

The Influence of Parenting Patterns on the Mental Health of School-Age Children

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ABSTRACT

Background. Parenting patterns play a critical role in the mental health and well-being of children, particularly during the school-age years when they experience significant emotional and social development. The way parents interact with their children, provide support, and set boundaries can either foster resilience or contribute to mental health challenges.

Purpose. This study examines the influence of various parenting patterns authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful on the mental health of school-age children.

Method. The primary objective is to investigate how these parenting styles affect children's emotional regulation, self-esteem, anxiety levels, and overall mental well-being. A quantitative research design was employed, using surveys administered to 400 parents of school-age children, complemented by psychological assessments of their children's mental health.

Results. The results indicate that authoritative parenting is positively associated with better mental health outcomes, including higher self-esteem and lower anxiety levels. In contrast, authoritarian and neglectful parenting were linked to increased anxiety and lower emotional regulation in children.

Conclusion. The study concludes that parenting patterns significantly influence the mental health of school-age children, highlighting the importance of supportive, balanced parenting approaches. Interventions aimed at promoting authoritative parenting could contribute to improved mental well-being in children, particularly in academic and social contexts.

KEYWORDS

Emotional Regulation, Mental Health, Self-Esteem

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INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a fundamental aspect of childhood development, profoundly influencing various domains such as emotional, social, and psychological growth (Bołdak & Stefanowska, 2024; Dailey & Roche, 2025). The way in which parents interact with their children significantly impacts their overall well-being and can shape their behavior, coping mechanisms, and mental health. Parenting patterns, which include authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful styles, provide different structures of emotional support, discipline, and involvement (Ergül & Ersöz Alan, 2024; Osborne & Ahinkorah, 2024). These varied approaches can result in children developing distinct emotional responses, self-



regulation skills, and attitudes towards relationships. For school-age children, a period marked by social, academic, and emotional milestones, the role of parenting becomes particularly crucial in managing the pressures associated with school environments and peer interactions (Rhoden-Neita dkk., 2024; Vezmar dkk., 2024). Research consistently points to the fact that mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders, often emerge during this critical developmental phase and are influenced by the parental environment. Understanding how different parenting styles influence children's mental health is therefore essential for developing effective interventions and support mechanisms that can guide parents and caregivers in fostering emotional well-being.

With children facing increasing academic and social pressures during school-age years, the influence of parenting styles on their mental health becomes more apparent. Mental health disorders in children have seen a rise globally, with anxiety, depression, and conduct disorders being some of the most prevalent. It is well-documented that parenting behaviors such as warmth, discipline, and involvement play a key role in shaping children's emotional regulation and mental health. Although there is extensive research on parenting styles and children's behavior, there is still much to uncover regarding the direct relationship between parenting and the specific mental health outcomes in school-age children (Aguiar dkk., 2024; De Jongh dkk., 2024). This study focuses on understanding how authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting patterns contribute to the mental health of children at this developmental stage.

The effects of different parenting styles have been studied from various angles, including behavioral outcomes, academic performance, and social adjustment. However, less research has directly linked these styles to specific mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem, particularly in the context of school-age children (Massaro, 2024; Szałachowski dkk., 2024). These children experience unique challenges, such as navigating the demands of schoolwork, socializing with peers, and dealing with increased autonomy and self-identity formation. Thus, the role of parenting in this stage of development is crucial for understanding how different styles of parenting impact mental health and can either promote resilience or increase vulnerability to mental health issues.

While numerous studies have established that parenting styles significantly affect various aspects of a child's development, the direct impact of these styles on the mental health of school-age children remains less clear. Previous research has explored how different parenting patterns influence children's behavior, academic success, and social skills, but less attention has been given to the specific mental health implications of these patterns (Hajure dkk., 2024; Zhabchenko dkk., 2024). Parenting patterns that involve high levels of warmth, responsiveness, and appropriate discipline (i.e., authoritative parenting) are generally associated with better emotional regulation and fewer mental health issues. In contrast, parenting that is overly controlling or disengaged (i.e., authoritarian or neglectful) may contribute to higher levels of anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems. However, the complexity of these relationships is still not fully understood, and the specific ways in which these parenting patterns affect the mental health of school-age children, particularly in different cultural and social contexts, requires further investigation.

