

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Parents have a vital impact on the lives of their children. During the period of childhood and adolescence, parents maintain a significant impact on the development of their children, moulding their principles, convictions, and actions. As children develop and progress, parents must adapt their parenting techniques to address their child's evolving requirements, offering suitable assistance and direction. The most recent report from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (2022) reveals that the largest occurrence of mental health issues is observed among those aged 16-19 years old who have difficulties related to peers, conduct, emotions, and hyperactivity. In the absence of adequate direction and parental accountability for moulding their children's character, they may encounter various challenges in their lives. This study seeks to comprehensively evaluate existing literature on the problem and develop a conceptual framework based on the findings of the literature review.

Keywords: *parenting styles; social skills; child development*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The role of parenting in child development has long been discussed by many researchers, in line with the evolution of parenting styles and their significant impact on child development. It has been the central focus of psychological experts for decades. The impact of parenting styles in shaping child development is paramount due to the vital roles of parents in nurturing a child, which encompasses the approaches and strategies used within their social context that result in various developmental outcomes. This includes social skills competence, which is the ability of a child to communicate effectively with others and their surroundings. This literature review investigates how parenting styles – authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved or neglectful- affect the social development and social skills of a child and adolescent alike.

Recent data from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (2022) emphasize the concerning rise of mental health issues among Malaysian adolescents, which includes loneliness, inability to sleep due to feeling worried, suicidal ideation, suicidal attempts, suicidal plans, and not having close friends. A conceptual framework is designed based on synthesizing these findings.

2.0 PARENTING STYLES

2.1 Historical Overview of Parenting Styles

The conceptualisation and study of parenting styles have evolved over the time, in line with the broader concept of societal values, theories in psychology and different cultural norms. In the mid-20th century, the pioneering work of understanding parenting styles reached its peak. In the early 1900s, the styles of parenting were influenced greatly by authoritarian principals where it was a societal belief that a child had to be obedient, disciplined, and father figure played the authority role of parents (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). The early 20th century witnessed the rise of psychoanalytic theories, especially those of Sigmund Freud which emphasised on the importance of parent-child experience and relationship in nurturing a child's behaviour and personality (Freud, 1933).

In the 1920s and 1930s, a new approach of parenting was introduced by John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner. Watson (1928) believed in the involvement of a scientific approach through reinforcement and conditioning, while Skinner (1953) proposed a reward system in the form of emotional warmth through consistency and discipline.

However, the conceptualization of parenting styles today was notably developed by Diana Baumrind in the 1960s. Baumrind (1967) identified three primary parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Baumrind (1967) highlighted the importance of warmth and control in child development. Later, Maccoby & Martin (1983) added the notable neglectful or uninvolved parenting style, which encompasses low and poor responsiveness or demandingness from the parents, which could result in the children's adverse outcomes.

2.2 Parenting Styles

There are four topologies of parenting styles which are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive (Baumrind, 1967), and neglectful or uninvolved (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). According to Baumrind (1967), authoritarian parenting involves demandingness but with low responsiveness. This is marked by parents enforcing strict rules and demanding obedience from the child without providing the emotional support. The effects of this parenting style are children lack social competence and are inclined to anxiety (Baumrind, 1967).

Authoritative parenting revolves around high responsiveness and high demandingness. This is done by setting clear expectations that the parents demand from the children, but they are also nurturing and supportive (Baumrind, 1967). Baumrind (1967) also found that this parenting style gives the most positive outcomes in developing the children's social and emotional development.

A permissive parenting style involves parents who are highly responsive but not demandingness. They deliver a lot of warmth, but only a few expectations and regulations are burdened to the children (Baumrind, 1967). The result of this parenting style is the lack of discipline and social interactions among the children (Baumrind, 1967).

The last addition to Baumrind's topologies is neglectful or uninvolved parenting style (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). This style proposes low responsiveness and low demandingness from the parents towards the children, thus resulting in mostly adverse outcomes such as poor social skills and self-esteem, as well as academic difficulties among the children (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

2.3 The Role of Parenting in Children's Development

A child experiences various relationships as he grows. However, the most crucial relationship is with the parents. With four parenting styles discussed above, the outcomes of the child vary.

