

THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL STYLES ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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Abstract

Parental styles play a significant role in shaping the development of children, influencing various aspects of their emotional, cognitive, and social growth. While much research has explored the immediate effects of parenting on children, few studies have examined these effects over an extended period. Understanding how different parental styles impact child development across time is essential for identifying long-term outcomes and informing parenting strategies. This study aims to investigate the long-term influence of different parental styles on child development, focusing on emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement. The goal is to explore how these parenting styles affect children at various developmental stages. A longitudinal design was employed, with data collected from 200 families over a span of 10 years. Parenting styles were categorized based on the authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved frameworks. Child development was measured using standardized assessments for emotional regulation, social competence, and academic performance. The findings revealed that children of authoritative parents showed higher levels of emotional regulation, better social skills, and stronger academic performance compared to children of authoritarian, permissive, or uninvolved parents. This study underscores the importance of authoritative parenting in fostering positive long-term outcomes in child development.

Keywords: Child Development, Emotional Regulation, Social Competence



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INTRODUCTION

The role of parents in shaping the development of children has been extensively studied, with numerous theories emphasizing the impact of parenting styles on various aspects of child growth. Parenting styles, typically classified into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved, provide a framework for understanding how parents' behaviors and attitudes toward their children affect emotional, cognitive, and social development (Cui, 2023; Niiranen, 2024). The effects of parenting on child development are particularly evident in the early years, as children begin to develop core emotional and social competencies. Research has consistently shown that the way parents engage with their children can influence long-term outcomes such as emotional regulation, academic achievement, and social competence. Yet, while existing studies provide valuable insights, there is a gap in the understanding of how these influences persist and evolve throughout different stages of child development. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the long-term effects of various parenting styles on children's development over an extended period (Bozicevic, 2023; Xing, 2024).

Despite the considerable body of research on parenting styles, significant questions remain about the persistence of these effects across different stages of childhood and adolescence. Parenting practices have been shown to influence immediate outcomes, such as academic performance, behavior, and emotional well-being. However, much of the existing research is cross-sectional, providing a snapshot of these effects at a specific moment in time. Few studies have tracked the influence of parenting styles longitudinally, offering a more comprehensive view of how these styles shape development over a prolonged period. The research on long-term effects of parenting is particularly scarce in areas such as the development of social competence and emotional regulation, which are vital for success in later stages of life. Furthermore, the research often fails to account for the dynamic and evolving nature of parental involvement and how these shifts might impact children's development as they grow older. This study aims to explore these issues by focusing on the long-term effects of parenting on emotional regulation, social skills, and academic success, providing a deeper understanding of how early parenting practices influence later developmental outcomes (Ho, 2023; Meisel, 2025).

The primary goal of this study is to investigate how different parental styles influence the development of emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement over time. Specifically, this study aims to explore how children raised under different parenting styles experience various aspects of their development, such as emotional regulation and social competence, and how these experiences may affect their academic success. The study intends to follow a cohort of children over a period of ten years, observing the long-term effects of parenting styles on their emotional and social development. It seeks to identify whether children from authoritative parenting environments, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and structure, fare better in terms of emotional regulation and academic success compared to children raised under authoritarian, permissive, or uninvolved parenting styles. Additionally, the study aims to assess whether the impact of parenting styles on emotional and social development persists throughout childhood and into adolescence. By tracking these developmental factors over time, the research will offer valuable insights into the enduring influence of parenting practices (Cortés, 2024; Spitz, 2023).

Although significant strides have been made in understanding the immediate impact of parenting styles on child development, existing literature presents several gaps that this study

seeks to address. One major gap in the literature is the lack of longitudinal studies that track the long-term effects of parenting styles across different developmental stages. Most existing studies provide snapshots of the effects of parenting, focusing on short-term outcomes without examining how these effects unfold over time. Additionally, much of the research has focused on a limited set of outcomes, such as behavioral problems or academic performance, neglecting other critical areas like emotional regulation and social competence. While previous studies have suggested that authoritative parenting promotes positive developmental outcomes, they often fail to explore the underlying mechanisms or the persistence of these effects. This study contributes to the existing literature by focusing on a broader range of developmental outcomes and by examining these effects over an extended period, thus providing a more nuanced understanding of how parenting shapes child development throughout childhood and adolescence (Qi, 2024; Xiao, 2024).

