The Influence of Parenting Styles on Social-Emotional Competence of Children

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Abstract. Parenting styles are taken more seriously in the process of children's development nowadays. It represents the strategies parents use to raise their children. However, most of the research focuses on the impact of parental skills on children's academic achievement, and less attention has been paid to social-emotional competence. Social-emotional competence is a crucial ability for children to interact with others positively, express their feelings and control their behavior. The ability relates to children's social interaction and the possibility of problem behaviors occurring and also impacts academic achievement. This literature review searched the contemporary literature, introduced the parenting styles and social-emotional competence and then argued parenting styles play an important role in the development of their children's social-emotional competence, and analyzed how the parenting styles influence the children's social-emotional competence. Some better suggestions were proposed for parents to parent children from the view of raising children's social-emotional competence.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Parenting skills, Social-emotional competence, Children education.

1   Introduction

Nowadays, parenting styles are taken more seriously in the process of children's development by the public. Most parents want their children to be able to achieve more in the future. As for children, learning and social ability are both important in their developmental process. However, most parents are only focused on their children's academic achievement and ignore their children's performance of social ability. Actually, social-ability is essential and will impact academic achievement. It is worth mentioning that parents play an irreplaceable role in impacting the development of children's social abilities [1]. Various studies have shown that children's critical social skills, such as school readiness, mental health and social interaction, were highly dependent on social-emotional competence [2, 3]. Ashdown conducted a study in Australia that trained the children's ability of social-emotional competence with the curriculum: You Can Do It! Early Childhood Education Program (YCDI). This study showed that the improvement of social-emotional competence could reduce the chil-

dren's problem behavior and increase the reading achievement for the lower grade [4]. Another example is that after social and emotional learning, participants have higher social-emotional competence, better life attitude and well-being [5]. Conversely, the lack of social-emotional competence causes negative impacts such as failure in academic, criminal behaviors and psychological problems when children are victimized by peers, are aggressive or even under high pressure [6]. These studies showed the importance of social-emotional competence for children. Therefore, this review would mainly focus on discussing the relationship between parenting styles for the children's social-emotional competence and propose better suggestions for parents to raise social-emotional confidence in children.

2   Method

The database used in this review was mainly Google Scholar. The key words "parent involvement", parenting style", "children's social skill" and "children's social-emotional competence" were searched and twelve studies were selected from about 30 articles. The selection according to the standard that study had to: (i) include the parenting styles, children's social-emotional competence or the relationship of both, (ii) be published after 2000, (iii) be published in English.

3   The Influence of Parenting Styles on CHILDREN'S Social-emotional Competence

3.1   Parenting Styles

There are three parenting styles proposed by Baumrind [7, 8] in her studies which are authoritarian, permissive and authoritative.

The parents who have an authoritative parenting style, tend to treat their children as an individual. The parents set up a warm and responsive parenting environment for the children. The children are taught to be independent and take their own responsibility [8]. In more detail, this kind of parent makes clear rules for the children's behavior and then monitors it. They are assertive but not intrusive or restrictive. While their children are making mistakes, they choose a supportive disciplinary method instead of a punitive one and also explain the reason for the rules. They expect to cultivate children who are responsible, cooperative and assertive. The parents with authoritarian parenting styles ask their children to completely obey their requests. And they will punish their children if their behavior cannot match their expectations. Their parenting environment is more strict and orderly. Permissive parents are non-punitive and accept their children's impulses, desires, and behaviors. Permissive parents allow children to regulate their activities, avoid control and confrontation, and choose forgiveness for immature behavior.

3.2   Social-Emotional Competence

The Collaborative of Academic Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL) has divided social-emotional competence into five broad and interrelated areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making [9]. Self-awareness is an ability to notice the influence of one's own emotions, thoughts and values on behavior. Self-management is the ability to manage one's own emotions, thoughts and behavior in different conditions. Social awareness is an ability to empathize with others and understand their thoughts, whether they come from different cultures and backgrounds. Relationship skills are the ability to set up and maintain healthy relationships, including some communication and cooperation abilities. Responsible decision-making is an ability to make positive choices after analyzing different situations with caring not only one's self but also for others and society.

These five areas can be used to analyze the different development stages from childhood to adulthood. For children's development, social-emotional competence is linked to their early academic performance and this link may be causal [10]. At the beginning of children's academic career, early school experience impact the children's learning habits and learning interest. With more positive social-emotional competence, children can establish a better relationship with their peers and teachers, which can make them positive to take part in the school activities and make it easier to adapt to the new school situation. Moreover, children can receive positive feedback from healthy and beneficial relationships with teachers and peers. The feedback can help children train their abilities such as communication, emotional management, emotional knowledge and other social skills [6]. Conversely, the children, who have difficulties of controlling their anger and sadness and getting along with others, always perform worse in school. Moreover, the children's early academic skills and social-emotional competence may be bi-directionally related. The bad performance in school brings more negative emotions to the children and the children may become more disrupted. It is also difficult for this kind of children to get positive feedback from their teachers [10]. It will become a vicious circle. It is important to practice the children's social-emotional competence at the beginning.

3.3   The Impact of Parenting Styles on Children's Social-Emotional Competence

Children's social-emotional competence is influenced by both nature and nurture. The nature factors such as genetic and environmental risk or ability are hardly changed. However, as a part of nurture influence, parents can play a primary role in adjusting the children's abilities and even the children's biological predispositions such as personality traits. Although the children's different biological development cause their different behavior and lead to lots of uncontrollable factors in the empirical studies, contrasting parenting styles have various different outcomes on children's social-emotional competence. It is meaningful to find the most adaption parenting styles for

the children [11]. Parents, who always know their children best, have the ability to help their children enhance their social-emotional competence.

