

The Impact of Parenting Style on Social Adjustment of Adolescents: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Research on parenting style is very important for the growth of adolescents. It affects the mental health and social adjustment of adolescents. There are generally three types of parenting styles: authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and neglect parenting. Most studies on parenting styles uses Western samples and rarely involve comparisons across cultures. Due to the differences between Eastern and Western cultural backgrounds, the same parenting style has different effects on different children. Plus, the social adaptation of adolescents affected by the parenting style is also different. Authoritarian parents are rare in the West and are much criticized for. The difference is that authoritarian parents are common in the East, and their evaluations are also different from those in the West, which are recognized by most parents. A variety of different factors influence the social adjustment of adolescents. Although the main problems of social adjustment of adolescents in East and West are different, they are all caused by various incorrect and inappropriate parenting methods. The limitations of existing research are the lack of long-term surveys of adolescents and the lack of research on adolescents' mental status. Future research can focus more on the connections between different cultures and psychological development, to better develop intervention methods for adolescents.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural, Parenting Style, Adolescents, Social Adjustment

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on previous research, parenting styles are divided into three types: (a) authoritarian parents, who are often strict, demanding, and focusing on making children obey them rather than responding to their children's demands; (b) neglectful parents, who are most relaxed and there are no restrictions, rules, or restrictions; (c) authoritative parents who respond flexibly to the needs of their children but still enforce reasonable standards of conduct [1]. According to mainstream studies, parenting styles are divided into four types: authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful. Indulgent parents meet all the demands of their children, but do not have any behavioral standards for their children, nor do they correct the child's behavior [2]. Adolescence is a critical period for children's development, and parents' parenting styles during adolescence have a profound impact on their later social adaptation. Numerous studies have highlighted parental style as one of the most important variables affecting children's social development, psychological and neurological development [3]. Previous research has confirmed that parental behavior may affect adolescents'

mental health and social development. It helps adolescents develop tools for emotional self-regulation. If adolescents do not have the opportunity to adopt positive parenting styles, adaptive and functional problems related to academic performance, health, behavior, or social competence may develop. Therefore, a better understanding of parenting styles can help researchers develop interventions for adolescents.

Previous research focused on parenting styles and their effects on adolescents and children were using Western samples, with limited empirical research on parenting styles using non-Caucasian or Asian samples. Most research on parenting styles has focused on two aspects: (a) the characteristics and proportions of specific types of parenting styles; (b) the effects of parenting styles on different aspects of adolescents or children. Among them, research results of the latter are more often reported. In Western scholars' research on the negative effects of parenting styles, authoritarian parenting styles have acquired negative connotations, mainly because authoritative parenting styles are often associated with negative psychological status or behavior in adolescents, such as anxiety, depression, or violent behavior. If

parents show emotional warmth and accept their child's negative emotions, instead of criticizing or minimizing their feelings, it will help to promote emotional regulation in children. Thereby, it will reduce children's vulnerability to anxiety and even anxiety in adolescents with anxiety disorders symptoms. However, most Western scholars have little understanding of parenting styles in Asian cultures, and some studies even describe the parenting styles of Asian parents (especially Chinese parents) as "controlling", "restrictive", "authoritarian" and "hostile".

Numerous etiological models infer that parenting behaviors play a key role in the psychological and behavioral development of children and adolescents, which indicates the importance of studying parenting styles. However, most of the studies only focus on the Western model of development in children or adolescents and do not consider the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. Therefore, to understand educational methods across different cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to compare the parenting styles of East and West, which is also lacking in most of the current research. This review aims to evaluate the impact of parenting style on the social adjustment of adolescents across different cultural backgrounds. Studying this topic can provide parents in different regions with educational methods suitable for their own culture. It will help to promote healthy growth of adolescents, to improve adolescents' mental health, to reduce their problem behaviors, and to enable them to better adapt to society.

2. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE EFFECTS OF PARENTING STYLE

2.1. Violence during Adolescence

Social adaptation refers to the process in which individuals gradually accept existing social norms and behavioral norms. Plus, they can respond to social stimuli in the environment within the scope allowed by the norms. If a person wants to adapt to society, he must make behaviors that conform to society, and violence is an abnormal social behavior and a manifestation of individual social maladaptation. In the study by Moreno-Ruiz et al., attachment style and emotion regulation were assessed using questionnaires in a large sample of adolescents (12 to 18 years) [4]. Interpretation of the results suggests that higher levels of violence are connected to negative socialization styles, such as authoritarian and negligent styles, because authoritarian and negligent parenting styles have one thing in common: a lack of parental emotional involvement. Low perceptions of parental support and emotional engagement were identified as risk factors for adolescents to become bullies. In addition, authoritarian parenting styles are the most common among violent teens. This suggests that a lack of loving socialization

