

# The Impact of Parenting Styles on Emotion Regulation in Children

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## Abstract

Parenting styles play a significant role in developmental psychology and influence the emotional outcomes of children. This paper outlines key parenting styles of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive alongside attachment theory, emotional regulation, and the Tripartite Model. The role of authoritarian parenting in emotional regulation is examined through a study by Sikandar, Parveen, and Khan (2025). This reveals that the parenting style reduces psychological well-being in children. A comparative analysis by Dexian Li, Wencan Li, and Xingchen Zhu (2023) highlights the benefits of authoritative parenting, which supports healthier emotional regulation compared to an authoritarian approach. Further, research by Daria and Zoltán et al. (2025) suggests that permissive parenting is linked to emotional dysregulation due to a lack of structure. A more integrative perspective is offered by Vidhi Sharma and Kavya Ahuja (2024), which compares the effects of all three parenting styles. The discussion synthesizes these findings with implications for parenting interventions.

**Keywords:** Parenting styles, Authoritarian parenting, Authoritative parenting, Permissive parenting, Emotional regulation, Child development

## INTRODUCTION

Emotions take shape under the quiet influence of parenting. Parenting styles are the different strategies used by parents to categorize the way they raise their children (Baumrind, 1960). This encompasses a range of behaviors, attitudes, and emotional surroundings. In recent years, psychologists have been investigating how parents impact the emotional regulation of children. At times, children brought up in vastly different households develop strikingly similar personality traits. In contrast, siblings raised together can grow into adults with noticeably different temperaments and behaviors. Even though such variability exists, researchers have explored the connection between parenting approaches and their impact on child development. Many argue that these influences not only shape childhood but may also extend into adult life. Four different categories of parenting styles have been identified. These include authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved (Baumrind, 1960). The fourth style of uninvolved parenting was identified in the 1980s by researchers, Stanford Eleanor Maccoby and John Martin.

## Different Types of Parenting Styles

It is challenging to quantify the effects of parenting styles on child development, however, there are widely accepted consequences of each style. These categories were formed after the study by psychologist Diana Baumrind in the 1960s to investigate the dimensions of parenting. This study was on a cohort of 100 preschool children. They were observed in their natural environment and interviews were conducted with

their guardians. These attributes included communication, maturity, and discipline. This essay will cover the 3 main parenting styles.

1. The first style is called authoritarian parenting where children are required to follow a set list of rules by parents. Disobedience of these rules results in punishment. They are not explained to the child but they are compelled to follow. This approach results in children having little to no control over their lives. Parents who follow this are deemed dominating, overbearing, and dictatorial. The effect of this style on children is that it increases levels of anxiety and reduces motivation.
2. The second style is called authoritative parenting which is a democratic version of authoritarian parenting. This is considered the best parenting style as it allows structure alongside independence. Similar to authoritarian parenting the parent sets rules however, the child has room to make mistakes. A characteristic of this style is that parents are open to the concerns of their children. The parents build a nurturing environment allowing children to be responsible, capable, and successful.
3. Lastly, the third style is called permissive parenting when parents are lenient and have lower expectations of their children. Parents try to be friendly and give in to the desires of their children. This might suggest that the parent was brought up in an authoritarian parenting style and does not want their child to have a similar experience. Permissive parents rarely set rules allowing their children to be independent in terms of decision-making. These children are more academically challenged and they take risks.

### Attachment Styles

While parenting styles are strategies that provide an understanding of parent and child interaction, they are distinct from attachment styles. Parenting styles are wider categories of behavioural patterns for raising a child. However, attachment styles specifically zero in on the emotional bond between parents and children. In recent times, psychologists have curated four main attachment styles including secure, ambivalent, avoidant, and disorganized. These styles show how children express comfort, emotions, and develop trust.

### Attachment Theory

Attachment theory, by John Bowlby, states that attachment is the interconnectedness between people (Bowlby, 1969). There is an emotional bond that stems from an early age setting the foundation for child development. Based on this theory, children are biologically prone to attachment to their parents, friends, or surroundings. This can be due to several reasons such as the necessity to survive, seek security, and gain comfort. Bowlby describes attachment as an evolutionary process. This is because children are born with the need to form an attachment with their caregivers. When they are more attached, their chances of receiving comfort increase, and, therefore, they survive to adulthood. This is a result of the survival of the fittest also known as natural selection. There are four stages of attachment:

1. Firstly, there is pre-attachment during the early stages of child development. This is from the time the child is born up till 6 weeks. In this stage, there is no observed attachment to either parent.
2. Moving forward, the indiscriminate phase is between 6 weeks to 7 months where the child is more attached to either their primary or secondary guardians.
3. Then the discriminate phase is prevalent once the child is more than 7 months old. The infant develops a strong bond with one of the caregivers.
4. Lastly, the multiple stages occur when the child is above 10 months. From here on various bonds are

nurtured amongst a group of people.