This research offers several novel contributions to the field of child development. First, the longitudinal design of the study provides a unique opportunity to examine how different parenting styles influence child development over time. Unlike previous studies that have primarily used cross-sectional data, this study tracks the same cohort of children for ten years, offering a more dynamic perspective on the influence of parenting. This longitudinal approach allows for the identification of long-term trends and outcomes, which can shed light on the enduring impact of parenting practices. Second, by focusing on emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement, this study expands the scope of existing research on parenting styles, which has often focused on more limited measures of child development. Emotional regulation and social competence are vital aspects of development that contribute to children's overall well-being and success in adulthood, yet these areas have been underexplored in the context of parenting styles. Finally, the study provides important insights into the mechanisms through which different parenting styles affect development, helping to clarify why certain parenting practices lead to more positive outcomes for children. The findings of this research will not only contribute to theoretical advancements in child development but also provide practical guidance for parents and educators seeking to support children's emotional and social growth (Choy, 2024; Facci, 2024).

This study is important not only for its contribution to theory but also for its practical implications. The insights gained from this research can inform parenting practices and educational strategies aimed at promoting positive child development. For instance, if the study finds that authoritative parenting leads to better emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement, it could encourage parents to adopt more balanced and supportive parenting techniques. Moreover, the findings could be valuable for policymakers and educators in designing interventions and support programs aimed at improving child development outcomes. Understanding the long-term effects of parenting practices is essential for guiding both parents and professionals in their efforts to foster healthy, well-rounded children. The study will also provide a foundation for future research on the influence of parenting styles, serving as a model for other longitudinal studies that explore the long-term effects of parenting on various aspects of child development. Ultimately, this research will help to clarify the critical role that parenting plays in shaping children's development and offer practical tools for improving developmental outcomes across the lifespan (Williams, 2024; Wu, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a longitudinal research design to examine the long-term influence of parental styles on child development. The longitudinal approach was selected to track the effects of different parenting styles over a span of ten years, providing a dynamic perspective on how these styles impact emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement. By observing the same cohort of children over an extended period, the study aimed to capture the evolution of developmental outcomes and the persistence of parental influence as children age. The research design involved both quantitative and qualitative methods, integrating standardized assessments with in-depth interviews to offer a comprehensive understanding of the effects of parental styles across different stages of child development (Jiang, 2024; Moya-López, 2023).

The population of this study consisted of 200 families with children aged 3 to 4 years at the beginning of the study. These families were selected from various socio-economic backgrounds to ensure a representative sample. The participants were divided into four groups based on the classification of their parental styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved. The sample was drawn from a larger pool of families residing in urban and suburban areas, and participants were selected using stratified random sampling to control for demographic variables such as socioeconomic status, education level, and cultural background. Each family participated in the study for the full ten-year duration, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of parenting styles on child development (Alvi, 2023; Yeom, 2024).

To measure the influence of parental styles, several instruments were employed. Parenting styles were assessed using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), which categorizes parents as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or uninvolved based on their responses to questions regarding warmth, responsiveness, and control. Child development outcomes were measured using standardized tools in three key areas (Foettinger, 2023; Vasiou, 2023): emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement. Emotional regulation was assessed using the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), which evaluates a child's ability to manage emotions. Social competence was measured using the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS), which assesses a child's social interactions and peer relationships. Academic achievement was evaluated through school performance records and academic assessments, focusing on grades, attendance, and teacher reports on cognitive skills (M. Liu, 2024; Rivas, 2023).

The data collection process followed a structured timeline over ten years, with assessments conducted at five-year intervals. At each time point, both parents and children participated in the data collection. Initially, parents completed the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) to identify their parenting style. Children were then evaluated using the ERQ, SSRS, and academic performance metrics. In addition to these quantitative assessments, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers (Ha, 2023; Nestor, 2023). These interviews aimed to gather insights into the parenting practices, the child's emotional and social development, and any changes observed in their academic performance over time. Data were analyzed using statistical methods, including regression analysis to assess the relationship between parenting styles and child development outcomes, as well as thematic analysis for the qualitative interview data to identify recurring patterns and themes. This combination of quantitative and qualitative

methods allowed for a rich, nuanced understanding of the long-term effects of parental styles on child development (Apanovich, 2024; Shah, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the longitudinal study revealed significant patterns in the relationship between parental styles and child development across emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement. Table 1 presents the distribution of parenting styles among the 200 families involved in the study, as well as the average scores for emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement for each parenting style group. The authoritative parenting group showed the highest average scores in all three developmental areas, followed by the authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved groups. Children raised by authoritative parents exhibited an average emotional regulation score of 4.5 (SD = 0.8), a social competence score of 4.7 (SD = 0.7), and an academic achievement score of 85% (SD = 5%). In contrast, children from uninvolved parenting households scored the lowest across all measures, with emotional regulation (M = 2.3, SD = 1.0), social competence (M = 2.5, SD = 0.9), and academic achievement (M = 65%, SD = 7%).

