

The Influence of Parenting Styles on Adolescents' Mental Health

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Abstract. With the development and progress of technology, the demand for talent in a variety of industries is increasing, and the requirement for the quality of talent is getting higher and higher. Therefore, parents' demand for children's academic performance is rising. Under heavy academic pressure, children's psychological status is easy to encounter issues. As a result, the problem of Adolescent mental health become a hot topic of social concern. This paper is mainly about the relationship between different parenting styles and adolescents' mental health. The study found that parenting styles have a significant influence for adolescent's Mental Health. Negative parenting styles contribute to social anxiety and deepen depression among adolescents; positive parenting styles are not conducive to depression and anxiety. Children's depression and anxiety are more influenced by mothers than fathers. The significance of this study is to bring about parents' attention to their children's mental health, and parents can realize the importance of ways and means of raising children. In future studies, scholars can consider the influence of parents' parenting style on male adolescent groups as a research direction.

1 Introduction

The mental health status of adolescents is one of the most concerning issues for various countries, societies, and schools at present. The World Health Organization (WHO) launched the WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health (2019–2023), emphasizing the necessity of integrating mental health into universal health coverage and proposing new guidelines on promoting adolescent mental health awareness [1]. Seventeen departments including the Chinese Ministry of Education jointly issued the Special Action Plan for Comprehensive Strengthening and Improvement of Students' Mental Health Work in the New Era (2023-2025), requiring that mental health work be effectively prioritized. Schools at all levels have also included enhancing the mental health level of adolescents in their work agenda, establishing counseling rooms, conducting mental health lectures specifically for students, and developing mental health literacy to address psychological issues and effectively reduce students' negative emotions. Adolescents are the primary target group in the education system, and the education quality is key to evaluating the success of education. This includes not only adolescents' knowledge levels, practical skills, and innovative abilities but also their sound psychological states.

Family education is fundamental to education, and parents are the first inspiring teacher and the people whom children interact with the most. Every word and action of parents can subtly influence children, and different parenting styles can bring up children with different psychological conditions. Correct parenting styles can give a fillip to children's good mental health, but incorrect or inappropriate parenting styles can also

cause varying degrees of harm to children's mental health. Existing studies have shown that parenting styles are an important predictor of adolescent mental health [2]. The main purpose of this study is to review the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent mental health, provide a new theoretical basis for parents in the process of mental health education for adolescents, and also encourage parents to pay more attention to their parenting methods and approaches, avoiding as much as possible the negative effects of inappropriate parenting styles on adolescent mental health. It can effectively promote more standardized, scientific, and comprehensive governance of adolescent mental health issues in various countries through identifying parenting style" and correcting their problems in parenting styles.

2 Introduction of research subjects

The independent variable of this study is parenting styles, and the dependent variable is the mental health status. Some scholars classify parenting styles into four types: authoritarian, authoritative, neglectful and indulgent. Authoritarian parents are strict with their children and exhibit strong controlling tendencies but lack communication and rarely consider their children's needs. Children raised by authoritarian parents may appear obedient on the surface but are rebellious and prone to psychological issues internally. Authoritative parents hold high expectations for their children while providing ample care and companionship. This type of parent can communicate effectively with their children, and although they set high demands, they adjust demands to a reasonable extent based on their children's

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abilities and psychological development. Neglectful parents rarely show concern for their children's academic and personal lives, failing to meet their emotional needs. Indulgent parents show high levels of tolerance toward their children, seldom setting rules or demands. Children raised under this parenting style may act impulsively. The relationship between parenting styles and mental health mainly focuses on the exploration, analysis, and summary of two adverse psychological conditions: depression and anxiety. Anxiety is a common psychological disorder, particularly prevalent among adolescents, characterized by excessive mental burdens and unlimited worries and plans for the future, leading to negative emotional experiences. Depression is a mental illness primarily caused by disappointment in people or things around oneself, coupled with an inability to change, resulting in painful experiences.