The National Institutes of Health (2016) identified four outcomes as fundamental to children's development and well-being about the role of parenting. This includes physical health and safety, emotional and behavioral, cognitive, and social competence. Children need an environment that caters to their ability to survive with protection from physical and sexual abuse and injuries. Therefore, parents must provide an environment that promotes safety and avoids danger. In addition, parents are essential resources for children to promote positive emotional health. Therefore, support is needed to overcome mental health issues. Parents play the role of providing positive responses, delivering warmth, and promising a sense of security. The support given at home helps to lower the risk of behaviors related to anxiety and depression, which, in return, impair children's adaptation and ability to function. Other than that, children's ability to communicate effectively in language, mathematics, writing, reading, and problem-solving is defined by their cognitive competence. The stimulating, supportive, and challenging atmospheres help children develop skills that later serve as fundamental for healthy self-regulatory practices. Lastly, children's basic social competence helps them develop positive relationships with people around them. This includes cognitive, emotional, linguistic, and

physical development as they can blend with others respectfully regardless of ethnicity, economic background, or religion.

Kong and Yasmin, F. (2022) echo that parenting style is positively associated with childhood learning outcomes. Parents with high self-efficacy are the key components that positively and effectively influence their children's behavior and development. They engage in more positive behavior, including being more responsive towards the children's needs and maintaining direct interactions via effective strategies and an assumption that their children have fewer struggles in disciplining themselves (Kong & Yasmin, F., 2022). In contrast, parents with low self-efficacy exhibit more perceptions of child difficulties with higher stress levels (Zeb et al., 2021).

Szkody et al. (2021) stated that children are happier and possess higher self-esteem if brought up by authoritative or permissive parents. This includes having either one of the authoritative or permissive parents. However, the combination of authoritative and permissive parents resulted in lower level of self-esteem among adolescents. Jinan et al. (2022) proposed that authoritative and permissive parenting styles directly and positively correlate with children's self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem are related to highly authoritarian and permissive parenting styles.

In a study examining the relationships between parenting styles with parenting stress and child behavior problems in the Chinese context, parenting stress was positively associated with child behavior problems and negative parenting styles (Mak et al., 2020).

Parenting styles also have an impact on the life satisfaction of children. Authoritative parenting was strongly correlated to higher life satisfaction, while lack of authoritative parenting was the most dominant factor in lower life satisfaction among children (Lavrič & Naterer, 2020). As the children in ten Southeast European countries were exposed to more authoritative parenting, they possessed higher levels of life satisfaction.

A study investigating the relationship between authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles and children's difficulties found that parents who practiced authoritative style were associated with less child maladjustment. Growing up with an authoritarian parenting style, however, showed that the child had difficulties in adapting themselves to their surroundings (Delvecchio et al., 2020).

2.4 The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Social Skills

It is vital to understand the relationship between parenting styles and social skills among children. Parenting styles, authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved or neglectful, play a significant role in honing a child's social skills.

To start with, authoritative parenting, described by high demandingness and low responsiveness (Baumrind, 1967), positively contributes to strong social skills among children. Authoritative parenting is associated with children who show high levels of social competence, including emotional regulation and cooperation with others, as they provide an environment where children find it safe and are constantly supported, encouraging better communication and empathy (Pinquart, 2020).

On the other hand, authoritarian parenting, which involves high demandingness and low responsiveness and warmth (Baumrind, 1967), negatively

affects children's social skills. This may include the struggles to interact due to lower self-esteem and difficulties starting and maintaining friendships. This is associated with the strict and punitive nature of the parenting style, which impacts the children's ability to express and develop their interpersonal skills (Gao et al., 2023). Children might also experience rising anxiety and lack of self-esteem when they are not under the supervision of an authority figure, thus further heightening their complications in social interactions (Gao et al., 2023). Chen (2022) added that in the long run, children might suffer the diminishing flexibility and maturity of their psychological state, which is paramount for successful social engagement.