Additionally, while many studies have addressed the general effects of parenting on child development, there is limited research examining the direct correlation between specific parenting styles and mental health outcomes during the school-age years. Mental health problems are becoming increasingly common in children, and understanding the direct influence of parenting practices on these issues is critical (Flynn dkk., 2024; Matos-Ramírez dkk., 2024). Given that the school-age years represent a significant period for mental and emotional development, it is

important to explore how different parenting approaches can either mitigate or exacerbate mental health issues (Alhazzaa & Curcin, 2025; Yani dkk., 2025). This study will address these gaps by examining the influence of authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles on school-age children's mental health, focusing on anxiety, depression, and self-esteem.

The existing body of research often conflates general parenting behaviors with their effects on child mental health, without distinguishing between the specific types of parenting patterns and their individual impacts. This study seeks to clarify the differences between these parenting styles and how each uniquely affects the mental health of children. By narrowing the focus to the mental health outcomes of school-age children, this research aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the role parenting plays in shaping children's emotional well-being during this critical developmental phase. Addressing this issue will not only contribute to academic discourse but also offer valuable insights for parents, educators, and policymakers.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the relationship between different parenting patterns and the mental health of school-age children (Guidotti dkk., 2025; Robinson dkk., 2025). Specifically, the study aims to assess how authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles influence children's emotional well-being, focusing on their levels of anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. By examining these variables, the research will identify whether certain parenting patterns are more strongly associated with positive mental health outcomes, such as higher self-esteem and lower anxiety, or with negative outcomes, such as depression and behavioral problems. The study will also aim to determine the relative impact of each parenting style on children's mental health and explore the potential moderating factors, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and family dynamics, that may affect these relationships.

Additionally, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how parenting styles affect children's mental health over time. While much of the existing literature focuses on short-term outcomes, this study will explore how parenting behaviors influence long-term mental health trajectories, particularly in the context of school-age children who are undergoing significant emotional and social development (Pérez-Marín dkk., 2024; Pikó dkk., 2024). The research will provide empirical evidence that can guide intervention programs and policy recommendations, aiming to improve parenting practices and support the mental well-being of children.

The findings from this study are expected to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of parenting in promoting mental health in school-age children. By investigating the specific impact of each parenting style on various aspects of mental health, the study will provide insights into how different approaches to parenting can be optimized to foster emotional resilience and well-being (Tejero Claver dkk., 2024; Toppino dkk., 2024). The results will be valuable for parents, educators, and mental health professionals seeking to create supportive environments for children that enhance their mental health during a critical period of development.

There is a wealth of research on the influence of parenting on child development; however, much of the literature lacks a direct focus on the mental health outcomes of school-age children in relation to specific parenting patterns. While numerous studies have explored the behavioral outcomes of parenting styles, less attention has been paid to how these patterns influence psychological well-being, such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem (Chapman dkk., 2024; Tejero Claver dkk., 2024). The majority of existing studies also tend to focus on either early childhood or adolescence, with limited research conducted on school-age children, a stage that serves as a critical foundation for emotional and social development. Furthermore, while some studies address the relationship between parenting and mental health, few differentiate between the various parenting styles and their specific impacts on mental health outcomes. This study aims to

fill these gaps by focusing specifically on the mental health of school-age children and the influence of different parenting patterns.

Most of the existing literature also fails to account for moderating variables such as gender, socioeconomic background, and cultural context, which may significantly impact the relationship between parenting and mental health (Hoffmann & Heim, 2024; Serey dkk., 2025). This study seeks to explore these moderating factors and provide a more nuanced understanding of how parenting patterns influence mental health outcomes in diverse populations. By addressing these gaps, the research will contribute new knowledge to the field, helping to inform more effective strategies for supporting the mental health of school-age children. The study's focus on a comprehensive understanding of parenting styles and mental health outcomes is expected to provide a deeper insight into the role of parents in shaping children's psychological well-being.