may lead to the development of social skills and poor coping resources, promoting peer violence. Adolescents who were educated in permissive parenting styles had the lowest levels of violence compared to all other groups analyzed. In indulgent family situations, teens are encouraged to develop other positive strategies to solve the problems encountered, rather than resorting to violence. That is, low levels of coercion, high levels of emotional engagement, parental support, positive communication, and parent-child trust reduce the likelihood of teen violence. Interpretation of the findings suggests that authoritarian parenting styles are associated with greater participation in both active and passive violence and that these adolescents are generally socially maladjusted. Regarding the effects of the interaction between age, gender, and parenting style, adolescents from permissive families, regardless of gender and age, are less prone to positive violence. The relationship between other parenting styles and positive violence is complex, and the role of gender and age variables must be considered.

Moreover, political violence is a political coercive force with class rule as its essence and the state as its dependent entity, and a tool of state repression composed of various coercive means such as the army, police, courts, and prisons. Indisputably, conflict and war are not satisfactory environments for healthy development and can affect adolescents' social adjustment, and this effect may vary across cultures. Both Jewish and Arab children were heavily revealed to political violence, both displayed higher levels of psychological distress [5]. For both groups, the father's parenting style was not connected to the child's level of psychological distress. On the other hand, children of authoritative mothers exhibited lower psychological distress than children of authoritarian mothers, and children of permissive mothers were indistinguishable from children of authoritative mothers, indicating the dominant influence of mothers in the family climate, especially regarding emotional health. When both father and mother are authoritarian parenting styles, the harm to children is even greater. The parenting styles of the two groups have different effects on children's psychological distress. For Jewish children, both authoritarian and permissive mothering styles are harmful. For Arab children exposed to high-level political life events, both authoritative and permissive mothering styles are beneficial. In Jewish groups, regardless of exposure to political violence, father's parenting style was not linked with children's psychological distress. However, for Arab groups, with lower exposure to political violence, father's parenting style had no effect, while Authoritarian parenting styles had more negative effects on children than authoritative parenting styles when exposure to political violence was high. The parenting styles of the two groups had different effects on children's psychological distress. For Jewish children, both authoritarian and permissive parenting

styles are detrimental, and the father's parenting style has nothing to do with the child's psychological distress, whether or not exposed to political violence. For Arab children, authoritative and tolerant mothers' styles were all beneficial, with authoritarian parenting styles having a greater negative impact on children than authoritative parenting when the risk of political violence was high, while for Arab groups with a lower risk of political violence, fathers' parenting styles had no effect.

2.2. The Role of Parental Control

Authoritarian education refers to parents advocating authority and tradition, demanding of their children, lack of enthusiasm, disrespecting children's needs and opinions, and being accustomed to restricting children to unconditional obedience. This type of parenting can lead to inconsistent behavior, self-centeredness, and even violence in teens in front of and behind their parents. However, the intensity of parental control may vary across cultures, affecting a child's ability to socially adapt. Dwairy and Achoui investigated a phenomenon of parents' control was administered to adolescents in nine countries [6]. The degree of parental control is related to culture and family relationships. Parents in Western countries have less control over their children than parents in Eastern countries. However, Poland is an exception in this regard. Polish parents use similar control methods as Eastern parents, and the parent-child relationship has a positive correlation coefficient with parental control. When countries specifically compared children's relationships with parents and parental control, it was found that in countries where parents and children tended to bond, parents tended to be more in control. Poland has lower parent-child ties, similar to France and Argentina. However parental control, especially maternal control, is higher in Poland. Jordanians and Indians have fewer family ties than other Eastern countries. Israeli Bedouin parents have higher ties and parental control, the highest correlation coefficient between these two variables. In all countries, mothers are considered more controlling than fathers. This difference is more pronounced in the West than in the East. Parental control is also related to the gender of parents and adolescents, with Western mothers having more control over sons than fathers, and Eastern mothers having more control over daughters than fathers. Higher family economic status was associated with higher paternal but not maternal control, and the association between paternal control and psychological impairment was significant in the West but not very important in the East. At the same time, the father's control was more harmful to adolescents' psychological adjustment than the mother's control. The results showed that parental control varied between different cultures. Eastern countries generally have higher levels of parental control than Western countries. Mothers are more controlling than fathers, especially in the West, and father's control, but not

mother's, is linked with adolescent psychological disorders in the West. It is different in the East. Inconsistent parental control is related to psychological disorders.