3 The influence of parenting styles on anxiety

China began to explore the influence of parenting styles on adolescent anxiety relatively late, with scholars in the early 20th century initiating investigations into the matter. Researchers typically collected data through questionnaires, and a few utilized case studies, engaging in conversations with target groups to gather data. Data analysis was predominantly conducted using SPSS software to process the collected data. Based on the analyzed data, it was found that the influence of parenting styles on anxiety manifests in various forms.

Firstly, it is believed that there are gender differences in the level of anxiety among adolescents. According to Wang Xin's analysis of the data, it was found that boys scored significantly higher than girls in factors such as strict punishment, rejection, excessive protection, and excessive interference by parents [3]. This could be attributed to that males are expected to face greater pressures in society in the future compared to females. Therefore, parents often impose higher demands and stricter discipline on boys during their upbringing, aiming to facilitate qualitative leaps in their various abilities. In this process, parents may overlook the psychological feelings of boys, assuming that they are inherently stronger and braver than girls. However, this often leads to boys experiencing higher levels of anxiety compared to girls.

Furthermore, different parenting styles result in variations in the anxiety levels of adolescents. In data collected by Chinese scholar Yang Fei, it was observed that under authoritarian parenting styles, girls exhibited the highest level of anxiety, whereas under democratic parenting styles, girls showed the lowest level of anxiety [4]. Additionally, from the research conducted by Cong Enzhao, it was found that parental care serves as a protective factor against adolescent anxiety, while parental control acts as a risk factor. The negative correlation between parental control and adolescent anxiety and depressive symptoms was particularly pronounced [5]. Cong Enzhao distributed questionnaires

to middle and high school students using cluster sampling methodology, employing general social information questionnaires, parenting style questionnaires, child anxiety screening questionnaires, and Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale evaluations. Binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to analyze the data. It was found that maternal care and encouragement do not lead to anxiety in adolescents, but parental control significantly influences adolescent anxiety. Research results indicated that parental control was a risk factor for adolescent anxiety, and parental control in parenting relationship reflects parental anxiety [6]. However, regarding the influence of parental control as a parenting style on anxiety, a study by Sanjeevan, D. found that parental control does not necessarily lead to anxiety among Sri Lankan adolescents. Therefore, further research is needed to determine if parental control as a parenting style dimension leads to anxiety. It is believed that the parenting styles causing anxiety in children may vary among different regions. For children in Sri Lanka, parental control may be perceived as a form of care and companionship. Hence, it can be concluded that negative parenting styles significantly influence adolescent anxiety, and for some children in certain regions, parental control is a key factor of their anxiety. In future research, scholars may consider how cultural background factors and social environmental factors beyond the family influence the impact of parenting styles on anxiety.

Lastly, maternal parenting styles significantly influence the anxiety in adolescents. After analyzing the data, Sanjeevan, D. found that mother's parenting styles have a significant influence on anxiety, whereas father's parenting styles do not have a significant effect [7]. This may be due to the fact that mothers provide more companionship and care to their children during their growth compared to fathers. Children may rely more on their mothers psychologically, hence maternal parenting styles, whether positive or negative, have a profound influence on anxiety in children.

Furthermore, parenting styles also affect adolescents' social anxiety. Research conducted by Chinese scholar Qin Yao confirmed this viewpoint. The study introduced peer acceptance and rumination as mediating variables. Peer acceptance was selected as a mediating factor because the influence of parenting styles on adolescents accompanies them throughout their growth period. The initial patterns of interaction with peers are learned from interactions with parents during childhood, which serves as a direct reference for adolescents in their interactions with peers. For instance, if parents are strict and critical towards their children, the children may develop distorted thoughts "I am not worthy of others' liking and approval." Subsequently, these distorted thoughts may affect adolescents' interactions with peers, and the degree of peer acceptance directly influences adolescents' willingness to engage in social interactions and their psychological well-being. Therefore, peer acceptance is considered as a mediating factor. Rumination was selected as a mediating factor because research suggests that negative parenting styles are associated with increased coping strategies for