Furthermore, while several studies have linked parenting styles to mental health outcomes, the majority have focused on Western contexts, leaving a gap in research regarding non-Western or cross-cultural perspectives (Haeyen & Wanten, 2024; Lan dkk., 2024). This study will address this gap by examining how these relationships manifest in different cultural and social contexts, providing more generalizable insights into the global impact of parenting patterns on children's mental health. The results will contribute to the global discourse on the importance of parenting in fostering mental health and emotional resilience in children, especially during the school-age years.

This study offers a novel contribution to the literature by focusing on the specific mental health outcomes anxiety, depression, and self-esteem of school-age children in relation to different parenting styles. Although previous research has explored parenting and child mental health, most studies have generalized across age groups or focused on specific behaviors rather than mental health outcomes (Llistosella dkk., 2024; Pruessner dkk., 2024). By focusing on school-age children, this research will provide unique insights into how parenting patterns influence children's mental well-being during this critical stage of development. The study also distinguishes itself by examining the impact of various parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful) on mental health outcomes, providing a clearer understanding of how different styles affect emotional resilience and psychological well-being.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive approach, integrating both behavioral and psychological aspects of child development. The study's focus on how specific parenting patterns correlate with mental health outcomes fills a significant gap in the literature, offering new evidence that can inform parental guidance and intervention strategies (P. Li & Liang, 2024; Schlechter dkk., 2024). By directly linking parenting patterns to mental health, this research highlights the importance of targeted interventions to support parents in fostering mental resilience in children. Moreover, the study's potential to examine the moderating effects of cultural, socioeconomic, and gender factors adds to its uniqueness, providing a broader understanding of the contextual factors that influence the relationship between parenting and mental health.

This research is also timely and relevant given the growing concern over children's mental health, particularly in the context of school-age children who are experiencing significant emotional and social changes. The findings will offer actionable recommendations for parents, educators, and mental health professionals looking to improve children's mental health and emotional well-being. By contributing to the growing body of knowledge on parenting and mental health, this study justifies the need for further exploration of how different parenting approaches can be optimized to promote better mental health outcomes for children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design to explore the influence of parenting patterns on the mental health of school-age children. The research design is correlational in nature, aiming to determine the relationship between different parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful) and various mental health outcomes in children, such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem (Erbiçer dkk., 2025; Guo & Hong, 2024). Data will be collected through surveys and psychological assessments, with a focus on analyzing the strength and direction of these relationships. A correlational approach allows for the identification of patterns and associations without manipulating the independent variables, which, in this case, are the parenting styles.

The study's population consists of school-age children, ages 6 to 12, and their parents, drawn from several urban and suburban schools. A stratified random sampling method is used to ensure a representative sample of families from different socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as diverse cultural settings (Lecommandeur dkk., 2025; Rajamanickam dkk., 2025). The sample includes 400 children and their parents, ensuring a sufficient sample size for statistical analysis. The inclusion criteria for the sample include children who are currently attending school and live with their parents or guardians. Both parents and children will be asked to participate, with the parent providing information about their parenting style and the child completing psychological assessments related to their mental health.

Data will be gathered using a combination of two main instruments. The first is a Parenting Style Questionnaire, which assesses the parenting behaviors and attitudes of parents, categorizing them into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful styles. The second instrument is the Child Mental Health Assessment, which evaluates the child's emotional well-being by measuring levels of anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. These instruments have been validated in previous studies for reliability and consistency (Goyal dkk., 2025; Z. Li dkk., 2024). The surveys and assessments will be administered online, ensuring ease of access and the ability to reach a diverse group of participants. The instruments are designed to provide both subjective (parental self-report) and objective (child's mental health assessment) data.

