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Revista de Cercetare și Interventie Sociala

ISSN: 1583-3410 (print), ISSN: 1584-5397 (electronic)

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Daniela Maria BOȘCA, Daniela COJOCARU

Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 2023, vol. 82, pp. 65-77

<https://doi.org/10.33788/rcis.82.5>

Published by:
Expert Projects Publishing House



On behalf of:
„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University,
Department of Sociology and Social Work
and
HoltIS Association

The Influence of Parenting Styles on Adolescent Development

Daniela Maria BOȘCA¹, Daniela COJOCARU²

Abstract

If we talk about parenting, it can be said that there is a great diversity among families, due to the fact that cultural aspects have a major impact on how children are raised. Several researchers have analysed over time the relationship between parenting styles and various developmental disorders of adolescents, but also the relationship between parenting styles and children's school results were considered. Many of these researches drew attention to the fact that there are consequences that affect public health, namely the health status of adolescents (Lahey, 2009). A large part of the research looks at the four parenting styles described by Carlson, Laczniak Wertley (2011) based on the research of Baumrind (1991). They created a matrix with 2 x 2 axis, in which permissiveness and restrictiveness are on the vertical axis, and warmth and hostility on the horizontal axis. Between these two axes are located the four parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative or democratic, indulgent or permissive and neglectful. This article analyses the characteristics of the four parenting styles and how they influence the child's development. Parental control, children's responsibility, parental warmth, parental responsiveness are just some of the factors that have been examined in relation to the development of children's autonomy in general and in adolescent's autonomy in particular, school results, socialization, including social behaviour of adolescents as well as consumers in the marketplace.

Keywords: parenting styles; adolescents; control; warmth; child development.

Parenting Dimensions and Styles and their evolution over time

Contemporary approaches to parental influences are rather less deterministic, incorporating components of behavioural genetic models but also including direct measures of potential environmental influences. Parental influences on children

¹ Alexandru Ioan Cuza University from Iasi, Department of sociology and Social Work, Iasi, ROMANIA. E-mail: daniela.bosca@fonpc.ro

² Alexandru Ioan Cuza University from Iasi, Department of sociology and Social Work, Iasi, ROMANIA. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1542-0724>; E-mail: dananacu@gmail.com

are analysed through experimental and quasi-experimental studies of changes in children's behaviours based on exposure to parental behaviours, thus controlling for children's initial characteristics. These contemporary approaches provide clear and unambiguous information, contrary to suggestions made by some earlier researchers, substantial rather than insubstantial information as claimed by some current critics. Through these studies, important data is obtained beyond the parent-child dyad, specifically information about the interactions between parental education, influences, and non-family contexts of the child's environment (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000).

It is known that recent studies on parental education have focused on the entire family system surrounding the child, rather than just the child-mother dyad (Giallo *et al.*, 2013; Diniz *et al.*, 2021). Although there is increasing discussion in childcare policies and research about the important role fathers play in childrearing and care, a significant portion of the research that analyses parenting styles and their influence on child development, as well as the role of parental self-efficacy and parental involvement in children's education, has neglected the role of fathers (Tazouti & Jarlégan, 2019). Tazouti & Jarlégan (2019) conducted a study on a sample of French families, examining the mediating role of parental self-efficacy and parental involvement in children's education on family socioeconomic status and children's academic performance. The results of this study support the hypothesis of a mediating effect of parental self-efficacy and parental involvement on children's academic performance in the case of mothers, but not fathers. In these studies, self-efficacy mostly referred to more general feelings about parenting ability, parents' capacities to support children in developing prosocial behaviours and avoiding risky behaviours, and only partially to parents' perceptions of their ability to teach their children. The studies show that some working-class parents are likely to feel particularly challenged when they have to home-school their children, which affects children's academic outcomes. When parents feel efficacious, they tend to be better prepared in handling challenging child behaviours (Bandura, 2002; Coleman & Karraker, 1997), which has a positive effect on children's adjustment.

