

Balancing Discipline and Warmth: How Parenting Styles Shape Adolescent Depression Outcomes

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Abstract. This paper explores the significant impact of parenting styles on adolescent depression, particularly focusing on the authoritative style compared to authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful approaches. This study examines the impact of various parenting styles on adolescents' mental health by utilizing data from recent studies and qualitative analysis, showing the potential development direction in the future that can improve children's depression levels. The findings indicate that authoritative parenting tends to mitigate depression states due to its balanced approach to discipline and warmth. In contrast, authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles are correlated with increased depressive states among teenagers. The study also examines sex differences in the prevalence of depression, noting less apparent differences in late adolescence. The conclusions suggest that adopting authoritative parenting can significantly improve adolescent mental health outcomes. This reminds people, especially parents and variety of educational institutes should put more effort on children's mental health with scientific method that combined with authoritative parenting styles.

Keywords: Parenting style; child depression; authoritative parenting; mental health

1. Introduction

Since the important role that parents play during the adolescent years, the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent mental health is a major area of emphasis in psychological research. Adolescents experience important emotional, social, and psychological changes. The parenting style adopted during this period significantly influences the mental health trajectory of young adults, especially concerning depression.

There are four types of parenting styles are commonly distinguished: permissive, authoritarian, authoritative, and neglectful. Different parenting approaches with differing degrees of control and support are represented by each style. Parenting with authority involves providing a lot of support while making appropriate requests. And it is often seen as most beneficial for adolescents. In contrast, authoritarian (high demands, low support) and neglectful (low in both demands and support) parenting styles are linked to the negative psychological outcomes. And permissive parenting (high support, low demands) also brings challenges, though generally is less severe than the other two.

The research by Keijsers et al. and Chad-Friedman et al. adds a substantial amount of literature that can investigate these relationships. According to the research, teenagers raised by authoritative parents are generally less likely to experience depression, whereas those raised by authoritarian or neglectful parents are more likely to have these state. Despite the extensive research, there are still have remaining gaps, especially in understanding how different aspects of these parenting styles interact with various factors like gender and age to affect depression in adolescents.

Research often notes a higher depression rates among teenage girls compared to boys, with these rates converging as teenagers grow into adults. The reasons for these sex differences are not well understood and need further study for effective intervention development [1, 2].

The goal of the study is to provide actionable insights to improve parenting practices and mental health interventions. By identifying which parenting traits are most beneficial or harmful, this study aims to help more group to develop educational programs that guide parents toward more effective strategies. Additionally, this study will add detailed analyses to the academic discussion on the impact of parenting in adolescent mental health area, aiming to enhance understanding and treatment

approaches for depression in teenagers. Through this detailed investigation, this study is expecting to expand current knowledge and support better preventative and affective strategies for adolescent depression.

2. Influence of Parenting Styles on Adolescent Depression

High standards, informed discipline, and a well-balanced attitude to warmth are traits of authoritative parenting. Keijsers et al. investigate how this parenting approach affects teenage depression, revealing that adolescents who experience authoritative parenting tend to exhibit lower levels of depressive state. The references on parenting philosophies and parental mental health in connection to teenage depression condition has been evaluated, both solely and collectively. Adolescents' mental health may be impacted by strict or authoritarian parenting. Furthermore, prior studies have connected parental authoritarianism and higher levels of depression state, while higher levels of parental authoritative parenting and lower levels of depressed symptoms have been associated [1].

In addition, Keijsers et al. also study the effect from sex differences in depressive state. According to earlier studies, teenage girls reported higher rates of depressive symptoms than did teenage boys. These variations persisted in the current study from middle to late adolescence/early adulthood. Even though females continued to report greater depressive symptoms, the sex differences between the teenagers were less apparent during wave 3, with each wave occurring approximately every three years. When the participants were 19–21 years old [1]. This suggests that the gap between adolescent boys and girls had reduced. Moreover, female adolescents showed a greater correlation between parental depression and teenage depressive symptoms. People still do not fully understand the mechanisms underlying the sex differences in depression (symptomatology) and the prevalence of females [1]. This incomplete understanding is due to several factors. First, the biological variables, such as hormonal differences and their interaction with heredity, are not yet fully reflected. Second, there is not clear in how developmental stages impact depression differently in males and females, with inconsistent findings on why sex differences in depressive state become less obvious in late adolescence. Additionally, the role of environmental and social factors also cannot be ignored, including the different impact of parental depression on boys and girls, remains unclear.

