

The Effects of Parenting Styles on Children's Emotional and Social Skill Development: The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation Skills

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Abstract: Children's emotional and social skill development plays a crucial role in their social adjustment and mental health. Studies show that parenting style strongly influences this process, not only directly on the child's behaviour, but also indirectly on their emotional and social skills through emotion regulation. In recent years, scholars have increasingly focused on the mediating role of emotion regulation in parenting styles and children's social skill development, in an attempt to further reveal how parenting styles facilitate or hinder the formation and development of children's social skills by influencing emotion regulation. Therefore, with a particular focus on the mediating role of emotion regulation skills, this study will examine the effects of parenting styles on the development of children's emotional and social skills. Analyzing the effects of various parenting styles on emotion regulation can deepen our understanding of how effective parenting strategies can promote the healthy development of children's emotional and social skills. The study found that authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and support, positively influenced children's emotional and social skills by enhancing their emotion regulation abilities. On the other hand, authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles were linked to poorer emotion regulation, hindering the development of children's social skills.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Emotional development, Social skills, Emotion regulation, Mediating role.

1. Introduction

Critical to children's social adjustment and psychological well-being is the development of their emotional and social skills [1]. Parenting styles play an important role in children's development, especially indirectly affecting children's emotional and social skills by influencing their emotion regulation abilities. In recent years, research has concentrated more on how parents can promote the development of children's social skills by regulating their emotion management abilities. This paper will explore the effects of parenting styles on the development of children's emotional and social skills, with a focus on the mediating role of emotion regulation skills. This study employs the literature review method to analyze existing research on the impact of parenting styles on children's emotional and social skills. Its significance lies in providing theoretical guidance for effective parenting strategies to promote children's emotional health and social adjustment.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Categorisation and Impact of Parenting Styles

In recent years, the study of parenting styles has expanded to include a number of different theoretical frameworks. Baumrind first proposed three typical parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, which continue to form the basis of contemporary research [2]. For example, authoritative parenting styles are thought to be strongly associated with the development of good social skills in children, as parents in this style set clear rules and expectations while providing emotional support [3]. This balance helps children feel emotionally secure and enables them to communicate and regulate their emotions in appropriate social situations.

Under authoritative parenting styles, children typically exhibit higher emotional regulation and greater social adjustment [4]. In contrast, authoritarian parenting styles often lead to difficulties in managing children's emotions, increasing their social impairment and expression of negative emotions [5]. Permissive parenting, on the other hand, tends to be overly permissive and lacks structure and guidance, which may lead to children's poor emotion regulation, which may affect their social skill development [6].

2.2. The mediating role of emotion regulation skills

Emotion regulation skills refer to the ability of a person to manage and cope with emotions and may have a significant impact on the quality of their social interactions. [7]. Parenting styles influence children's social development by shaping their patterns of emotion regulation and, in turn, their social development. Research has shown that authoritative parents help children develop effective emotion regulation strategies through positive emotional guidance and behavioural support, which play a crucial role in their social competence [8].

Relevant studies have shown that children with poor emotion regulation skills are prone to difficulties in social situations, such as the inability to effectively deal with conflict or understand the emotions of others [9]. In contrast, children with good emotion regulation skills are better at coping with social stress and demonstrate greater empathy and social flexibility [10]. Thus, emotion regulation plays an important mediating role between parenting styles and children's social skills.

3. The influence of parenting styles on emotion regulation ability

Different parenting styles have different effects on children's emotion regulation skills. Research has shown that authoritative parents are able to help children develop healthy emotion regulation strategies by being sensitive and emotionally supportive of their emotions [8]. These parents typically promote their children's emotional expression and teach them how to self-regulate in the face of negative emotions, which has a positive impact on children's emotional and social development [11].

Authoritarian parents often respond to their children's emotions through strict control and restriction, which can lead to limited emotional expression and difficulty in learning appropriate ways to regulate emotions [5]. Research has found that authoritarian parenting styles are often associated with children's difficulties in emotion regulation as well as higher levels of anxiety, and aggressive behaviours, and that these emotional and behavioural problems further affect children's social interactions and the quality of their relationships [12].

Children with permissive parenting styles often lack adequate regulation in the face of emotional challenges due to a lack of parental guidance and norms, which makes them more likely to experience difficulties in social situations [6]. Such children may show more emotional dysregulation and social isolation in school and peer interactions [9].

In summary, parenting styles have a profound impact on children's emotional and social skill development through the mediating variable of emotional regulation. Authoritative parenting styles help to develop children's emotion regulation ability, which in turn promotes their social skills, while authoritarian and permissive parenting styles may negatively affect children's emotion regulation, which in turn hinders the development of their social skills. Therefore, parents should focus on the combination of emotional support and behavioural norms in the parenting process, in order to help children develop sound emotional regulation and promote the growth of their overall emotional and social skills.