Last but not the least, parents with different levels of control will subtly influence their children through their words and deeds, and eventually, cultivate adolescents with different levels of autonomy. Teenagers with high autonomy have more complete internal development and can better adapt to society. In the study by Soenens and Beyers, they concluded that from different cultural contexts, the relevance among control, autonomy, and parent-adolescent relationships [7]. First, parental control is divided into psychological control and behavioral control. Psychological control is thought to refer to intrusive and manipulative parental behaviors toward children, such as falsehood, guilt, and loving withdrawal, while behavioral control is thought to refer to parents' regulation of children's behavior through strategies such as setting expectations and monitoring. Second, the theoretical opposite of psychic control is the promotion of volitional functions. Parents who are highly volitional promoting will stand in the child's shoes, allow the child to act according to real preferences, encourage the child to take the initiative, offer relevant advice where possible, and provide meaningful reasons when the choice is not allowed. Third, mental control frustrates the child's three basic and universal needs, namely, the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. From the perspective that controlling parents may cause adolescents to experience feelings of stress, helplessness and incompetence, and interpersonal alienation, mind-controlling parenting styles can have detrimental effects on a global scale. There is a general agreement that parenting styles of psychological control and behavioral control are associated with socially maladaptive outcomes.

3. RELEVANT FACTORS INFLUENCED BY DIFFERENT CULTURES

3.1. Internalizing Problems

Adolescents are more prone to anxiety, most surveys say, and if an adolescent's anxiety level is too high or has reached the level of an anxiety disorder, it may be difficult for him to carry out normal social activities. Such people may have a strong desire to control those around them, or, conversely, they avoid communicating with others and become increasingly withdrawn. It indicates that individuals with high anxiety levels have poor social adaptability. Mousavil et al. conducted a study examining the relationship between perceived parenting style and anxiety among some Asian countries, for example Malay, Chinese, Indian, Arab, and European/American (Caucasian) origins adolescents [8]. They found that across all cultural groups, social phobia scores were the highest among adolescents, suggesting

that social anxiety symptoms do increase during adolescence. In addition, Malay, Indian, Arab, and Chinese adolescents reported higher anxiety symptoms than Caucasians on all anxiety subscales, surveyed across cultural groups. In the Asian sample, especially Chinese and Malay adolescents had higher levels of anxiety symptoms. One possible explanation for this may have to do with negative parenting behaviors of Asian parents, such as anxious parenting, greater rejection, and less direct expressions of emotional warmth, similar to authoritarian parenting. Considering the differences in perceived parenting behavior across cultures, Chinese adolescents have the lowest level of emotional warmth toward their parents, indicating that Chinese parents are less accepting of their children's ideas and express less emotional warmth to their children. The associations between anxiety and parenting styles across all cultures showed that parental rejection was associated with higher anxiety, over-protection, and anxious parenting was associated with anxiety (except Malay participants), and these associations were stronger in Caucasians. In addition to the influence of parenting behaviors on adolescent anxiety, there are other culturally specific factors such as gender role identity, cognitive schemas, and individualism/collectivism. Thus, the Asian samples showed greater anxiety symptoms than the European/American sample on all anxiety scales. Anxious parenting, parental rejection, and controlling/over-protection were associated with higher anxiety independent of the cultural group, but these connections were stronger in Caucasians. In a study of cross-cultural differences in anxiety measures, adolescents in Asian cultural groups, particularly Malays and Chinese, were at greater risk for anxiety disorders due to exposure to more suboptimal parenting styles.

Plus, self-esteem is defined as the degree to which an individual considers himself capable, important, successful, and valuable, and self-esteem predicts an individual's ability to adapt to society. People with high self-esteem are healthy, positive, developing, and appear in the public eye with a good image. They are also better able to adjust to social situations and buffer basic anxiety. People with low self-esteem, on the other hand, have a pessimistic view of themselves, often belittle themselves, lack self-esteem and responsibility, are often unable or unwilling to open-up to others, and are more prone to symptoms of depression or anxiety. Herz and Gullone investigated the self-esteem level of 118 Vietnamese Australian and 120 Anglo-Australian adolescents [9]. It demonstrated that Vietnamese-Australian adolescents have higher rates of emotionless parenting which means they have more authoritative parenting than Anglo-Australian adolescents, mothers of Vietnamese-Australian adolescents and fathers apply to this conclusion. In the study by Predictors of Self-Esteem, it showed that perceived parenting behaviors and self-esteem were as correlated in Vietnamese-Australian

adolescents as in Anglo-Australian adolescents. Furthermore, perceived parental over-protection was negatively correlated with self-esteem, whereas perceived parental care was positively correlated with self-esteem. Among the teens in both groups, those who reported the best parenting experiences had higher self-esteem than those classified as lacking emotional control traits. When adolescents are in the strong cultural context of their original country, they may be exposed to overprotective parenting styles necessary for family harmony and the demonstration of filial piety. But after immigration, when these values are shaken by the need for acculturation, teens may resent the over protectiveness of their parents. It was also found that a higher incidence of affectionless-control parenting styles in the Vietnamese Australian sample was more prevalent in the Vietnamese-Australian sample, suggesting that the parents of these teens may still be constrained by their traditional beliefs. In the Western cultural context, adolescent self-esteem is negatively correlated with parenting styles characterized by low levels of acceptance and high levels of over-protection (i.e., apathetic control). And for immigrant teens, because they tend to adapt more quickly than their parents, the collectivist cultural context no longer supports this adaptive parenting style, resulting in parenting styles characterized by a high degree of over-protection and low acceptance.