### **Emotional Regulation**

Emotional regulation is when an individual is able to control their emotions through different strategies (Thomson et al., 2008). Emotional regulation varies from individual to individual and it has two types which are conscious and unconscious. Conscious regulation is when we choose to control our emotions. Whereas, unconscious regulation is when we automatically have a grasp over our emotions (McRae & Gross, 2020). This is a strategy that helps us manage our everyday emotions. When an individual regulates emotions they can address challenging situations without emotional overload. This is a therapeutic practice that reduces stress and anxiety. Emotional regulation when performed healthily requires three key stages (Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017). Firstly an individual must be able to divert their mind from the emotion. Additionally, the cycle of negative thoughts should be broken. Lastly, one should engage with the situation in an adaptive manner.

### **The Tripartite Model**

The link between emotional regulation and parenting styles was first established through Morris et al.'s (2007) tripartite model. It states that there are three main categories of influence on emotional regulation in children.

1. The first category is modelling also known as observation. Albert Bandura hypothesized that behaviour is learned through observation of a model. Children observe emotions in their daily lives and the responses that their parents have. This helps the child understand how to react when encountering a similar situation.
2. The second category of the model explains different parenting strategies. This includes coaching emotions and dismissing emotions. Coaching emotions allows parents to acknowledge the emotions and experiences of the child to help them regulate the same. On the contrary, dismissing emotions is when the parent undermines their child's emotions. Emotion coaching is considered a positive practice that improves emotional regulation and the opposite of dismissing.
3. The third category is known as the emotional climate. This means the relationships between family members the child has been exposed to. Parenting styles towards children that involve aggression and hostility are known to degrade emotional regulation.

Provided the crucial role played by parenting and emotions during child development it is important to understand how parenting styles may impact the ability to regulate emotions. This essay will focus on the three main parenting styles authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. These would be observed in the context of how an emotional environment is established. An emotional environment is a space where children can recognize, express, and manage their feelings. The rationale behind studying this relationship is that emotional regulation is a foundational skill that affects the well-being of a child. Identification of the impact of parenting styles on this ability can provide parents and mental health professionals with an understanding of how they can support children's emotional development. This has led to the central research question of this paper: To what extent do different parenting styles impact children's emotional regulation?

### **Authoritarian Parenting on Emotional Regulation**

Authoritarian parenting focuses on discipline and parental control which has implications for the

emotional regulation of children and overall psychological development. This has been found through a recent study by Sikandar, A., Parveen, T., & Khan, S. (2025). This study focused on three variables: authoritarian parenting, well-being, and emotional regulation among university students. The research stressed the need to improve emotional regulation interventions when parents follow an authoritarian style.

The study hypothesized that the authoritarian parenting style will negatively impact the emotions of children leading to emotional reappraisal. Cognitive reappraisal is when a situation is re-evaluated to change its emotional impact (Richard Lazarus & Susan Folkman, 1984). Another hypothesis was that it might positively impact the emotions of children which would lead to emotional suppression. Emotional suppression is when one reduces their emotional expression. (JJ Gross, 1993). The last hypothesis was that gender differences would impact the findings of the study.

This was a cross-sectional study in the universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. It spanned across 4 months from October of 2023 to January 2024. The participant cohort were 250 university students with an average age of 20 years. To measure the dependent variable of emotion regulation a psychological well-being scale was used. This measures the various dimensions of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989). Additionally, to measure the emotional regulation strategies of cognitive reappraisal and emotional suppression an emotional regulation questionnaire was used (Gross and John, 2003). Furthermore, the authoritarian parenting scale was used to measure the dimension of parenting. It displays the amount of control parents have over their children and the extent to which the child's emotional needs are fulfilled. The procedure commenced with questionnaires being provided to the participants. These were required to be filled under the supervision of the researchers. The ethical condition followed during the experiment was that informed consent forms were given to the students. This allowed them to understand the aim of the study and provide consent to participate. Another consideration was confidentiality as their names and identity were not revealed and remained confidential. Before the research study, the participants were briefed on the procedures and objectives. They were also informed that they would be assessed using the different scales. After 10 minutes of completing the scale, the researchers collected them. The results were then scored and analysed by the researchers.