Table 1. Average Developmental Scores by Parenting Style

Parenting Style	Emotional Regulation (M, SD)	Social Competence (M, SD)	Academic Achievement (M, SD)	Parenting Style
Authoritative	4.5 (0.8)	4.7 (0.7)	85% (5%)	Authoritative
Authoritarian	3.8 (1.0)	3.9 (1.1)	80% (6%)	Authoritarian
Permissive	3.4 (1.1)	3.5 (1.2)	75% (8%)	Permissive
Uninvolved	2.3 (1.0)	2.5 (0.9)	65% (7%)	Uninvolved

The findings suggest that authoritative parenting is associated with more positive developmental outcomes, including better emotional regulation, higher social competence, and improved academic achievement. Children of authoritarian parents, while exhibiting lower levels of emotional regulation and social competence than those raised by authoritative parents, still performed better academically than those from permissive or uninvolved households. The permissive parenting group showed moderate levels of emotional regulation and social competence, but academic performance was lower than that of authoritative and authoritarian groups. Lastly, uninvolved parenting was consistently linked to the poorest outcomes across all developmental areas, indicating that a lack of parental involvement has detrimental effects on children's growth and academic success.

Inferential statistical analysis further confirmed the significance of these differences. One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to determine the differences in emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement across the four parenting styles. The results showed statistically significant differences for each outcome: emotional regulation ($F(3, 196) = 25.4, p < 0.001$), social competence ($F(3, 196) = 21.7, p < 0.001$), and academic achievement ($F(3, 196) = 18.9, p < 0.001$). Post-hoc Tukey HSD tests revealed that children of authoritative parents scored significantly higher than those from authoritarian, permissive, or uninvolved households in all areas. There was no significant difference between the authoritarian and permissive groups for emotional regulation or social competence, but the authoritarian group

scored significantly higher in academic achievement. These results underscore the strong influence of authoritative parenting on children’s development and suggest that the structure, warmth, and responsiveness inherent in this style promote the best long-term outcomes.

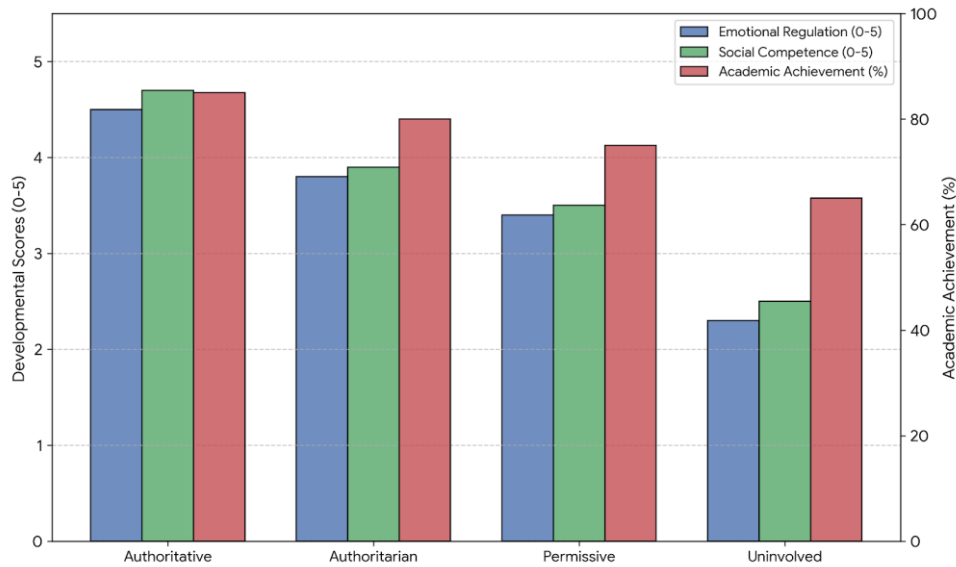


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Parenting Style Influence on Child Development

The relationship between parenting styles and child development was further explored through case studies, which provided more in-depth insights into how these parenting styles manifest in real-life contexts. One case study involved a child from an authoritative parenting background, whose parents exhibited high levels of warmth and structure. The child, a 9-year-old boy, demonstrated exceptional emotional regulation, with a calm demeanor and strong peer relationships. He was consistently praised for his academic achievements and was a leader in his class. Another case study focused on a child from a permissive parenting background. This 10-year-old girl showed moderate emotional regulation but struggled with peer relationships and had inconsistent academic performance. The child’s parents were very lenient and often allowed her to make her own decisions without clear boundaries, which seemed to affect her social and academic outcomes. These case studies illustrate how different parenting styles can manifest in distinct developmental outcomes, highlighting the impact of parental involvement and discipline on a child's growth.