Next, lack of firm boundaries categorizes permissive parenting (Baumrind, 1967), which leads to children having to struggle with self-discipline and may project poor social behavior. Children with this parenting skill often find it difficult to adhere to rules and cooperate with others (Mammadov et al., 2021). However, children raised in permissive environments may exhibit high self-esteem.

Finally, neglectful parenting is remarked by lower responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1967). This is the most harmful parenting style as children with neglectful parents often find it difficult to form and maintain healthy relationships due to the lack of warmth and emotional support needed for developing social skills. These children are prone to behavioral problems and social withdrawal (Rodríguez-Fernández et al., 2020).

To summarize, parenting styles greatly influence children's development of social skills. While authoritarian parenting leads to the best outcomes, other parenting styles may impose other social challenges.

3.0 SOCIAL SKILLS COMPETENCE

Social competence is defined as the ability of a person to act appropriately in certain situations, form and maintain relationships, and get along well with other people (Orpinas, 2010). Several cognitive abilities are integral in improving social competence, such as emotional processes, social awareness, cultural and personal values related to relationships, and behavioral skills.

The Social Competence Prism, proposed by Linda Rose-Krasnor (1997), is a theoretical framework designed to explain, understand, and assess social competence. This model suggests that social competence does not only involve a single trait but intertwines with various components such as social skills, social relationships, and the ability to achieve personal and social goals. The key components highlighted in the Prism are social skills, social relationships, and achieving goals.

Orpinas (2010) proposes several cognitive abilities integral to improving social competence. To begin with, it is the ability to solve problems. When a person possesses this ability, he has skills in identifying the issues involved and the desired outcomes to find solutions. Second, the ability to understand the connection of the elements of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors in certain situations, thus being aware of the consequences of such beliefs and being able to identify and change them if they do not achieve the desired outcomes. Lastly, it is the ability to execute various techniques in handling conflict, such as ignoring or avoiding undesirable situations, apologizing, and finding a solution.

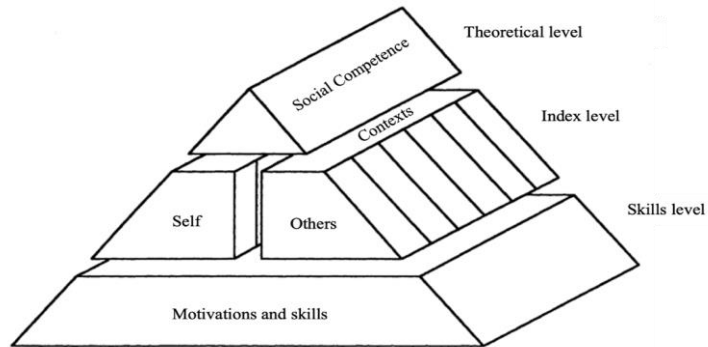


Figure 1: The Social Competence Prism by Linda-Rose Krasnor (1997)

Gresham & Elliott's (1990) framework of social competence identifies four critical elements of social competence. They posit the elements of cooperation, assertion, empathy, and self-control pivotal in social competence based on Albert Bandura's (1986) social learning theory where learning occurs in social environment and it can happen through observation, and social cognitive theory where cognitive processes play a salient role in one's behaviour and learning. Gresham & Elliot (1990) define cooperation as the capability of a person to work effectively with others within certain rules, assertion which is the ability to express personal views, convey needs confidently while still respecting others, empathy which refers to the ability to understand and respond to other's feelings to form positive social interactions and lastly, self-control which is the capability to regulate emotion and behaviours in a social context especially when facing difficulties, conflict, or stress.