The findings showed a positive correlation between psychological well-being, emotional reappraisal, and emotional suppression. There was also a strong positive correlation between the two emotional regulation strategies of suppression and reappraisal showing that they both increase together and are strongly correlated. Additionally, the results highlighted that authoritarian parenting leads to low psychological well-being. The researchers further conducted a comparison between female and male participants which showed several gender differences in terms of emotional regulation. Females had a lower score than males in psychological wellbeing meaning that they do not use emotional regulation strategies frequently. On the contrary, females scored better in the tendency of having authoritarian parenting.

Based on the findings, we can understand that there is an association between authoritarian parenting and reduced psychological well-being in children. The study supports existing research and its findings indicating that this parenting style is associated with lower self-esteem and increased stress levels. The studies that support the results include Wang et al. (2023), who observed that children raised in authoritarian environments are more prone to stress, sadness, and even discomfort. Similarly, a cross-cultural study by Gaspar et al. (2022) supports the notion that authoritarian parenting leads to reduced self-esteem, life satisfaction, and poorer mental health in children. These consistent findings display the harmful psychological effects of authoritarian parenting.

### **Authoritative vs Authoritarian Parenting on Emotional Regulation**

Moving forward, to further understand the impact of authoritarian parenting it can be compared to authoritative. A study by Dexian Li, Wencan Li and Xingchen Zhu (2023) illustrates the same. This was conducted with the aim of investigating the impact of parenting styles on managing emotions. Additionally, two variables of self-control and peer interactions were observed. The sample was a cohort of 2,397 participants who were 16 kindergartens in 10 provinces of 7 geographic regions. These regions included: northern, eastern, southern, central, northwestern, southwestern, and northeastern of China. The sampling style was stratified sampling where the kindergarteners were placed under different stratas. Data was collected throughout the course of the school year.

The ethical consideration that was followed throughout the study was informed consent which was obtained from the guardians. Another consideration that was fulfilled was anonymity and confidentiality. This was by not asking for the names of the participants. They were also told that they could withdraw themselves and the results from the study at any point.

The procedure of the study commenced with participants answering a questionnaire during a parent-teacher meeting. After this, the questionnaires were screened. This resulted in 94 of them being invalid due to missing information. After removing the invalid questionnaires the remaining were analyzed making the response rate 96.08%. The class with the maximum number of participants was the junior class (1082) and the least number of participants were in the senior class (737). The age group of the children was 3-6 years old. More mothers (1827) as compared to fathers (476) answered the two questionnaires. The researchers classified 3 age categories for the parents. Firstly 229 parents were under 30, 1,702 were between 30 -40 , and 372 were over 40.

The next part of the procedure was a survey with the parents and teachers. Before the survey, the Department of Education sought approval with the schools to conduct the survey. This ensured that some level of ethics and consent was carried out. The parents were also told the aims and procedures of the study. The survey allowed the researchers to understand the ambiance of the campus.

### **The instruments, questionnaires, and scales used throughout the study include-**

1. Parenting styles and dimensions questionnaire: This was developed by Robinson et al. This questionnaire intends to measure parents behaviour towards their children. It consists of two dimensions which are authoritarian and authoritative parenting style. This was completed by the parents who answered using a 1 to 5 Likert scale. Through the use of this scale the reliability and validity of the study improved. To measure the authoritarian and authoritative parenting style Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. For authoritarian parenting it was 0.95 and for authoritative it was 0.92.
2. Self-control teacher rating questionnaire: This was developed by Dong. It aimed to measure the level of self-control in children. The questions presented were rated on a five point scale. There were a total of 4 dimensions. To measure the parenting style the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used again which resulted in 0.94.
3. Peer interaction skills scale: This was used to measure peer interaction skills of the children. This scale had four dimensions which were social initiative, verbal and non-verbal interactions, social barriers, and pro-social behaviour. This questionnaire was used because the perception of a teacher might change peer interaction skills amongst children. Thereby, the teachers filled the questionnaire in accordance to the performance of the children. The different dimensions were measured on a four-



point scale. The total score had a positive correlation with the peer interaction skills. For this scale the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.84.