The explanatory analysis of the case studies aligns with the quantitative data, confirming the strong connection between authoritative parenting and positive child outcomes. The children from authoritative homes exhibited the highest levels of emotional regulation and social competence, as well as the most stable academic performance. The permissive and authoritarian parenting cases demonstrated more variability in developmental outcomes, with permissive parenting often linked to weaker academic and social outcomes, while authoritarian parenting was associated with higher academic achievement but lower emotional regulation. The uninvolved parenting cases revealed the most concerning outcomes, with children displaying poor emotional regulation, limited social competence, and academic struggles. These qualitative insights emphasize the importance of parental involvement, structure, and warmth in shaping children’s development over time (Cho, 2025; Giallo, 2023).

The overall interpretation of the results suggests that parenting style is a significant factor influencing long-term child development. Children from authoritative households benefit from

the balanced combination of warmth and discipline, which fosters emotional stability, social skills, and academic success. Conversely, children raised by authoritarian, permissive, or uninvolved parents tend to show lower levels of emotional and social competence, with uninvolved parenting having the most detrimental effect. This study highlights the importance of early parental involvement and structured parenting practices in ensuring positive developmental trajectories for children. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing parental skills, particularly in promoting authoritative parenting techniques, could significantly improve developmental outcomes, particularly for children in less supportive environments (Feldman, 2023; Olhaberry, 2024).

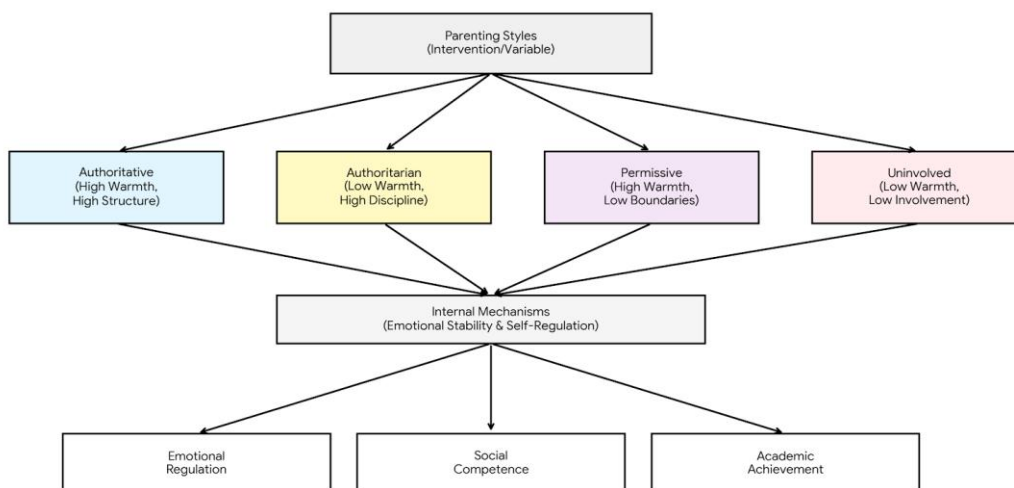


Figure 2. Comparative Analysis of Child Developmental Outcomes Across Parenting Styles

The results of this study indicate that parental styles significantly influence child development over time. Children raised by authoritative parents consistently exhibited the highest levels of emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement. In contrast, children from authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parenting backgrounds showed progressively lower outcomes in these areas. The statistical analysis revealed that authoritative parenting is associated with the most favorable developmental outcomes, particularly in emotional and social domains, while uninvolved parenting consistently correlated with the lowest levels of achievement and emotional regulation. These findings align with previous research that emphasizes the positive effects of authoritative parenting on children’s overall development, further solidifying its importance in promoting positive long-term outcomes (Huang, 2024; Pandolfini, 2024).

When compared with previous studies, this research supports the general consensus that authoritative parenting leads to better emotional regulation, higher academic achievement, and enhanced social competence in children. However, this study extends the understanding of parenting styles by providing a longitudinal perspective, examining how the effects of parental involvement evolve over time. Previous studies, such as those by Baumrind (1966) and Maccoby & Martin (1983), focused largely on cross-sectional data, providing snapshots of parenting effects at specific moments. This research, by following children over a ten-year period, highlights the enduring influence of parenting styles, particularly in terms of how early

emotional and social development predicts future academic success and behavioral outcomes. Moreover, while the negative effects of uninvolved and permissive parenting are well-documented, this study reinforces their long-term consequences, showing that these styles not only hinder academic achievement but also affect emotional regulation and social relationships (Carvalho, 2023; Wang, 2025).