Kong and Yasmin (2022) also examined the impact of parenting styles on early childhood learning in China, as well as the mediating role of parental self-efficacy, based on data collected over several months.

Considering the influence of parental self-efficacy on children's outcomes, educational policies and research should focus on parents, so that supporting them can lead to a reduction in educational disparities and improvement in children's academic performance. The sooner parents are supported in developing healthy parenting practices, the sooner results will be seen in children, starting from early education.

Cultural and economic changes have influenced families over time, migration and immigration, socioeconomic status, family model (single-parent, adoptive family, divorced parents, recomposed family, etc.) are just some of the factors

that determine a variety of parenting styles among families. Family models are constantly changing and although children can thrive in all types of family environments, it is important to note that there is data showing that family typology has influences on the child well-being (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2023). According to the data communicated by the National Institute of Statistics in 2021, the number of divorces pronounced by the court decisions or by administrative means was 27.024, increasing by 4.239 divorces compared to 2020. So, the changes of the last decades had an influence on the family and implicitly on the parenting style and practices of raising children, thus becoming more and more necessary to analyse the mechanisms underlying the relationship between child and parents. Given that each parent has a different approach to how to interact with their children, set of rules, and responsiveness, different researchers have identified three, four, five, or more parenting styles.

To classify parenting styles, a circumplex model was first introduced by Schaefer (1959; 1965). It was based on three dichotomies: acceptance versus rejection, psychological autonomy versus psychological control, and firm behavioural control versus lax behavioural control. Starting from this model, the three types of parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parenting) were first conceptualized by social psychologist Diane Baumrind: (Baumrind, 1971; 1989; 1991a; 1991b), later Maccoby and Martin (1983) classified the parenting styles of Baumrind using two dimensions of parenting: demandingness and responsiveness, resulting an additional type of parenting, neglectful parenting. The two dimensions analyse the degree of response that parents have to the child's needs, but also communication, parental warmth, acceptance, involvement and support, on the one hand, and on the other hand, they analyse the degree of parental control, supervision and child monitoring from the parents. The three parenting styles classified by Baumrind were based on the dimension of parental control and parental warmth, and later the dimension of responsiveness was introduced (resulting an additional type of parenting style) which refers to parental acceptance, adaptation to the child's needs, and consequently parental support and warmth (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; see also Baumrind, 2010; Baumrind et al, 2013).

Baumrind (1966), Baumrind (2013; Baumrind *et al.*, 2010) conceptualized authoritative parents as having high levels of responsiveness and medium to high levels of control. They are described as rational, warm, encouraging parents who set clear rules for their children while promoting child autonomy. In addition to Baumrind's description (1966), Maccoby and Martin (1983) portray authoritative parents as those who communicate openly with their children, express affection and support, establish clear rules, and enforce them using reasoning. The authoritative parenting style has been considered the optimal parenting style (e.g., Baumrind, 1966; Baumrind, 2013; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) and has been associated with positive child outcomes, including academic achievement, high levels of autonomy and social responsibility (Baumrind, 1971), and overall adjustment (Baumrind *et al.*, 2010).

According to the two dimensions of parenting classification, responsiveness and control, authoritarian parents are characterized by high levels of behavioural and psychological control but low levels of responsiveness. They exhibit low warmth towards their children and tend to be rejecting, while being highly demanding and employing high levels of psychological control (Baumrind, 2013; Baumrind *et al.*, 2010). They often use punishment as a method of discipline and coercion in raising their children (Baumrind, 1966). This parenting style is associated with less optimal child outcomes, including externalizing problems, difficulties in communication and social interaction (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), rebellion or resistance to authority, sometimes even increasing children's resistance to their parents' advice and suggestions (Baumrind, 1968), and lower self-esteem (Baumrind *et al.*, 2010).