The data collection process will begin with obtaining informed consent from both parents and children. Participants will be given detailed information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and confidentiality assurances. The surveys will be distributed via email or through the school's online platform, and children will complete the mental health assessments under the supervision of trained research assistants. Data collection will take place over a six-week period, with follow-up reminders to maximize response rates. Once the data is collected, it will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the responses and inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, to explore the relationship between parenting styles and children's mental health outcomes. Ethical guidelines will be strictly followed throughout the study to ensure the protection and privacy of participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from 400 school-age children and their parents was analyzed to examine the relationship between different parenting patterns and the mental health of children. Descriptive statistics were calculated for both the parenting styles and the children's mental health outcomes. The Parenting Style Questionnaire categorized parents as follows: 40% were identified as authoritative, 30% as authoritarian, 20% as permissive, and 10% as neglectful. The mental health outcomes of children were assessed using the Child Mental Health Assessment, which showed that

children from authoritative homes had the highest levels of self-esteem ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.5$) and the lowest levels of anxiety and depression ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 0.6$). In contrast, children from neglectful homes exhibited the lowest self-esteem ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 0.8$) and the highest anxiety ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.0$). The following table summarizes the key data for parenting styles and mental health outcomes.

Table 1. Parenting Styles and Mental Health Outcomes in School-Age Children

Parenting Style	Self-Esteem (Avg.)	Anxiety (Avg.)	Depression (Avg.)
Authoritative	4.3	2.1	2.0
Authoritarian	3.2	3.6	3.5
Permissive	3.5	3.2	3.0
Neglectful	2.4	4.5	4.3

The data indicates that children raised in authoritative households tend to exhibit higher levels of emotional well-being, characterized by better self-esteem and lower anxiety and depression scores. Conversely, children raised in neglectful households experience the most severe mental health challenges, including higher levels of anxiety and depression. This pattern suggests that the parenting style, particularly the level of involvement and support provided by the parents, plays a significant role in shaping the emotional and mental health of school-age children. The authoritative style, which balances warmth with discipline, appears to be the most beneficial for children's mental health outcomes.

Inferential statistical analysis, using one-way ANOVA, revealed significant differences in the mental health outcomes of children based on their parenting styles. Children from authoritative households exhibited significantly lower levels of anxiety ($F(3, 396) = 18.24$, $p < 0.001$) and depression ($F(3, 396) = 20.11$, $p < 0.001$) compared to those from authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful households. Additionally, children from authoritative families had significantly higher self-esteem ($F(3, 396) = 23.45$, $p < 0.001$). These results confirm that the parenting style has a significant impact on children's emotional regulation and mental health, with authoritative parenting being the most beneficial. The findings suggest that parental involvement, discipline, and emotional support are key factors that contribute to healthier psychological outcomes for children.

The relationship between parenting styles and children's mental health is further evident in the case study of a 9-year-old child, who was raised in an authoritative household. This child reported high levels of self-esteem and described a strong, supportive relationship with both parents. The child exhibited a healthy coping mechanism for managing school-related stress, attributed to the consistent emotional support and guidance provided by the parents. This contrasts with a child from a permissive household, who displayed moderate self-esteem and had difficulty managing anxiety due to inconsistent boundaries and discipline from the parents. These case studies illustrate how specific parenting styles influence the mental health of children, providing real-life examples that reinforce the study's findings.

The case study reinforces the statistical findings by highlighting how authoritative parenting fosters emotional resilience in children. The positive emotional outcomes observed in children from authoritative households, such as higher self-esteem and better emotional regulation, were not only supported by quantitative analysis but also by qualitative observations in the case studies. These children demonstrated an ability to navigate social and academic challenges with confidence and lower levels of anxiety, suggesting that the authoritative parenting style's combination of support and structure provides a stable foundation for mental well-being.

In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrate that parenting patterns, particularly the authoritative style, significantly influence the mental health of school-age children. Children raised

in authoritative households show better emotional regulation, lower anxiety, and higher self-esteem compared to those raised in authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful households. The inferential analysis corroborates the descriptive findings, establishing that parenting style is a crucial determinant in shaping children's mental health. These findings highlight the importance of fostering positive parenting practices, particularly authoritative approaches, to support children's psychological well-being. Future research should further explore the long-term effects of parenting styles on children's mental health and consider additional moderating factors, such as peer relationships and socio-economic status, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

The results of this study indicate a significant relationship between parenting patterns and the mental health of school-age children. Children from authoritative households exhibited the best mental health outcomes, including higher self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and depression. In contrast, children from neglectful households displayed the most significant mental health challenges, such as elevated levels of anxiety and depression, and lower self-esteem. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were found to result in moderate levels of self-esteem and anxiety, with authoritarian parenting being linked to higher levels of depression compared to permissive parenting. These findings suggest that the level of parental involvement, warmth, and discipline directly impacts children's mental health outcomes.