4. Emotion management skills questionnaire: This has three dimensions of emotional perception, emotional regulation and emotional utilization skills. Firstly, emotional perception is the skill a child possesses to both recognize and understand their own emotional experiences and those of others. This required the individual to have a sense of empathy and to be sensitive to changes in emotions. Emotional changes include facial expressions, tone of voice, and being able to interpret social cues. Secondly, emotion regulation refers to the ability of a child to control and adjust their emotional reactions to a particular situation. Lastly, emotion utilization is when emotional expression is used effectively in a situation. This can be through multiple ways such as facial cues, gestures, or behaviour. The motive behind the same is to improve enhance social interactions and build positive relationships. This questionnaire was filled out by teachers. It had 11 questions related to emotion perception skills, 13 on emotion regulation skills, and 6 on emotion utilization skills. A higher the score of emotional management related to an improved emotional stability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient in this study was 0.94.

The results of this study were obtained through descriptive statistics and a significance test. The Pearson's correlation coefficient for parenting styles and emotional regulation indicated a significant correlation. There was a negative correlation between emotion management skills and authoritarian parenting style. Additionally, a positive correlation was observed between authoritative parenting, self-control and peer interactions. However, a negative correlation was observed between authoritarian parenting, self-control and peer interactions. Overall, the study reinforces that authoritative parenting promotes better emotional outcomes than authoritarian.

### **Permissive Parenting on Emotional Regulation**

Beyond authoritarian and authoritative styles, permissive parenting has been linked to different emotional outcomes. A research study was conducted by Daria and Zoltán et al (2025). The study investigated the impact of permissive parenting on emotional regulation during child growth. The study aimed to understand if the characteristics of permissive parenting would positively or negatively impact the process of emotional regulation. Emotional regulation is a skill that plays a vital role in the development of a child. The study reviewed literature and analysed secondary sources on the relationship between permissive parenting and emotional regulation in children.

The peer-reviewed sources used included Google Scholar, ERIC, ScienceDirect, PsycINFO, and PubMed. This assisted in the collection of appropriate and credible articles and literature enhancing the validity of the study. The research focused on studies published from 1996 to 2025. All studies were in English and contained theoretical and empirical information. The researchers omitted studies that were generic in nature and only covered parenting styles. Overall 34 sources of information were considered. This allowed diversity in multiple contexts of permissive parenting influencing emotional regulation.

The procedure included reviewing papers on the parenting style of permissive parenting, and its effect on emotional regulation. This includes peer-reviewed studies, theory, and real-life contexts. Both advantages and disadvantages of the parenting style were taken into consideration. The studies included Herzog et al. which was conducted in the United States. It aims to measure how parenting styles influence emotional traits in a sample of American college students (Herzog et al., 2015). The results suggested that permissive parenting is linked to reduced emotional regulation and increased emotional instability.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the absence of boundaries can impact emotions during later stages of life. Another study was conducted by Jabeen et al. They studied a sample of adolescents from Pakistan. The study proved permissive parenting as a maladaptive strategy rather than an adaptive one (Jabeen et al., 2013). The researchers also reviewed the empirical study of Karim et al. This showed that permissive parenting reduces cognitive emotional regulation in children from Bangladesh (Karim et al., 2014).

The results suggest that parenting styles form the emotional regulation of a child. When a parent does not set rules and regulations there is a lack of discipline in the child which can cause emotional dysregulation. Mental and physical problems such as impulsive behaviour, lack of stress management, and reduced coping mechanisms can be a form of dysregulation. Nonetheless, dysregulation can be caused in many other ways and is impacted by cultural influences, status in society, and aggression. Thereby, this study concludes that permissive parenting creates a co-dependent environment for children. However, it lacks structure leading to a lack of emotional regulation skills. To mitigate negative results parents must maintain an equilibrium between emotional expression and discipline.

### **Three Parenting Styles on Emotional Regulation**

To capture the full spectrum of parenting, other research investigates emotional regulation across authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive styles. A study by Vidhi Sharma and Kavya Ahuja was published in the Indian Journal of Mental Health, in 2024. The aim of the study was to understand the relationship between the three parenting styles and emotion regulation in adolescents. The sampling techniques used in the study were purposive and snowball sampling. The study took 100 samples from Delhi NCR. To measure the dependent variable of emotional regulation, questionnaires were filled out by children and a parent authority questionnaire by the parents. The results showed that there was no prominent relationship between parenting styles and emotion regulation in India. This might be due to the nature of a collectivist society in India.