Permissive parents are characterized by low levels of behavioural control but high levels of responsiveness and warmth. They promote psychological autonomy, provide acceptance and love to their children, and exhibit lenient behavioural control (Baumrind, 2013; Baumrind *et al.*, 2010). With few demands placed on their children, these parents avoid coercive and punitive practices, preferring a relationship without constraints and with minimal rules (Baumrind, 1966). This category of parents has also been referred to as indulgent parents, as they allow children to establish their own rules and make their own decisions (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Therefore, despite encouraging autonomy and allowing children to set their own boundaries and limits, these parents tend to have children with lower achievements (Baumrind, 1971), lack of impulse control (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), and reduced autonomy (Baumrind *et al.*, 2010).

The fourth parenting style is characterized by low levels of warmth, responsiveness, and control, with a high degree of child rejection and minimal involvement, known as uninvolved parents (Baumrind, 2013). These parents make minimal effort and allocate minimal time to their parenting responsibilities (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Being more focused on their own needs, they may respond to their child with hostility or completely disregard their child's needs (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Baumrind (1989) found that the uninvolved parenting style is associated with the use of coercive practices and a lack of monitoring.

Authoritarian parents are very demanding, they have high standards for their children, they establish rules, but they have a low degree of responsiveness, communication and affectivity, warmth. At the opposite pole are permissive parents who have a low degree of control and supervision, they are permissive with their children, they dislike control and authority over their children, but at the same time they have a high degree of affectivity, warmth, involvement and acceptance. They give children more rights than responsibilities but maintain an open communication environment with children (Walsh, Laczniak & Carlson, 1998). Neglectful parents are weak in terms of demandingness, control, communication, affectivity, warmth, involvement, responsiveness, and are not engaged in their children's activities (Cojocaru, Cojocaru & Ciuchi, 2011). They exhibit both tendencies described by

Carlson in the matrix of parenting styles, permissive and hostile tendencies (Carlson, Laczniaik Wertley, 2011), providing little guidance for children’s development. Authoritative parents, however, set healthy rules and limits for children, clear standards for their behaviours and at the same time respond to the child’s needs, have a high degree of parental warmth, involvement, responsiveness and support (Baumrind, 1991; Carlson & Grossbart, 1988). If authoritarian parents do not encourage children’s autonomy, permissive and authoritative parents support the children’s autonomy.

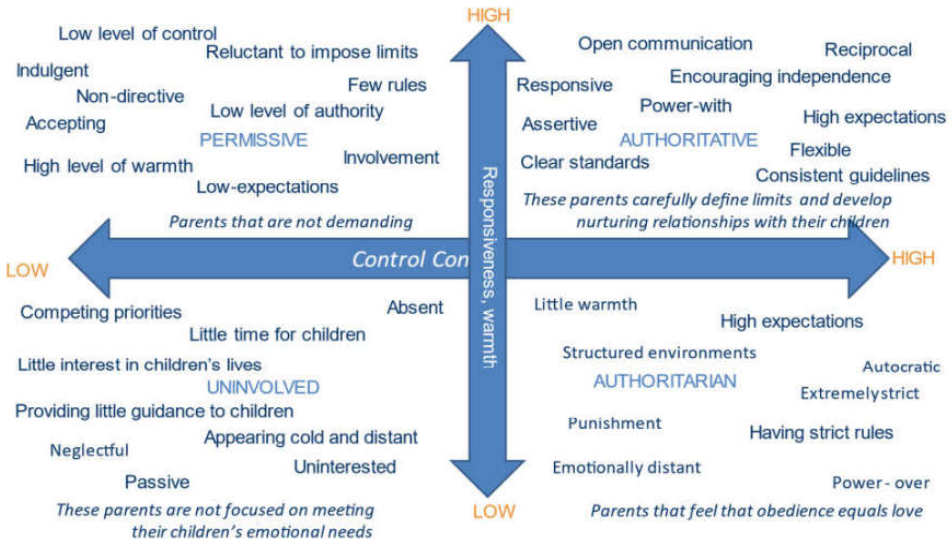


Figure 1. Parenting styles Matrix³ (adaptation)