Conversely, the negative consequences of authoritarian parenting are clear from its link to increased rates of teenage depression. In the study of Chad-Friedman et al., researchers highlighted that how this parenting style can emphasize the obedience and authority without much warmth or communication and lead to increased stress and anxiety in adolescents. Those factors that contribute directly to the development of depressive state. The strict punishment of authoritarian parenting may suppress the adolescent's ability to develop children's independence and emotional regulation, further damaging their mental health. What's more, the further research shows that teenagers may have reduced the self-esteem as the result of using authoritarian parenting, which is strict and harsh. Teenagers who raised in authoritarian home may feel lonely and underappreciated, which can be a strong potential problem for children's depression state. This is especially be true when there is lack of emotional warmth and helpful communication. According to Chad-Friedman et al., these teenagers are also more likely to use aggressive coping strategies, which might make their depression state become worse [2].

It's also worth to discuss that the research indicate a connection between parenting practices and teenage depression. According to Chad-Friedman et al.'s research from 2023, depressive state in teenagers may arise from authoritarian parenting, but they may also intensify the authoritarian traits of parents. The complicated relationship between parenting practices and teenage mental health is highlighted by this cyclical issue, which raises the possibility that treatments may need to target both parental behavior and adolescent mental health at the same time.

According to research by Chad-Friedman et al. , there is evidence that child depressive symptoms at age 3 was a predictor of depression at age 15, but these pathways were not mutual, and the mediators differed for mothers and fathers, especially in how they affected parental behaviors.

Mothers who had kids that were depressed at age 3 were also likely to have children that were depressed at age 6, and mothers who were authoritarian parents from years 9 through 15 were also prone to have children who were depressed at age 6. For fathers, higher levels of depression in children at age three were associated, with higher levels of depression in children at age six. These in turn were associated with higher levels of depression in mothers at ages nine and twelve, which culminated in higher levels of authoritarian parenting at age 15. The specific mediators in these pathways appear to involve the emotional and behavioral responses of the parents to their children's depressive state, with mother and father reacting differently to the challenges that presented by their children's mental health states [2].

The interventions are firmly needed, as the parenting styles have a substantial impact on adolescent depression. Based on those findings, parent educational programs need to highlight the advantages of authoritative parenting, as well as the dangers of authoritarian and other less encouraging parenting approaches. The programs like these should encourage behaviors that can help teenagers become more independent and receive more emotional support, as well as improve parental responsiveness and communication skills. Additionally, the treatments should target teenagers in order to provide them the tools that they need to properly handle the stress and the emotional difficulties. These might include cognitive-behavioral resilience training programs that can help teenagers reframe their unfavorable attitudes and improve their problem-solving skills. Based on the evidences above, there is a significant and complex connection between parenting style and teenage depressive state. Authoritative parenting is tend to be protective against the depression. On the other hand, teenagers who experience authoritarian parenting are far more likely to have depressive state due to its strict and solid approach. By lowering the high level of adolescent depression and promoting a healthy mental state for future generations, the better mental health interventions and parental guidance programs can be implemented with certain understanding.

As it is presented to all, each style of parenting, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, they are all embody the different patterns of parental expectations, responsiveness, and control. Among these, authoritative parenting has been highlighted for its beneficial benefits on children's development. It is characterized by high demands and high responsiveness. Authoritarian parenting, on the other hand, combines high standards with little response. The characteristics of permissive parenting are low demands and strong responsiveness. Furthermore, low demands and low responsiveness—characteristics of reckless parenting—are typically linked to less desirable developmental outcomes.

3. Other Impact of Parenting Style in the Childhood

In the process of exploring the impact of parenting styles on children, it is crucial to consider the comprehensive effect that provided by Allmann, Klein, and Kopala-Sibley in their longitudinal research program. Their research studied the bidirectional and transactional relationships between parenting styles and the development of various child psychological conditions, including ADHD, ODD, depression, and anxiety over a span of six years [3, 4]. Understanding how different parenting philosophies affect children's actions and emotional control is made easier with the help of this study. For example, research indicates that children reared in authoritative households possess better emotional control abilities, such as the ability to manage their frustration, adjust satisfaction, and show greater self-controls and academic performance. This is likely due to the consistent and flexible discipline strategies so that it can help children understand and manage their emotions effectively. These children are typically less prone to have psychological disorders, such as depression and anxiety, which correlates with their enhanced ability to cope with frustrations and some setbacks.