### **The three research hypotheses for this study were the following-**

1. Permissive parenting will significantly influence emotional regulation in adolescents.
2. Authoritarian parenting style will significantly influence emotion regulation in adolescents.
3. Authoritative parenting style will significantly influence emotion regulation in adolescents.

### **The questionnaires and tools used in the study include the following-**

1. Parental authority questionnaire: This was used to measure parenting styles. It had two parts with 30 questions each. There were three separate scales for each of the parenting styles authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. These two sections were to understand both the point of view of the mother and father. The scores were analysed based on their ranking on the scale which was from 10 to 50.
2. Emotion regulation questionnaire: This was for children and adolescents and was used to measure the ability of teenagers to contain their emotions.
3. Emotional adjustment test questionnaire: This had scales that included 26 questions and were divided between 3 other scales. The questionnaire measured the three variables of concentration, inhibitory control, and activation control. However, combined ratings were used in the study to analyze how the adolescents controlled their emotions. The results in terms of high scores showed more emotional control of adolescents compared to the lower scores. This was measured through a Likert scale ranging

from values 1 to 5.

After the questionnaires were collected from the sample, Google Forms were created. The ethical considerations followed during the study include informed consent and confidentiality. To do so a phone call was made with the participants to seek their consent to participate and to brief them on the study. Additionally, snowball sampling was followed as the online questionnaire was forwarded by the researcher to the participants after which they sent the same to their friends .

The results of the study were analysed using Pearsons correlation coefficient. The Pearsons coefficient for permissive parenting on emotion regulation was  $r = -.038$ . This indicated that the correlation was non-significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level. Additionally, the authoritative parenting style had a coefficient of  $r = -.040$  and authoritarian parenting of  $r = -.084$ . Both these parenting styles also showed a non-significant correlation with emotion regulation.

To conclude, this study aimed to find the relationship between different parenting styles and emotion regulation. However, the results of the study proved the hypothesis invalid. The hypothesis was that there would be a significant correlation between permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles and emotion regulation in adolescents. However, this research contributes to an understanding that parenting styles affect the capacity to self-regulate emotions.

## Discussion

Throughout the reviewed studies a deeper understanding of the impact of parenting styles on emotional regulation of children has been established. Additionally, cultural differences have played a major role as they determine the upbringing of the child. Firstly, the study by Sikandar et al. (2025) suggested a relationship between authoritarian parenting and reduced mental well-being in children. This underscores that authoritarian parenting sets rigid rules that restrict personal expression and emotional management. Children who undergo this form of parenting tend to associate regulating emotions with certain criticism or punishment. Thereby, this leads to unhealthy emotional outcomes.

This idea is further explored through the comparative study by Dexian Li et al. (2023). The study showed the difference in emotional regulation between the two parenting styles of authoritarian and authoritative. Their results showed a positive correlation between authoritative parenting, self-control, and peer relationships. This suggests that an open relationship with boundaries between parent and child can lead to emotional regulation. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting decreases self-control and peer interactions. A reason for the same would be that children raised in such a manner may comply with the needs of the environment.

Moving forward, the study on permissive parenting by Daria and Zoltán et al. shows that while this type of parenting helps in the emotional support of the child it decreases boundaries with the parent. This lack of control and guidance may lead to emotional dysregulation in children. This might make them overwhelmed with emotions due to an unstructured relationship. Thereby, we can conclude that emotional warmth alone does not equate to regulation.

Lastly, the study by Sharma and Ahuja (2024) contradicted the findings of all the other studies. This is because the results showed a lack of significant correlation between parenting styles and emotional regulation in Indian adolescents. This means that cultural differences can change values in terms of parenting. India being a collectivist culture means that there is support from family and there are societal norms to abide by. This can reduce the impact of the parenting style.

Unlike the other studies where the sample was children, this study was with adolescents. Teenagers during



the time of puberty undergo rapid psychological and emotional changes. They are also prone to peer pressure which may dilute the direct impact of parenting style.

To sum up, parenting styles do influence emotional regulation but their effect is mediated by the behavioural expectations of the environment. Furthermore, cultural context can impact emotions making emotional development a result of the child's socio-cultural environment. Therefore, interventions for healthy emotional development should focus on parenting behaviors and cultural frameworks.

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