Parenting styles have also been analysed in comparison to leadership styles, considering parents as a family group with leaders who influence children’s personality development and interpersonal patterns. Lewin and his colleagues (Lewin, 1948; Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939), taking into account leadership styles, social climate, and interpersonal dynamics, described three types of clusters that differ based on these three types of leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. Their research had a significant impact on the analysis of leadership in adult groups, and Peterson (1997) emphasizes the need to understand how decisions are affected by group interactions in general, and specifically how critical decisions are influenced by group dynamics. Therefore, the influence of a leader’s behaviour on adult groups was examined. However, Adlerian theories highlight how parents’ and teachers’ leadership styles affect

³ <https://sustainingcommunity.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/parenting-style-v-21.jpg>

children's personality development (Dreikurs, Cassel, & Ferguson, 2004; Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper, 1999).

Dreikurs (1995), considering parents not only as educators and caretakers but also as true leaders, used the model developed by Lewin (1948) regarding leadership styles, given the effects they have on the social climate and group dynamics, represented by the family in this case, as well as their influence on children's personality development. Baumrind (1991) was also inspired by this research when studying parenting styles, conceptualizing parenting as a dyadic process that influences the child's development and discipline. Her approach contrasts with that of Dreikurs (1995), which has a group perspective. Baumrind (1991) retained only the term "authoritarian" for describing parenting styles, while the democratic style was labelled as authoritative, and the laissez-faire style was divided into neglectful and permissive.

Therefore, the difference between Baumrind's (1991) approach and that of Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) and Dreikurs (1995) lies in the fact that the former focuses more on the child-parent dyad, while the latter focuses on the family as a social group. Baumrind primarily studied discipline methods within the dyad, while the others concentrate on decision-making and governance styles within the family.

The role of parenting styles in child development

Longitudinal studies have reviewed in detail how parenting styles or parenting skills influence children's development. Some of the research analysed the moderating role of parenting styles on the specific parenting practices influence. The role of parenting practices being expressed through the emotional climate and authority created by the general parenting style analysed on two axes: parental warmth and authority as suggested by Darling and Steinberg (1993). The most research are based on the research and theory of Baumrind (1971) who identified three parenting styles, which correspond to three distinct prototypes of parental authority and control: authoritative, authoritative and permissive. Darling & Steinberg (1993) argue that the authoritative parenting style characterized by Baumrind (1971) as having a high degree of affectivity, warmth and a low to moderate degree of parental control, is characterized by a reciprocal communication with the child and requires more a lot of maturity, but it acts nourishingly on the child and helps child development, encouraging to communicate and socialize better. At the opposite pole is the authoritarian style, characterized by a low level of parental warmth and a higher level of parental control, which is based on obedience behaviour from children, strict discipline, punitiveness and which is leads with a poor communication and socialization, and sometimes even increasing children's resistance to their parents' advice and suggestions.

It is possible that the democratic or authoritative parenting style finds the balance between empowering the child, through clear rules and demands, helping the child to develop positive self-esteem, helping him to react maturely and enriching his educational and cultural opportunities (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988; Walsh, Laczniak, & Carlson, 1998). Some studies conducted over the years have analysed the role of parenting styles in children and adolescents development, internalizing and externalizing problem behaviour (Hart, Newell and Olsen, 2003), taking into account three dimensions of parenting styles: parental warmth, psychological control and the behaviour control. The three dimensions of parenting style have been shown to be associated with the process of child adjustment (Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994; Siequeland, Kendall, & Steinberg, 1996), which has been conceptualized by several researchers as meaning the reciprocal influences between children and parents, analysed through the lens of children's adversarial behaviours and temperament-based traits (Kiff, Lengua, & Zalewski, 2011; Patterson, 1982). However, only a few studies (Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Galambos, Barker, & Almeida, 2003) have examined whether the impact of one particular dimension of parental style is moderated by the other two dimensions. Bean *et al.* (2003) analyse the difference between parents' behavioural and emotional control, finding that a greater emotional control of the parents at the expense of a behavioural control, has negative influences on the adolescent's development, especially on the occurrence of developmental disorders.

