

The Impact of Parenting Styles on Adolescents' Anxiety and Academic Achievement

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Abstract: This paper reviews papers about the impact of parenting styles on adolescents' anxiety and academic achievement, emphasizing the differential effects of cultural background and parental role. The study shows that parenting styles have different effects on students' anxiety and academic performance. Cultural differences play a crucial role in parenting styles and anxiety while permissive parenting is more favourable to adolescents' adjustment to school life in Spain, compared to the conclusion that authoritarian parenting is more positive in Asia. In addition, gender differences are also significant, with authoritative parenting styles of fathers associated with low levels of anxiety in university students, while authoritarian parenting styles of mothers were associated with high levels of anxiety. These findings emphasize the different roles that mothers and fathers play in shaping the emotional well-being of their children. In terms of academic achievement, the paper reveals that effective parental supervision and care is positively associated with academic success. It also highlights the need for more nuanced research to explain the influence of both parents and to explore how parenting styles affect gender differences in anxiety and academic achievement. The paper concludes with practical recommendations, such as increasing parental involvement.

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the influence of the family on children is more widely discussed. Many studies have shown that parents' educational expectations of their children

with the educational environment provided and the way it is done, have a significant impact on their development (Fan & Williams, 2010).

At the same time, the anxiety status of young people is also a topic of concern. In England, two-fifths of young people score above the threshold for emotional problems (Deighton et al., 2019). In addition, the association between parenting and children's academic performance has generated some discussion and different perspectives.

The aim of this paper is to summarise the literature discussing the association between the two elements of family parenting on adolescents' anxiety status and academic achievement (AA), and also to further explore and give recommendations for future research directions.

2 PARENTING STYLES (PSS), ANXIETY STATES AND AA

2.1 Parenting Styles

PS is best conceptualised as a context that moderates the influence of specific parenting practices on the child (Darling & Steinberg, 2017). Baumrind's influential model of PSs states that PSs can be divided by two dimensions (parental warmth versus level of control) which in turn can be classified into four types, authoritative, authoritarian and permissive and rejecting neglecting. Authoritative PSs are characterised by high levels of control and warmth, with parents listening to their children and respecting their children's feelings, whilst giving appropriate guidance and limits. Authoritarian PSs are characterised by high control and low warmth; these parents will tightly control their children's behaviour but are less attentive to their children's emotional needs or opinions. In addition, permissive PSs are characterized by low control and high warmth; these parents focus on their children's emotional needs but rarely set clear rules or control their children's behaviour. Rejecting-Neglecting PSs are reflected in

low control and low warmth. This type of parent lacks attention to both the child's emotional needs and behaviour management (Baumrind, 1971).

2.2 Anxiety States

Anxiety is a subjective feeling of uneasiness, discomfort, apprehension or fear accompanied by a range of autonomic and somatic manifestations. Anxiety is a normal, emotional, rational and anticipatory response to real or potential danger (Shri, 2010). Increased anxiety leads to increased severity of perceived pain and decreased pain tolerance (Michaelides & Zis, 2019). At the same time, anxiety can make people extremely fearful and anxious, which can cause people to try to escape from something they perceive as a threat, such as a social situation or an unfamiliar place. Even if they don't pose a threat (Craske, 1999). Excessive anxiety in students is detrimental to their health, and can cause problems such as stomachaches or headaches, sleep problems, and substance abuse (Miller, 2025).

2.3 AA

AA refers to a student's communication (speaking, reading, writing), maths, science, social science and thinking skills. These skills enable students to be successful in school and in society (Lindholm-Leary, 2006). Typically, factors such as standardised achievement tests, grade point averages, and other factors can be used to measure AA in research.

3 IMPACT OF PSS ON ANXIETY SITUATIONS

The initial point that requires clarification is that some researchers have found that the relationship between PS and anxiety varies across cultures. For example, Asian samples reported more severe anxiety symptoms on all anxiety subscales compared to Europe/USA (Mousavi & Low, 2016). In addition, in contrast to the finding that authoritarian parenting is more positive in Asian, the findings in Spain are completely different. For the study in Spain, the researchers selected 437 high school students encompassing different genders and levels of education from seven public high schools in the Valencia region of Spain. Also, this study used the Warmth/Affection Scale and Parental Control Scale, both integrated in the Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire to examine PSs and

used the Questionnaire of Academic Stress in Secondary Education (QASSE) to measure academic stress (Rohner, 1989; Rohner, 1990). Ultimately, it was obtained that permissive parenting is more favourable to the school adjustment of Spanish adolescents and to the reduction of academic stress. Again, this supports the significance of regional differences.