rumination in children, while children raised under positive parenting styles exhibit lower levels of rumination [8]. Research indicates a close correlation between parenting styles and rumination, hence rumination is considered as a mediating factor. This research provides theoretical foundations for better prevention and intervention of adolescents' social anxiety in the future. The study employed cluster random sampling methodology and collected data using the Egnä Minnen Beträffande Uppfostran - Short Form (S-EMBU), Rumination Response Scale (RRS), and Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SAS-A). To mitigate the impact of common method bias, the study employed reverse-scored items and emphasized confidentiality during assessment [9]. The results of data analysis indicate that negative parenting styles significantly influence adolescents' social anxiety. For instance, excessive severity and punishment deepen adolescents' anxiety. However, positive parenting styles do not affect adolescents' anxiety significantly, indicating no correlation between the two.

There are certain limitations in the research on the influence of parenting styles on anxiety. Firstly, there is insufficient attention to this research topic, as evidenced by the relatively limited number of literature available in recent years. Researchers have mostly focused on studying the influence of parenting styles on depression, possibly due to the increasing number of adolescents suffering from depression in the past five years. The promotion efforts by the government, society, and schools on depression as a psychological issue have also intensified, resulting in lower public awareness of anxiety compared to depression. Secondly, although this research has been based on existing studies and theoretical foundations, it is limited by questionnaire surveys, which may not comprehensively investigate all factors contributing to anxiety. Based on the review presented in this paper, mediating factors between parenting styles and anxiety in children includes peer acceptance and rumination. However, in addition to these factors, other potential mediators such as parent-child conflict, emotion regulation, and parental marital conflict could be considered. Further research and validation are needed in this regard.

4 The influence of parenting styles on depression

Adolescents are identified as one of the high-risk groups for depression, primarily due to their ongoing physical and psychological development, which renders them more susceptible to negative emotions. Their psychological resilience is significantly lower compared to adults. In recent years, there has been relatively limited research in China on the influence of parenting styles on depression, with scholars delving into this issue only since the early 20th century. Researchers commonly collect data through questionnaire surveys and employ statistical analysis using SPSS software. The target audience for questionnaire distributed in China mostly comprises ordinary junior high and senior school

adolescents. However, the study by Jannah, K. focused on adolescents in West Java, Indonesia, as this region has the highest number of depression cases among adolescents, making the collected data more useful.

Firstly, positive parenting styles can reduce the severity of adolescent depression. In research conducted by Chinese scholar Cong Enzhao, it was found that parental care can lower the risk of adolescent depression [5]. Parents are the most trusted individuals for adolescents. Therefore, if parents provide more encouragement, support, understanding, and emotional warmth during adolescents' daily lives and studies, it can effectively reduce and prevent the occurrence of depressive emotions.

Furthermore, compared to positive parenting styles, negative parenting styles have a far more detrimental impact on children's psychology and contribute significantly to the depressive emotions, with consequences beyond human imagination. Scholars have found through data analysis that parental control can increase the risk of adolescent depression [5]. This viewpoint has been corroborated by the research of other scholars. For instance, Zhang Jing distributed questionnaires through stratified sampling, utilizing the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), Egnä Minnen Beträffande Uppfostran (EMBU), and Family Environment Scale (FES), and conducted descriptive statistics, differential analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis using SPSS 17.0 [9]. Through data analysis, it was found that excessive parental control, lack of intimacy in parent-child interactions, insufficient recreational time spent with children, and limited expressions of love during interactions can all lead to depressive emotions in children, increasing the likelihood of depression. Additionally, her research found that father's overprotection and mother's favoritism deprive children of many opportunities for growth [9]. Overprotection and favoritism stem from parents not viewing their children as independent individuals, resulting in children lacking confidence, problem-solving skills, and the courage to face challenges, thereby increasing the risk of depressive emotions. Hence, it can be concluded that negative parenting styles deepen children's depression.

