

## **Parenting Style and Mental Health**

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### **Abstract**

Family is a basic and core component of our primary group. We acquire basic skills of life, like decision making, sense of responsibility, moral and ethical values, respect for others, expression of love etc. from this primary group. Undoubtedly it can be said that we get first education from our parents. Being a parent, we wish to provide our child best values, warmth, love, nurturing, emotional stability and discipline. But sometimes things do not work, as we plan. What type of person a child will grow as an adult, depends upon various factors. Among all these factors the most important factor is the parenting practice which one adopts to bringing up the child. There are various researches which suggest the various parental practices and styles that can be correlated with mental health, academic achievement and success of the child. In the present paper the author wants to elaborate the various types of parenting style and the relationship with mental health and academic success.

**Keywords:** Parenting style, academic achievement, success, mental health.

### **Introduction**

Parenting style plays a very important and crucial role in determining the future of a child. Apart from personality traits, the social, moral and ethical development very much depends upon the practices which parents adopt while interacting with the child. Parenting style can be defined as a system of beliefs which describes the child and parent interaction over a wide range of situation. There are various studies which confirm the impact of parenting styles on children and achievement regarding their academics. Based on parenting model proposed by Baumrind's the majority of studies established that the authoritative parenting style is the most effective for increasing academic achievement, whereas the authoritarian and permissive styles are associated

with decrease in academics achievement /grades. The psychologist has long been interested to investigate the factors that impact academic achievement of children. Educational achievement means, admission of the student in a good course and increased level of scores (Moosavi, H. 2002). There can be various parameters that can measure the students' academic success, but generally academic grades are considered as a measure of academic achievement. Because, it is considered that student's academic scores is an indicator of achievement of goals. Numerous studies indicate that academic achievement can be increased or decreased based on the parenting style that is practiced by the parents (Spera, 2005).

Parenting styles can be defined as a set or a system of behaviours that describes the parent and child interactions over a wide range of situations and creates an effective interaction atmosphere (Maher & Komaijani, 2006). Parenting styles play a very important role in children and adolescents development and have been associated to different aspects of their cognitive, emotional, social and academic capability (Steinberg et. al, 1994; Morris et. al, 2007). Parenting style is considered as the attitudes of parents towards the child that are communicated to him or her and creates an emotional environment in which the behavior of the parents is expressed (Darling & Steinberg 1993).

Diana Baumrind (1971) classified parenting styles into four categories: authoritative parenting (highly demanding, highly responsive, reasonable and consistent), authoritarian parenting (highly demanding and low responsive), permissive parenting (low demanding and high responsive) and permissive and unloving (low in demanding, uninvolved and unsupportive).

The authoritative parenting style can be described as supportive and taking interest in child's activity. This is also called democratic parenting style. This type of parenting style is characterized by clear communication with child by setting of rules and expectations, use of reasoning and healthy discussion to follow the rules for desired goals (Ballantine, 200; Varela et al, 2004). Authoritative parents are demanding and responsive, controlling but not restrictive; they are open to communication and actively participate in the child's life showing trust and acceptance; encouraging their children to be autonomous. Authoritarian parenting style is

democratic pattern characterized by high level of warmth and supportiveness, along with positive control. Children brought up with this parenting style tend to grow up as a happier person with better emotional control and regulation and high on self –assertiveness (Khamen&Gatab, 2011). In this parenting style, parents respect children’s autonomy and believe in the giving freedom to them to encourage their independence. In this style of parenting, parents adopt inductive discipline strategy, which help the kids to become more empathic, helpful, conscientious, and kind to others( Krevans& Gibbs: Knafo&Plomin, 2006). Inductive discipline is explaining the reasons for rule, and it has been linked to advance moral reasoning skills ( Krenvas&Gibb!996; Kerr et al, 2004). It further helps prevent children from developing deficient behaviour problems ( Choe et al, 2013: Arsenio And Romos- Marcuse, 2014). Authoritative parenting style is positively correlated with higher academic performance, high self- esteem, competent social skills,self-assertiveness and better mental health ( Spera, C.2005: Nyark, K. 2011: Strange & Brandt 1999: McClun&Marrell, 1998: Renklin et. al,2009: Rothrauff& Cooney 2009: Newman at al 2008: Zeinali at, al. 2011: Khamen& Gatab,2011).