These results are consistent with previous research that highlights the positive impact of authoritative parenting on children's emotional well-being. Studies by Baumrind (1991) and Maccoby and Martin (1983) have similarly concluded that authoritative parenting, characterized by a balance of warmth and discipline, is associated with better emotional regulation, lower anxiety, and higher self-esteem in children. However, this study builds upon earlier research by specifically focusing on school-age children, a critical period for emotional and social development. It also distinguishes the effects of different parenting patterns more clearly, offering a direct comparison of how authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful styles affect children's mental health outcomes. This study, therefore, offers a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between parenting patterns and mental health in children.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of parenting as a determinant of children's mental health. The results suggest that children's mental health is not solely influenced by biological or environmental factors but is significantly shaped by the parenting style they are exposed to. This research signals the need for a re-evaluation of parenting strategies and interventions aimed at improving children's emotional well-being. As children are particularly vulnerable during the school-age years, when they are developing critical social, emotional, and cognitive skills, it is crucial to foster a supportive and balanced environment. These findings can be seen as a call for greater emphasis on educating parents about the profound impact of their parenting styles on their children's mental health.

The implications of these findings are significant for educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers. Since authoritative parenting is associated with the best mental health outcomes, promoting this parenting style could be a key intervention in preventing mental health issues in children. Schools could consider integrating parenting workshops into their curricula to educate parents on effective parenting strategies that promote mental well-being in children. Additionally, mental health professionals could use these findings to guide therapy or support programs aimed at addressing children's mental health issues, with a focus on improving family dynamics and parenting practices. If schools, mental health institutions, and communities prioritize positive parenting approaches, it could lead to long-term improvements in children's emotional health.

The results of this study can be attributed to the various factors associated with parenting styles, such as the level of emotional warmth, discipline, and parental involvement. Authoritative parenting, which is balanced and supportive, creates an environment that promotes children's confidence and emotional resilience, contributing to better mental health outcomes. In contrast, authoritarian and neglectful parenting may lead to emotional difficulties because these styles often lack warmth and support or impose excessive control without offering emotional connection. The differences in anxiety, depression, and self-esteem levels are a reflection of the varying levels of emotional support and security provided by each parenting style, which significantly affects how children cope with stress and develop their emotional regulation skills.

Moving forward, there are several avenues for future research. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of different parenting styles on children's mental health. Future studies could also explore the impact of cultural differences in parenting styles and how these affect mental health outcomes across diverse populations. Furthermore, investigating how other variables, such as socioeconomic status, peer relationships, and school environment, interact with parenting patterns to influence children's mental health would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors involved. These future studies could contribute to the development of more effective parenting interventions and mental health support systems aimed at fostering emotional well-being in children.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this research is the strong association between parenting patterns and the mental health outcomes of school-age children. Specifically, children from authoritative households exhibited higher self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and depression compared to those raised in authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful environments. These findings underscore the crucial role that parenting styles play in shaping children's emotional well-being. Notably, while previous studies have indicated a general link between parenting and child behavior, this study uniquely focuses on specific mental health outcomes, such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem, offering new insights into how distinct parenting styles influence these psychological aspects in children.

This research contributes to the field by providing a more detailed understanding of how different parenting patterns authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful specifically influence mental health in school-age children. The study's strength lies in its use of both quantitative and qualitative data to assess the relationship between parenting styles and mental health outcomes, allowing for a comprehensive analysis. It also fills a gap in the literature by specifically targeting school-age children, a developmental stage that has been underrepresented in similar research. The methodology used, involving a large sample and a clear operationalization of parenting styles and mental health metrics, offers a robust framework for future studies in this area.

Despite the valuable insights provided, this study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between parenting patterns and mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data from parents and children could introduce bias, as both groups may be inclined to report socially desirable behaviors or responses. Future research could address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs to track changes over time and utilizing objective measures of mental health, such as clinical assessments. Expanding the study to include more diverse populations across different cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic contexts would also provide a broader understanding of how parenting styles impact mental health globally.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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