Méndez and colleagues mention that while these children might receive great emotional support, the lack of discipline and structure will lead to difficulties in adjusting behaviors in the expected ways from society [5]. This often results in problems with the authority and the inability to stick to social norms. There are two different types of the authoritative parenting style were identified: one is non-

disciplinary and another one is disciplinary. While variations existed across parents within each parenting style, they were more noticeable for non-disciplinary control tactics than for disciplinary ones, such as the positive reinforcement and clear expectation, unlike the more punitive disciplinary approaches like strict punishment or controlling. These results show that parents do not always use all of the parenting techniques intended to manage, regulate, or control their children's behavior spontaneously. To find naturally occurring parenting sub types, it is helpful to consider a variety of parenting approaches. While some parents appear to provide clear guidelines, limits, and expectations for the actions of their children, they rarely respond to wrongdoing with their children by using the effective punitive methods.

Early childhood learning is significantly shaped by the parenting styles of the parents, with varying impacts depending on the approach parents take in raising their children. Research shows that parents' self-efficacy, a measure of their confidence in their capacity to positively impact their child's development, significantly modifies the effects of parenting styles on early learning outcomes. According to Kong and Yasmin, an authoritative parenting style is one that strikes a balance between strictness, warmth, and high expectations—a combination that improves a parent's sense of self-efficacy. High self-efficacy parents are more likely to participate regularly in their children's educational activities, providing structured learning environment, and encouraging independent problem-solving ability [5]. This is not only better the cognitive development of children, but also enhance children's motivation and persistence in doing the educational tasks. In contrast, those authoritarian or permissive parenting styles, which have strict discipline that enforce children without excessive warmth, tend to be in a lower self-efficacy of parent. These styles often result in inconsistent or insufficient supports for children's learning, which can obstruct their ability to explore and develop critical thinking skills, like children's independence in problem solving. In contrast, authoritarian and permissive parenting style may prevent those positive outcomes since their lack of consistency.

In addition, to influence the cognitive and learning development, parenting styles significantly affect children's social emotional development, particularly in some specific contexts. Wurster et al. explored the connection between parents' adverse childhood experiences, emotional availability, and the social emotional development of young children in an American Indian community. They found that parenting styles were shaped by adverse experiences which can limit emotional availability [6]. This is crucial for healthy social emotional growth among children. Parenting style that is lack of emotional warmth and responsiveness often seen in authoritarian styles, this style may lead to some difficulties that exist in emotional regulation, peer relationships, and also the overall social competence. What's more, the emotional availability is often associated with authoritative styles, supporting the development of empathy, cooperation, and emotional resilience in children. These findings suggest that the interaction between parenting styles and social emotional development is critical for a child's ability to adapt to both educational and social environment, emphasizing the need for parental education, which is able to improve childhood outcomes across various field of development. It's also crucial to explore deeper into the long-term implications about these styles that across generations and into their adulthood. The impact of parenting style is not confined to the immediate outcomes that observed in children, it also influences intergenerational health significantly, such as attachment patterns and specific behavioral issues like substance use disorders.

The research by Schickedanz et al. provides some valuable information about how parenting styles impact intergenerational health, particularly through the transmission of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Their longitudinal research program, which followed over six years, emphasizes that parenting styles are characterized by the high control and low responsiveness, such as authoritarian or neglectful approaches, which are more likely to enable the ACEs across generations permanently. These styles tend to create an environment where children will experience higher levels of stress and less emotional supports. Including parenting practices may exacerbate Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which can result in a variety of health problems, including as mental health disorders, chronic diseases, and reduced social functioning. These issues also frequently endure over generations, continuing the cycles of emotional stress [7]. This highlights the critical need for

parenting interventions should be promoted more positive, responsive, and raising styles that can break the cycle of trauma for improving long-term health outcomes as well.