Yu, Putnick, Hendricks, Bornstein, (2019) conducted a study that examined the self-competence of adolescents on one hand, and parental practices as individual and family factors that influence optimistic or neurotic adolescents on the other hand. In this study, the self-perception of competence by adolescents was considered as a potential mediator, while parenting styles were considered as potential moderators on the effects of parental practices on the personality of young people. The authors analysed the hypothesis that more parental warmth and behavioural control would promote self-competence among adolescents by satisfying their basic needs, while psychological control would undermine the self-competence of adolescents.

Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch and Darling (1992) analysed the influence of parenting styles and parental involvement in facilitating adolescent academic achievement. They observed that the authoritative (or democratic) parenting style is more effective in helping adolescents achieve good academic outcomes compared to the authoritarian style. Based on available theories and research results, it has been observed that the authoritarian and authoritative (democratic) parenting styles are expected to enhance or mitigate the effects of parental warmth and behavioural control (Mateos *et al.*, 2013).

Mikeska, Jessica & Harrison, Robert & Carlson, Les. (2016) conducted a meta-analysis on parenting styles and socialization of children as consumers in the marketplace. The study examines the influence of parental control (parental restrictiveness vs. permissiveness) on children's growth and their ability to interact positively and avoid negative interactions in the marketplace or social

environment (Pastor *et al.*,2015). The meta-analysis partially supports previous representations of the authoritative (democratic) parenting style as important, particularly for older children, in reinforcing positive child behaviors, especially regarding children’s socialization outcomes. Additionally, this meta-analysis provides information on how parents’ perceptions of children’s participation in the marketplace as consumers influence children’s consumer behaviours, such as buying healthy and safe products, self-esteem as a consumer and substance use. The study also analyses behavioural models of the child, victim or safe consumer. Carlson, Lacznia & Wertley (2011) showed that the authoritative parenting style, which provides warmth, security, and high parental control, contributes to the development of behaviours that ensure children’s safety and good socialization in the marketplace. These parents contribute to safe consumer behaviour of their children in the marketplace. Therefore, authoritative parents will help their children avoid the consumption of harmful substances, the acquisition of things that could be dangerous for them, and they will also help them protect themselves from people who could harm them.

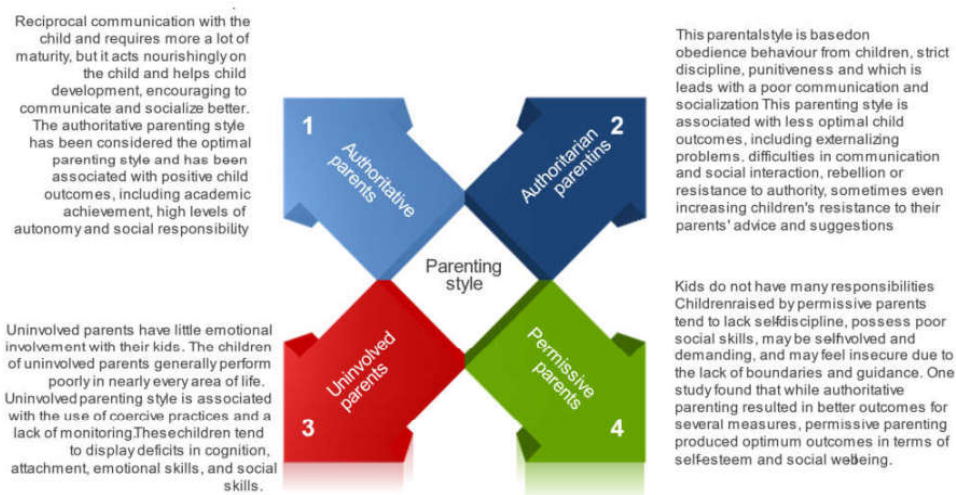


Figure 2. The impact of parenting style on child development

Discussion

Several researchers including Smetana (1995) have shown that at the end of adolescence the growth is much steeper than gradually as it happens in other stages of child development. The development of autonomy is one of the greatest needs of adolescents, but at the same time, also for parents. This process occurs throughout childhood but becomes a mandatory objective in the middle childhood and adolescence period (Erikson, 1968). Although the child has the competence to

