction of the relationship was positive, the association did not reach statistical significance ($\rho = .155$, $p = .131$). This suggests that academic behaviour may be influenced by factors beyond parenting style, including individual characteristics, school experiences, motivation, and other contextual influences.

Authoritarian parenting did not show significant bivariate associations with emotional regulation, social competence, or academic behaviour. However, it emerged as a significant positive predictor in the multiple regression model ($B = 0.374$, $p < .001$) after the other parenting-style dimensions were statistically controlled. This difference between bivariate and multivariable findings indicates that the association may be affected by overlap among the parenting-style dimensions and should be interpreted cautiously rather than as evidence of a simple positive effect.

Permissive parenting showed a significant negative association with social competence ($\rho = -.222$, $p = .030$), while its relationships with emotional regulation and academic behaviour were not statistically significant. The permissive parenting scale demonstrated low internal consistency, so this finding should be interpreted cautiously. Uninvolved parenting was significantly negatively associated with social competence ($\rho = -.280$, $p = .006$), whereas its associations with emotional regulation and academic behaviour were not statistically significant. The cross-sectional design does not permit causal conclusions.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study examined parental perceptions of four parenting styles and their observed relationships with three dimensions of child development using data from 96 parent responses. Authoritative parenting had the highest mean and was the predominant parenting-style classification. It was positively associated with emotional regulation and social competence, but not significantly associated with academic behaviour. Permissive and uninvolved parenting showed significant negative associations with social competence. The four parenting-style dimensions jointly explained 25.5% of the variance in overall child-development scores. The findings should be understood within the limits of a cross-sectional parent-report study and do not establish causal relationships.

Recommendations

Parent-education programmes may emphasise warm communication, consistent boundaries, explanation of expectations, and emotional support.

Parents may be encouraged to create opportunities for children to express opinions and emotions while maintaining age-appropriate structure.

Future research should include larger and more diverse samples across different regions and family contexts.

Future studies may include child, teacher, or observational measures alongside parent reports.

Longitudinal research would be useful for examining developmental change over time.

Further refinement and validation of the permissive parenting items is recommended because of the low internal consistency observed in this dataset.

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