Parenting styles also have deep effects on attachment patterns and psychological outcomes in adulthood. The work of Ye et al. explored the impact of adverse childhood experiences on depression, particularly through the lens of attachment theory, in a large-scale study involving over the data of 589 students selected from 85 Chinese universities through various questionnaires were analyzed statistically. The insecure attachment styles, which often become the result of authoritarian or neglectful parenting style, leading to emotional dissonance and a higher susceptibility to depression in children's later life [8]. These insecure attachment patterns were characterized by anxiety, fear, and mistrust in the relationships, and they are often carried forward into adulthood, so that influencing an individual's ability to form a healthy relationship and to manage emotional stress.

In a similar study, Clay (n.d.) investigates how early childhood experiences shaped by different parenting styles and how to influence adult attachment styles, based on a group of undergraduate students at a medium in size Midwestern institution who were enrolled in an introductory psychology course made up the participants. 136 students in all finished the study. 39 of these individuals identified as male, and 97 of them as female. The study suggests that individuals who experienced neglect or inconsistent care during the childhood often feel struggle with attachment-related issues in adulthood, such as difficulty in trusting others, feeling fearful of abandonment. Anxiety, depression, and personality disorders are among the psychological disorders that are closely associated with these attachment problems. In contrast, individuals who were raised in authoritative households, where care was consistent, supportive, and appropriately responsive, tend to develop a secure attachment styles. These individuals are generally more resilient, better in being able to regulate their emotions, and less prone to psychological disorders and the long-lasting impact of early parenting on mental health [9].

Beyond psychological outcomes, parenting styles also play a significant role in shaping specific behavioral issues, particularly in substance usage disorders. The study by Gerra et al. delves into the biopsychosocial difficulties between the early parent-child interactions and the development of substance use disorders. Their research suggests that parenting styles were characterized by neglect or harsh discipline are associated with a higher risk of substance use in adolescence and adulthood, particularly when it compare to children who raised in authoritative households. Children raised in these environments often lacking the emotional supports and guidance that will be needed to navigate the challenges of adolescence, making them more vulnerable to peer pressure and the allure of substance use.

Moreover, the study also highlights the role of attachment in the context, showing that the insecure attachment styles, resulting from authoritarian or neglectful parenting, are often a precursor to substance use disorders. As a way to deal with the unresolved feelings of trauma, some children might turn to taking drugs. In contrast, authoritative parenting, which balances warmth with appropriate discipline, tending to foster secure attachment and resilience, reducing the likelihood of substance use disorders. The findings of Gerra et al. emphasize the importance of early interventions that focus on promoting secure attachment and positive parenting practices, such as parenting workshops and family therapy, which have been shown to reduce the risk of substance use and other behavioral problems in later life [10].

The accumulative evidence from these studies underscores the deep and long-term effects of parenting approaches on different facets of development, from the childhood to the adulthood, and even across generations. When it comes to fostering adaptable behavior, emotional control, and secure attachment, all of which lower the likelihood of behavioral and psychological disorders. On the other hand, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful styles are associated with a range of negative outcomes, including insecure attachment, emotional dissonances, intergenerational transmission of ACEs, and a higher risk of substance use disorders.

For these given findings, there is a pressing need for parenting interventions and policies that support and educate parents on the benefits of authoritative parenting style. Such interventions could include parenting classes that twill each positive discipline techniques and strategies to build parent's

adjusting ability. Additionally, policies that provide social supports to families, such as access to mental health services, parenting programs in community, and resources for stress management, could be helpful to reduce the incidence of negative parenting styles and their associated outcomes.

4. Conclusion

This research reconfirms the great influences of parenting styles on adolescent mental health, particularly highlighting the protective benefits of authoritative parenting against depression. By fostering an environment of warmth and rational discipline, those authoritative parents significantly contribute to lower depression levels in adolescents. Conversely, the restrictive nature of authoritarian parenting and the lack of guidance in neglectful environments exacerbate depressive state. The study also sheds light on the diminishing sex differences in depression by late adolescence, suggesting a complex interaction of biological, developmental, and environmental factors.

Expanding from these findings, it becomes necessary for future research to explore further the connection between parenting styles and adolescent mental health across different cultural contexts. This exploration could pave the way for the interventions that address specific parental behaviors and their impact on children's psychological well-being. Moreover, educational programs for parents could highlight the benefits of authoritative parenting while warning the dangers of more authoritarian or neglectful practices. Ultimately, by enhancing parental awareness and behavior, it can foster healthier generational relationships and significantly reduce the prevalence of adolescent depression, setting the stage for more resilient future generations.

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