3.2. Externalizing Problems

Adolescent aggression is one of the strongest predictors of various social adjustment problems, such as cognitive impairment, antisocial behavior, and externalizing harmful behaviors. Numerous studies have concluded that there are differences in the positive or negative effects of parenting styles on children's aggression. Findings in Anglo-Saxon contexts with a predominantly European and American sample consistently show that adolescents raised in authoritative families have better developmental outcomes than their peers raised in authoritarian, permissive or neglectful families. Perez-Gramaje and his colleagues conducted a study in main and interaction effects between parenting styles and aggressiveness [10]. Adolescent aggression is associated with poor self-esteem and psychological maladaptation. Findings on parenting styles show that indulgent parenting is associated with physical and family self-esteem and even emotional self-esteem compared with authoritative parenting, while neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles are associated with the worst self-esteem and the most psychological dysregulation. However, an interaction between parenting style and aggression was found in family self-esteem, with aggressive teens showing the highest family self-esteem, the same as the teens which were not aggressive, whereas in authoritarian and neglected families, aggressive and non-aggressive teens showed the

highest family self-esteem. Aggressive adolescents all showed poor family self-esteem, with aggressive adolescents having the lowest family self-esteem. For both aggressive and non-aggressive teens, warm families are more likely to produce socially well-adjusted teens with good self-esteem and lower psychological dysregulation. In contrast, lack of parental warmth is a risk factor, and authoritarian and neglectful parenting is often associated with poor teen outcomes. Although aggressive adolescents in past studies reported lower family self-esteem than non-aggressive adolescents, this study in Spain suggests that family self-esteem may differ between aggressive and non-aggressive adolescents, depending on their family type. Aggressive teens had the same optimal family self-esteem as their non-aggressive peers from indulgent and authoritative families, and much better than non-aggressive teens from authoritarian and neglectful families. All in all, aggressive teens had the worst social adjustment. Aggressive and non-aggressive teens share a common pattern: Indulgent and authoritative parenting is always associated with better outcomes than authoritarian or neglectful parenting, that is, parental warmth for aggressive and non-aggressive teens has a positive impact

4. CONCLUSION

Children exposed to politically violent parenting styles have certain psychological distress. Exposure to political violence through mothers and fathers have different effects on Jewish and Arab children. Adolescents with authoritarian parenting styles were more likely to engage in active and passive violence. Adolescents from permissive families, regardless of gender and age, had lower propensities for active violence. The degree of parental control in Eastern countries is higher than that in Western countries. At this aspect, mothers are more controlling than fathers, especially in the West. In the West, paternal control rather than maternal control is associated with adolescents' psychological disorders, but not so in the East. If parents have too strong psychological control and behavioral control over their children, there will be adverse consequences for their children, mainly in the form of social maladaptation. Asian adolescents have more severe anxiety symptoms than European/American. Parental rejection, anxious upbringing, and control/overprotection are associated with higher anxiety, and these associations are weaker in Asians. The impact of anxiety parenting styles on developing anxiety disorder in adolescents are different across cultures. Because immigrant adolescents adjust to new environments faster than their parents, collectivist cultural backgrounds no longer support adaptive parenting, resulting in highly overprotective and low accepting parenting styles. Aggressive adolescents have the worst social fitness. Parental warmth has a positive

effect on adolescents, both in aggressive and nonaggressive adolescents.

This review contributed to the research and practical areas of parenting styles. It provided a cross-cultural perspective regarding the impact of parenting style on adolescents' social adjustment. Practical applications should take a variety of cultural factors into account and adjust intervention methods accordingly. Existing research mainly studied the correlation between parenting style and adolescents' social adaptation across different cultures. Future research can explore the causal relationship between them. If the parent's parenting styles are trained to the best through educational programs, how the adolescent's social adjustment will be strengthened. Existing research mainly focused on the phenomenon of this relationship in different cultures during a certain period. Future research can track its long-term changes. Plus, the existing research mainly focused on the external problem behaviors of adolescents. Future research can explore the influence of parenting styles across different cultures on the internalized mental illness of adolescents.

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