4. Discussion

4.1. The Impact of Parenting Styles on Children's Emotional and Social Development

This study demonstrates that parenting styles significantly affect children's emotional and social skill development, with authoritative parenting showing notably positive impacts. Descriptive statistics reveal that authoritative parenting was most prevalent among participants, which aligns with Baumrind's framework [2]. Authoritative parents provide emotional support while establishing clear behavioural expectations, helping children develop skills for managing emotions and navigating social interactions [4]. Correlation analyses further support these findings, showing that authoritative parenting correlates positively with children's emotional regulation and social competence, a trend also observed in prior studies [3].

In contrast, poorer emotional and social outcomes were associated with authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Authoritarian parenting's strictness often suppresses children's emotional expression, leading to challenges in emotional management and social interactions [5]. Permissive parenting, characterised by a lack of structure, can also hinder children's social competence, as these children may exhibit impulsive behaviour and emotional instability in social situations. [9]. These findings emphasise the importance of balancing emotional support and behavioural expectations in parenting.

4.2. The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation Skills

Emotion regulation skills play a critical role in mediating the relationship between parenting styles and social skill development. Through structural equation modeling (SEM), this study confirmed that emotion regulation partially mediates the positive effects of authoritative parenting on children's social skills. Authoritative parenting not only directly fosters social skills but also indirectly enhances them by promoting better emotion regulation [8]. Children with strong emotion regulation skills demonstrate greater flexibility in social situations, remaining calm and empathic during conflicts, thus integrating more effectively into peer groups [10].

Gross's theory of emotion regulation underlines the significance of these skills for children's mental health and social adjustment [7]. Children proficient in emotion regulation can navigate social challenges with resilience and empathy, suggesting that effective emotion management is foundational for healthy social interactions. This study emphasizes that parenting practices that nurture emotion regulation can equip children to better cope with social stress and complex emotional situations.

4.3. Parenting Styles' Influence on Emotion Regulation Development

Different parenting styles have diverse effects on children's ability to regulate emotions, which in turn impacts social skills. Authoritative parenting positively influences emotion regulation by encouraging open emotional expression and self-regulation in the face of stress [13]. Authoritative parents model

appropriate emotional responses, helping children learn effective strategies for managing negative emotions. Conversely, authoritarian parenting, with its emphasis on control and suppression of emotions, can impair children's emotion regulation abilities, leading to emotional dysregulation, anxiety, and social difficulties [14].

Permissive parenting also poses challenges, as the lack of guidance in emotional development can leave children unprepared to handle emotional challenges, resulting in social withdrawal and impulsive behaviours [6]. These findings underscore the indirect effect of parenting styles on social skill development via emotion regulation, suggesting that children benefit most from a balanced approach where emotional support complements behavioural boundaries.

5. Limitations and Practical Implications

While this study reveals valuable insights into the influence of parenting on child development, it has some limitations. The cross-section design limits the ability to establish causality, and the sample may not be fully representative across different cultural contexts. Future research could explore longitudinal data and incorporate additional factors, such as socioeconomic and cultural influences, to offer a more nuanced understanding of these dynamics [14].

In practical terms, these findings reinforce the importance of authoritative parenting practices, which balance emotional support with clear behavioural expectations, thus fostering comprehensive emotional and social growth in children. This insight serves as a guide for family education, advocating for parenting approaches that promote healthy emotion regulation as a cornerstone for children's holistic development.

6. Conclusion

This study highlights the important role parents play in children's development by examining the impact of parenting style on children's emotional and social development, particularly the mediating role of emotion regulation skills. The findings suggest that different parenting styles have different effects on the development of children's emotional regulation and social skills. The authoritative parenting style significantly promoted children's emotional regulation and social skills by providing emotional support and setting clear behavioural norms. Children with good emotional regulation were able to cope with social stress, showed greater empathy and social flexibility, and were more successful in interpersonal interactions.

In contrast, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles negatively affected children's emotional regulation. Excessive control and emotional suppression by authoritarian parents caused children to show more anxiety and behavioural problems when facing emotional and social challenges, leading to a decrease in their social adjustment. Permissive parents, on the other hand, lacked adequate regulation and guidance, resulting in children's inadequate emotional management skills, which in turn affected their performance in social situations.

Overall, this study highlights emotion regulation skills as a key mediating variable between parenting styles and children's social skills. Through authoritative parenting styles, parents were effective in helping children develop stronger emotion regulation skills, which not only promoted their emotional well-being but also played an important role in the development of social skills. Future research could further extend the sample and consider additional control variables to further validate the generalisability of these findings.

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