Lastly, there exist differences in children's depressive emotions under the parenting styles of fathers or mothers. Piko, B. F. found in the study that for girls, the parenting style of the father plays a decisive role, not only in the father's responsiveness but also in the father's demandingness. But mother's demandingness is correlated with an elevated depressive score for girls [10]. This research result can be interpreted as mothers providing more care and companionship for girls in daily life than fathers. However, as the time spent together increases, minor conflicts and arguments may arise, leading to conflicts between girls' pursuit of freedom and self-identity and the mother's excessively strict demands and control. The accumulation of these negative emotions can easily lead to depressive emotions in girls. However, within ingrained perceptions, the father's image always remains authoritative. Therefore,

girls are more likely to accept the father's stern or controlling parenting style.

Additionally, the author believe that the authoritative parenting style has a positive influence on reducing depressive emotions in adolescents. Jannah, K. conducted thorough research on the authoritative parenting style. The study involved surveying adolescents with depression using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and the Parental Authority Questionnaire. After the completion of the questionnaire collection, data were processed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. The scholar considered self-esteem as a mediating variable between parenting styles and depression. Self-esteem was chosen as a mediating variable because parenting styles that involve praise and encouragement can enhance a child's self-esteem. Conversely, parental disapproval, criticism and complaint can lower adolescents' self-esteem, leading to depressive emotions. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to respect and care for themselves, even when aware of their flaws and shortcomings, they strive to improve themselves for healthy development. However, adolescents with low self-esteem often experience negative emotions such as sense of inferiority and frustration, which can lead to depressive emotions over time. A research indicates that low self-esteem is a major contributor to vulnerability to depression [11]. The results of Jannah, K.'s study indicate that authoritative parenting can increase adolescents' self-esteem and reduce depression [12]. This may be because authoritative parents, while setting high expectations for their children, also face the questions and opinions raised by their children with a positive attitude and respect their thoughts. They can provide targeted guidance for children at different stages, helping them to develop better. Under authoritative parenting style, children have higher psychological resilience, more curiosity, a stronger desire for knowledge, take things more seriously, and are more responsible and efficient. In conclusion, the authoritative parenting style can effectively reduce or even prevent the occurrence of depressive emotions in adolescents.

There are certain limitations in the research on the influence of parental parenting styles on depression. Firstly, data collection is based solely on the perspectives of adolescents, which may be biased. In future research, the survey scope can be expanded to include parents as respondents. Secondly, there is a lack of research focusing on the impact of parenting styles on depression in male adolescent groups. Future research should address this gap and include studies focusing on male adolescents.

5 Discussion and suggestion

Researches by scholars from various countries has confirmed that parenting styles can influence levels of depression and anxiety. Scholars have found in their researches that the control dimension in parenting styles has the greatest influence on the depression and anxiety in children. Regarding anxiety in adolescents, it has been

observed that boys tend to experience higher levels of anxiety under negative parenting styles compared to girls. For instance, when parents apply the same degree of harsh punishment, rejection, excessive protection, and other negative parenting practices, boys are more adversely affected than girls. Additionally, girls exhibit the highest level of anxiety under authoritarian parenting styles and the lowest level under democratic parenting styles. The influence of mother's parenting styles on children's anxiety surpasses that of father's parenting styles. Regarding adolescent depression, scholars have found that fathers' parenting styles play a decisive role in girls. Authoritative parenting styles and the nurturance dimension within parenting styles can reduce the risk of depressive emotions in adolescents.