4.0 IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Social media is ubiquitous; almost everyone has at least one social media account. According to Data Reportal (2024), as of January 2024, there were 33.59 million internet users in Malaysia. The figures show that 28.68 million internet users were active social media users, which is 83.1% of the total of Malaysia's population. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook Messenger, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and X are among Malaysia's popular social media applications. The social media statistics for Malaysia in 2024 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Social Media Statistics for Malaysia in 2024

Social Media Application	Number of users
Facebook	22.35 million
YouTube	24.19 million
Instagram	15.70 million
TikTok	28.68 million
Facebook Messenger	11.85 million
LinkedIn	7.80 million
Snapchat	1.46 million
X	5.71 million

Nesi (2020) highlighted the mixed impacts of social media on youth's mental health by giving attention to both the challenges and opportunities social media offers adolescents. As the digital media landscape evolves, so does the impact it offers to the users. While Ndung'u et al. (2021) proposed that social media had positively affected students in Kenyan private universities' task performance and competence, Lee et al. (2023) addressed their concerns about psychological distress, social media addiction, and cyberbullying. Abi-Joude et al. (2020) indicated the correlation between smartphone and social media use and mental illness among adolescents in North America.

To conclude, though social media outlines both the benefits and drawbacks of using it, more concerns are raised about its downsides, especially regarding the users' mental health issues. Therefore, it is pertinent for social media users to evaluate situations using their social skills competence to avoid potential negative effects of social media.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Parents play a crucial role in child development. It is undeniable that parenting styles notably influence a child's development and, later, his social competence as he grows and responds to his surroundings. As social media is unavoidable these days, adolescents need social competence to prevent the potential negative impacts social media poses. Therefore, a conceptual framework is derived as in Figure 2 below.

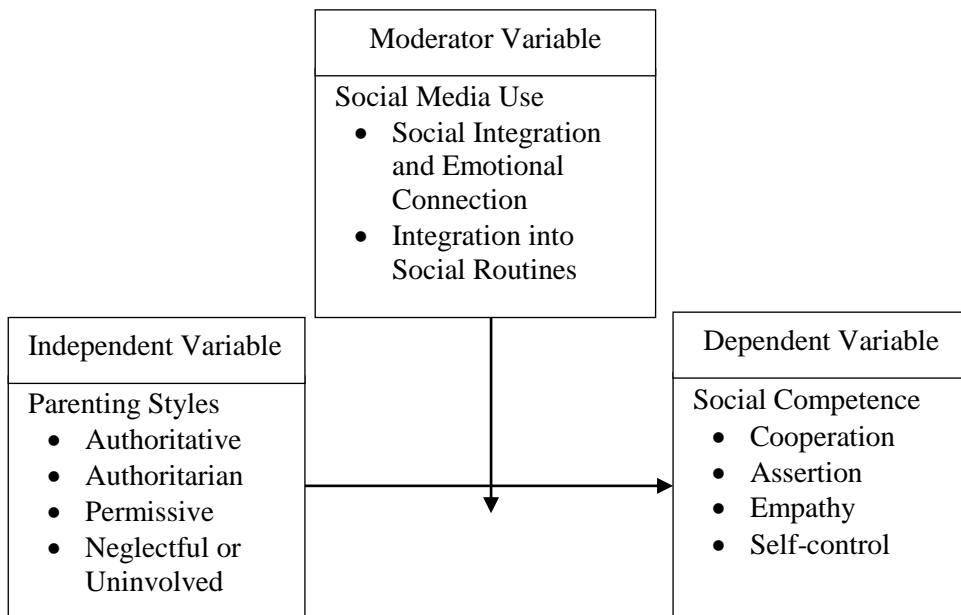


Figure 2: The Conceptual Framework

In conclusion, the conceptual framework presented above is vital in structuring and clarifying the relationship among the independent variables: parenting styles, social competence, and social media use. This framework anchors the study and the choice of methodology to carry out the research.

Author Contribution

Abdul Kadir, Z. and Isa, K., focused on the writing process involved the introduction, discussion on idea organization, language style review, and final draft editing, all of which were collectively carried out and completed by all parties involved.

Conflict of Interest

This manuscript has not been published elsewhere, and all authors have agreed to its submission and declare no conflict of interest regarding the manuscript.

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