Authoritarian parents provide positive and orderly environment and monitor their children’s activities carefully ( Darling & Steinberg 1993). But they are extremely strict and not responsive and discourage open communication. In this parenting style open communication is not an option and they are not affectionate towards their children, rather they can be highly critical and may use shame as a tactic to force children to follow the rules.Parentsbelieve that shaming will motivate their children better. Parents believe in complete and total control over the kids and often show little trust in their children. These types ofparents form strict rules for their wards which much be followed. In case the child does not follow the rules, the child is givenhash and punitive punishment, which may be physically and emotionally abusive. They focus more on control, obedience and discipline rather than nurturing the child. Children of these types of parents have a feeling of insecurity, high level of aggression, possess low self- esteem, conduct issue, perform poor in academics, lack of social competence, mental health issues ,low coping skills and high risk of substance abuse ( Smith et. al, 2014: Martin & Waite, !994: Baumrind,

1991: Woltfradt et. al, 2003). Children of these types of parents show more agreeable behaviour towards others and also display less prosocial behaviour.

Third type of parenting style is Permissive parenting. This parenting style is characterised by low demanding and high responsiveness. Permissive parents are tolerant and accepting toward the child's impulses, desires, and actions, also low in self-regulation and make few demands for mature behaviour (Baumrind, 2013). Parents treat their child more like a friend rather than parents. These types of parents are nurturing and warm but very reluctant to impose limits. This parenting style is also called passive parenting. They don't say "no" to their child or disappoint their child. Permissive parents intent to be non-punitive and avoid confrontation or over power to accomplish their means . (Bauermeister,1995). Parents let their children make major decisions without any guidance. Children of these types of parents do not follow clear rules and struggle with self-regulation and self-control. Generally, they become ego centric and face lots of problems in their interpersonal relationship. They are impulsive, aggressive and lack of independence and personal responsibilities because of lack of boundaries. They can have mental health issues like depression and anxiety. They can be demanding and selfish also. They need external validation for their behaviour, which can be very dangerous.

Permissive and unloving parenting is when parents are indifferent, dismissive and don't respond to their child's needs apart from basic needs, like food, clothes and shelter. This parenting style is low in both responsiveness and demanding. They act emotionally distant from their children and keep limited interaction with them because they are too busy with their own problems. They don't have time to supervise their wards. Neglectful parents are not warm, not supportive and uninvolved. Neglectful parents minimize interaction time with their kids and show indifference to their child needs and demands(Ballantine, J.2001). They do not monitor children activities and actions and fail in providing a structured environment, may neglect discipline entirely or use strict disciplinary practices sporadically. Children of these types of parents feel lost and directionless (Varela etal, 2004). Children raised by these parents may face difficulties in forming attachment in their later life( Hong& Park, 2012). They also display faulty cognition,

unhealthy attachment style, lacking in emotional and social skills also perform poor in academics. Due to lacking boundaries at home it is difficult for them to learn appropriate behaviour at home as well as in social situations. These children are also more likely to misbehave in different situations. They have increased risk of substance abuse and exhibit delinquency during adolescence (Hoskins, 2014; Hoffman & Bahr, 2014).

Data from various researches indicate that authoritarian, permissive and neglectful (permissive and unloving) parenting styles are negatively associated with academic performance (Baumrind, D, 1999; Kopko, K. 2007; Maccoby & Martin, 1983), whereas, authoritative parenting style has been positively related with enhanced academic achievement (Parsasirat et. al, 2013; Chen et. al, 1997). This pattern of results suggests that warmth, loving, discipline and setting clear limits, are more effective for promoting good mental health and success than permissiveness, strict obedience, punishment, and rejection. The emotional environment created in a family with an authoritative parenting style supports the development and boosts many abilities and skills implicated in academic achievement, such as self-regulation, rule-following, communication of needs and opinions, independence and cooperation with peers and adults (Shute et. al, 2011). The benefits of authoritative parenting styles on academic achievement of children and adolescents have been consistently reported across countries and cultures (Walker & MacPhee 2011).

Various studies suggest that authoritative parenting raise self-reliant, independent and socially-competent kids. But children of authoritative parents are also not immune to mental health problems, relationship problems, substance abuse, delinquency problem, low self – esteem and poor self-regulations issues. When it comes to parenting style there is no “one size fits to all”. You don’t need to stick to one style, there comes time in life when you have to use a combined type of approach in moderation.. It is clear that the parenting style adopted within the family has an impact on children and adolescents academic achievement. The attitudes that parents have towards their kids have an effect on the involvement they show in the school, as well as in the development of skills and abilities needed to cope with school demands. Culture plays a

significant role so that in some contexts specific parenting styles can be valid, appropriate and effective, but obsolete in others. It is also important to keep in mind that, in addition to culture, gender and individual differences also influence parenting style. Although parenting style categorization may not fit in all situations as independent constructs in a linear continuum from high to low responsiveness and demanding, most studies show that children and adolescents require a balanced relationship with their parents where warmth (acceptance-rejection) and control (permissiveness-strictness) are managed according to the context and children and adolescent's personal demands and needs. The most successful parents know when to change their style depending on situations and circumstances.

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