develop autonomy, an important part of this process is the involvement of parents who exercise their authority and control over their children (Smetana, 1995). The autonomy of decision-making is usually studied in several social domains such as prudential, conventional, personal, and multifaceted (Baumrind, 2005). Therefore, the level of autonomy of children depends greatly on how parents express their authority and control, but the degree of control and authority differs from one stage of child development to another, and this should be studied especially for the middle childhood and adolescence periods in longitudinal studies and across different cultures. Wray-Lake, Crouter, and McHale (2010) examined in a longitudinal study, among 201 European American families the parents' reports on the autonomy of decision-making among young people aged 9 to 20. Multi-level modeling analyses have shown that decision-making autonomy gradually increases during middle childhood and adolescence, before sharply increasing at the end of adolescence. It should be noted that parents' perception of adolescents influences how they encourage or discourage children's autonomy (Cojocaru, 2009). Girls have been more encouraged to be autonomous because parents considered them easier to supervise, monitor. Parents often say that raising the first child is the hardest, and then they relax more with the others. Wray-Lake, Crouter, and McHale (2010), studying European American families, show that first-born and second-born children had different trajectories related to age of decision-making autonomy. Therefore, although some of the studies presented in this article (Baumrind, 1991; Carlson & Grossbart, 1988, Carlson & Grossbart, 1988; Walsh, Laczniak and Carlson, 1998, Carlson, Laczniak Wertley, 2011) indicate that parental style influences children's autonomy, it is important to have more longitudinal studies that analyse both the cultural influence on how parents influence children's autonomy, examine parental styles at different stages of child development, and how these stages influence autonomy. Therefore, there is a need to analyse the trajectories of development and family processes associated with the fundamental task of adolescents to acquire autonomy.

Some of the studies have measured parental styles using self-reporting from parents (O'Connor *et al.*, 2015), while others have used reports from adolescents (Gray and Steinberg, 1999; Pettit & Laird, 2002). Parental self-reporting may be influenced by social desirability bias of those who evaluate parental styles, while in the case of adolescents, their perception of parental styles may influence the analysis results. For example, some adolescents are unable to differentiate between psychological control and parental affection, therefore, the parenting reported by the child is not consistent with the parenting styles described by various authors. Also, the way adolescents perceive their parents as authoritarian or not, warm or less affectionate, depends on the culture in which they are raised. For example, for children in Asia, some parental behaviours may not be considered authoritarian, while for European children, they may be considered too authoritarian (Yang, Wang, Zhang, Deater-Deckard, 2018).

Conclusion

The impact that parents have on adolescent development differs depending on the age of the children, the competencies of the parents, and a series of other factors: cultural, economic, etc. (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005). The more parents invest in educating their children, being involved in their lives, providing them with support, responding to their needs, but at the same time helping them become autonomous, the more children perceive their own mental health in a positive way, develop positive self-esteem, and ensure good psychological development (Gray & Steinberg, 1999). The degree of a child's autonomy is influenced by the way parents exercise control over their children and by the warmth and affection that the parent has towards their own children. Parental control and affection are often used by parents to manipulate the child in order to do what the parents want, so that they can be at ease about their child (Baumrind, 1966; Schaefer, 1965). This is often noticed especially during middle childhood, because at this age children are not yet emotionally and psychologically separated from their parents (Barber *et al.*, 1994), but as adolescence sets in, this changes, as teenagers gain their own independence and autonomy, and a warm parental relationship can serve as a protective factor against the negative impacts of psychological control.

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