In addition, anxiety situations do not produce the same effects when parents of different genders implement different PSs. In a study in 2007, 298 students from a university in the southeastern region of the United States were selected from an age range of 18 to 25 years old, from all grades, and from a variety of ethnicities (80 males, 214 females, and 4 students who did not indicate their gender). The researchers methodologically chose The Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991). to measure college students' PSs during childhood and The Manifest Anxiety Scale (Taylor, 1953). to measure students' anxiety levels. They learnt from the data that the father's authoritative PS was significantly negatively correlated with college students' anxiety levels ($r = -0.23$, $p < 0.001$), while the mother's authoritarian PS was significantly positively correlated with anxiety levels ($r = 0.13$, $p < 0.02$). Whereas, mother's authoritative type, father's authoritarian type, and both parents' permissive PSs were not significantly associated with college students' anxiety levels (Silva et al., 2007).

Overall, some researchers have obtained conclusions with clear generalisations: lower levels of anxiety, or fewer anxiety symptoms or internalising symptoms are associated with parental affection, warmth and acceptance. Conversely, higher levels or more of these symptoms are associated with excessive parental control (Besteiro & Quintanilla, 2023). Moreover, MinJun Choong points out an unexplored area where both authoritative and permissive PSs are associated with children's social anxiety, which requires further research (Choong, 2023).

4 IMPACT OF PSS ON STUDENTS' AA

A number of researchers have pointed to the differential impact of parenting on students' AA. They analysed Wave I and Wave II data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), completed in September 1994 to December 1995 and from April to August 1996,

respectively (Harris & Richard, 2018). After selection, the final sample included 2,306 adolescents living in heterosexual two-parent households that varied in ethnicity, family income, and parental education. The researchers also used latent profile analysis to determine parental warmth patterns and measured AA in terms of GPA. They found that different parenting by fathers versus mothers can have different effects on adolescent outcomes. At the same time, excluding one parent and not considering the joint influence of both parents can also produce misconceptions about parenting in research (Chung et al., 2019). In terms of overall impact, some researchers have used the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire-Short Form (Elgar et al., 2007). and self-developed standardised tests by surveying 231 third- and fourth-grade students in the Romanian region to measure, respectively PSs and academic performance, ultimately leading to the conclusion that poor parental supervision was negatively correlated with student performance in language arts and mathematics (Albulescu et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Wilder's study also proved the point that the relationship between parental involvement and AA is positive (Wilder, 2023). It is also important to note that Barton, A. L. and Kirtley, M. S. in their study indicated that anxiety and stress mediated the relationship between PSs and depression in female students, whereas the existence of a mediating relationship between male students' scores was not found (Barton & Kirtley, 2011). This is a reminder that researchers need to be aware of the influence of adolescent gender in this issue.

5 DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION

When discussing the effect of PSs on anxiety, the cultural difference factor is one of the key factors in the discussion, for example, compared to some European countries like Spain, in Asian countries like Malaysia and China, children's anxiety reacts differently in different PSs, which means that the researchers need to take into account the cultural backgrounds of different countries and regions, as well as to give practical solutions. At the same time, research also needs to focus on the different influences of fathers and mothers in the same PS. For example, fathers' authoritative PS is significantly negatively associated with college students' anxiety levels, while mothers' authoritarian PS is positively associated with anxiety levels. This suggests that the

roles of fathers and mothers in the formation of adolescent anxiety may differ and that there is a need to make a distinction between parental roles in education.

In addition, in terms of the effect of PSs on students' AA, many papers suggest that adequate parental supervision is sufficiently associated with increased AA of children. Meanwhile, the effect of PSs on AA varies across family roles. Moreover, inappropriate PSs are more likely to induce anxiety and lead to lower AA in the female group than in the male group. This requires researchers to discuss more about the gender differences in PSs on the AA of students of different genders.

6 CONCLUSION

In family education, it is particularly important to choose the right kind of parenting, as it can significantly impact a child's mental and academic development. Reviewing some of the papers that have examined the effects of family parenting on adolescents' anxiety and academic performance, the author find that cultural and gender differences have an impact on this process. Furthermore, the influence of fathers and mothers in the same PS can differ, with fathers' authoritative parenting being associated with lower anxiety levels in adolescents, while mothers' authoritarian parenting is more likely to correlate with higher anxiety. This indicates that the roles each parent plays in the educational process are not interchangeable and can have differential effects on a child's anxiety. In addition, effective parental supervision, coupled with warmth and affection, is strongly linked to better academic performance. Parents who engage in supportive, involved parenting help reduce academic stress, foster motivation, and encourage positive learning behaviors. Both parents and society must remain sensitive to cultural, gender, and individual differences when supporting children's education. Tailoring parenting approaches to the child's unique needs can help alleviate anxiety and promote academic success, which, in turn, contributes to educational excellence and the healthy, well-rounded development of the child.

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