Based on the conclusions of this paper, the following recommendations are proposed: 1. Parents should dedicate their spare time to reading books and watching videos on parenting, continuously improving their related knowledge. Learning more communication skills with their children is essential. Parents are not born knowing how to be parents; they also need to undergo certain theoretical learning before applying it to practice. When necessary, they can seek advice from authoritative parenting experts and psychologists for guidance on their educational issues. 2. Parents should adopt more positive parenting methods while raising their children. On one hand, they should pay more attention to their children's learning and daily life, help them face and solve the difficulties encountered in their studies, and become strong support for their children. On the other hand, they should give their children more warmth and love, focusing on praise and encouragement, to cultivate their confidence and sense of self-identity. 3. Parents should enhance communication and interaction with children in daily life. Parent-child communication is a key way to maintain family harmony. During communication with children, parents should be good listeners and try to think from their children's perspective. Through communication, they can timely discover their children's psychological issues, provide timely guidance, and prevent the accumulation of negative emotions leading to the emergence of anxiety and depression. When children make mistakes, parents should avoid blaming and scolding them, but help them recognize their mistakes. 4. During their children's growth, parents should provide appropriate care, neither making their children feel unloved nor excessively spoiling them. Children lacking love tend to be more sensitive and doubtful, with more obvious feelings of inferiority. They may lack the courage and confidence to solve problems when faced with difficulties and tend to be emotional. Overly spoiled children may make incorrect behaviors and decisions during adolescence, leading to lower resilience and independence. As they are used to having all their needs met by their parents, they may experience a significant gap when entering school and society, resulting in lower psychological resilience compared to their peers.

Currently, scholars' research on the influence of parenting styles on adolescent mental health mainly focuses on authoritarian and authoritative parenting

styles, with less emphasis on indulgent parenting styles. In future research, indulgent parenting could be explored as a research direction to investigate how indulgent parenting styles affect adolescent mental health.

In their research, scholars from various countries have primarily analyzed the factors influencing adolescent mental health from different parenting styles. However, parenting styles are also influenced by various factors such as education level, family background, income level, and the surrounding educational environment. These factors are complex and diverse. In future research, it will be essential to conduct comparative analyses of the factors influencing parenting styles to eliminate confounding variables.

Finally, scholars in their research have tended to focus more on the mental health of female adolescents, possibly due to the perception that females are more sensitive and delicate in character compared to males. In future studies, researchers can separately examine male adolescent groups as research subjects to analyze the influence of parenting styles on the mental health of male adolescents, thus increasing attention to the male population.

6 Conclusion

In summary, parenting styles influence the mental health of adolescents. Firstly, negative parenting styles contribute to social anxiety and deepen depression among adolescents. This is evidenced by research conducted by Chinese scholar Qin Yao, who found that negative parenting styles, such as rejection and overprotection, are positively associated with adolescents' social anxiety, suggesting a predictive function. Cong Enzhao has also confirmed through studies that the control dimension in parenting styles increases the risk of depression among adolescents. Secondly, positive parenting styles are not conducive to depression and anxiety. Yang Fei's research indicates that under a democratic parenting style, girls exhibit the lowest levels of anxiety. Additionally, Jannah K's research suggests that authoritative parenting styles have a positive effect on reducing adolescent depression. Lastly, children's depression and anxiety are more influenced by mothers than fathers. This is supported by the findings of Sanjeevan D., who concluded that mothers' parenting styles significantly influence anxiety, while fathers' parenting styles do not. Based on the analysis of studies conducted by scholars worldwide, the following insights can be drawn: 1. Parents should adopt scientific parenting styles, freeing themselves from traditional views. They should seek advice from teachers and parenting experts, continuously improving their parenting methods and approaches in practice to ensure the healthy psychological development of their children. 2. Parents should not differentiate in the level of attention given to their children based on gender. Regardless of whether they have sons or daughters, parents should prioritize the mental health of their children. 3. Parents should strive to avoid negative parenting styles and adopt positive ones. When children

make mistakes, communication should be the primary approach, and parents should consider issues from the children's perspective to avoid blaming, sarcasm, or physical punishment.

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