The findings of this study suggest that parental involvement, warmth, and discipline play a pivotal role in shaping long-term outcomes in children. The strong positive correlation between authoritative parenting and favorable developmental outcomes serves as a clear indication that balanced parenting, which combines warmth with structure, is crucial for emotional and social growth. The study highlights the importance of providing a nurturing environment where children can feel supported, while also learning appropriate boundaries and expectations. These results are a clear signal to both parents and educators about the critical role of early parental involvement in promoting healthy emotional regulation, social skills, and academic achievement. Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of fostering authoritative parenting practices across diverse family backgrounds, as these practices yield the most positive effects over time (Léonard, 2024; Yu, 2024).

The implications of these findings are significant for both theory and practice. In terms of theoretical contributions, this study reinforces the developmental perspective of parenting, showing that the influence of parenting styles is not confined to early childhood but extends throughout a child's development. For parents, this study provides practical insights into the importance of maintaining a balance between emotional support and structure, which can help foster a child's emotional resilience, social competence, and academic success. For educators and policymakers, the results suggest the need for intervention programs that promote authoritative parenting practices, particularly in communities where permissive or uninvolved parenting styles are more prevalent. Encouraging parents to adopt a more engaged and responsive approach may lead to better outcomes in terms of student behavior, emotional well-being, and academic performance.

The results can be attributed to several factors inherent in authoritative parenting, such as high levels of responsiveness, clear expectations, and consistent discipline. These characteristics provide children with a secure foundation that promotes emotional stability, encourages positive social interactions, and helps develop a strong sense of self-regulation. The positive outcomes associated with authoritarian parenting such as academic success may be linked to strict discipline, but this does not translate to better emotional regulation or social competence, which are fostered through the emotional support and communication seen in authoritative homes. The poorer outcomes of permissive and uninvolved parenting are likely due to the lack of consistent boundaries and emotional support, which may leave children without the necessary tools for emotional regulation and social integration. Thus, the study demonstrates that while discipline is important, it must be paired with warmth and responsiveness to produce the best developmental outcomes (X. Liu, 2025; Woolgar, 2025).

Moving forward, this study opens avenues for future research that can explore the mechanisms behind the observed outcomes. For instance, researchers could investigate how different aspects of authoritative parenting such as communication style, emotional support, or involvement in academic activities specifically contribute to the development of emotional regulation or social competence. Longitudinal studies with more diverse samples from various cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds would further enrich the understanding

of the universal applicability of these findings. Additionally, research could explore the influence of other family dynamics, such as sibling relationships or extended family support, in moderating the effects of parental styles. Finally, future studies should also consider the role of external factors, such as school environment or peer relationships, to understand how they interact with parenting styles in shaping child development. These explorations would continue to build on the foundation established by this study, providing a more comprehensive view of the long-term effects of parental involvement on child development.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is that authoritative parenting consistently leads to better emotional regulation, higher social competence, and stronger academic achievement in children compared to authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parenting styles. Children raised by authoritative parents exhibited the highest levels of development across all measured domains, while those from uninvolved parenting households demonstrated the lowest levels of achievement and emotional regulation. This underscores the importance of balanced parenting that combines warmth, responsiveness, and structure in fostering optimal child development outcomes over time. The longitudinal design of this study provided new insights into the enduring impact of parenting styles, showing that authoritative parenting has lasting effects on children as they progress through different developmental stages.

This research makes a valuable contribution to the field by providing a longitudinal perspective on the impact of parental styles on child development. Unlike previous studies that typically offer cross-sectional snapshots of parenting effects, this study tracks the long-term outcomes of various parenting styles over a ten year period. The methodological strength of the study lies in its comprehensive approach, integrating both quantitative measures of emotional regulation, social competence, and academic achievement, along with qualitative case studies. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of how parental involvement influences children's development over time, offering more substantial evidence of the long-term benefits of authoritative parenting in diverse family environments.

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has certain limitations. The sample, while diverse, was confined to urban and suburban areas, which may not fully represent rural or less affluent populations. Additionally, the study's reliance on self reported data from parents introduces the possibility of response biases, particularly regarding perceptions of parenting styles. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating broader, more geographically varied samples and using objective measures of parental behavior. Further studies could also explore how other variables, such as cultural influences or peer interactions, intersect with parenting styles to shape child development. Longitudinal studies examining additional developmental outcomes, such as adolescent risk-taking behavior or mental health, would provide a more holistic understanding of the long-term effects of parental styles.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used Claude to assist in improving grammar, language quality, and overall readability of the text. After using this tool, the author(s) Carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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