There is two empirical research analyzing the impact of parenting styles on children's social-emotional competence. For the first one, Maria has done research that argues that parenting styles influence some factors of children's social-emotional competence [12]. They used the Socials Skills Rating System [13] to evaluate the social competence, used an instrument adapted after Denham Affective Knowledge Test [14] to evaluate emotional competence, used a Wally Problem Solving Test [15] to evaluate the competence in solving problems and used the Parental Authority Questionnaire [16] to evaluate the parenting styles. For another one, Zeinab conducted a study about emotional competence and parenting styles [17]. They used Parental Authority Questionnaire [16] to measure the parenting style and the Emotional Competence Questionnaire [18] to measure emotional competence. The impact of parenting styles on children's social-emotional competence was divided into three parts according to the three parenting styles proposed by Baumrind [7, 8], authoritarian, permissive and authoritative.

3.3.1. Authoritative parenting style.

The authoritative parenting style is flexible, warm and responsive and requires much time, patience and energy. It also asks the parents to have great abilities to adjust their way of teaching children according to their children and environment. At the same time, the authoritative parenting style has a positive association with emotional competence, which means that authoritative parenting styles influence the children's development of emotion [17]. Parents with an authoritative parenting style always treat their children as an individual and prefer preparing children rather than control. This kind of parents gives more options for their children to make choices in a variety of domains with the limitation that are acceptable for parents. While making decisions children themselves, can learn more about how to manage their activities, time and emotion. The results of their own decision should be accepted. The abilities of responsible decision-making and self-management can both be trained in this process and the relationship between parents and children becomes more intimate, which is a benefit for future parenting [11]. Maria [12] also mentioned that the level of the dimension assertion, which includes initiating behavior, presenting and responding to others' behavior, is affected by the practice of an authoritative parenting style.

Regarding the regulations parents set for children, authoritative parents use a friendly, peer-like way to persuade their children to follow the rules by reasoning the rules, analyzing the consequence of misconduct, encouraging their good behavior and sometimes punishment on some mistakes of principle. Parents who tend to prevent misbehavior instead of punishment after misbehavior have fewer disputes with children and their children will be more compliant [11]. The reasoning of rules and misbehavior can help children regulate their own behaviors and also know more about responsibility. The authoritative parenting styles lead to a high ability of children's self-management [12]. Besides, the authoritative parents listen and take the children's advice if the children take responsibility for their own decisions [11]. This process promotes the development of children's sense of duty.

At last, this kind of parent-child relationship, which is reciprocity and a degree of power-sharing, can lead children to be more respectful to others [11]. Respecting others is the principal social rule that children should learn.

3.3.2. Authoritarian parenting style.

Authoritarian parenting style, compared with the flexibility and warm authoritative parenting style, is more tough and inflexible. Although the authoritarian parenting style is easier to practice than the authoritative, this kind of parenting style has a lot of defects. Authoritarian parents rely on punishment, isolation and limitation to regulate and control their children. This coercive parenting way can encourage the children to manage themselves and enhance responsibility better than the authoritative parenting style [11, 12]. However, this kind of self-management ability is different from the ability enhanced by the authoritative parenting style that we mentioned before. The previous one is usually forced by external factors like the fear of punishment, so the children who are parented by authoritarian parents always have more weak ability to manage their own behavior from within than the children parented by authoritative parents. The regulation behavior may only stop the children's misbehavior and struggles when their parents are besides for a short time, it actually will enhance the possibility of more disobedience and antisocial behavior in the future, especially without the control of their parents [11].

Furthermore, authoritarian parents are always in a depressed family environment. In this situation, children are physically punished, demeaned and lack encouragement. These coercive factors impede the development of children's communication and social skills and may cause the children's externalization behaviors [11]. Besides, children's negative emotion can not be vented in such a family environment and they will express their negative emotions to their peers, which makes them more difficult to establish a good peer relationship [11]. Furthermore, some children will have destructive behavior to break the barriers before their objectives because they are surrounded by strict rules when they want to explore the new area and their authoritarian parents give them no support but more limitations [12].

3.3.3. Permissive parenting style.

The permissive parenting style avoids control and confrontation with children and encourages children to make their own decision. However, this kind of parents still asks their children to be mature and accept the consequence of the misbehavior. The children whose parents practice a permissive parenting style are more sociable and tend to express their emotions which also causes a low possibility of internalizing problems. However, the lack of parents' involvement makes the children show less respect to others and more defiant toward the expert [11].

While the children can make their own decision without limitation and guidance, they are spontaneously used to be satisfied and avoiding difficulties. These make it difficult for the children to adjust their emotion, control themselves and overcome the difficulties while in trouble [11, 12, 17].

3.4   Suggestions

According to the above discussion, the adapted chosen parenting styles can promote the development of children's social-emotional competence. In most situations, the authoritative parenting style was related to a lot of positive impacts in the research. However, it is not always the correct one. The choice of parenting styles should depend on the children's personalities and the social environment they live. For example, there is research argues that the permissive parenting style is more adaptable for Spanish families [19].

Moreover, in some high-risk areas, parenting styles may need to be more authoritative to protect children and leave away the risks. By the way, the different cultural backgrounds should be considered while arguing about the parenting style [20]. They are paying more attention to children and more communication to find out the individualized parenting style for children.

4   Implications

The aim of this literature review is to collect information on the relationship between parenting styles and children's social-emotional competence to provide more convenient searching. There are still a lot of difficulties in this area. For example, it is hard to control the variable method in emergent empirical research. Because the development of children's social-emotional competence will be affected by the way, others treat them. Obviously, a friendly social environment is beneficial to developing relationship skills and also other social-emotional competence. However, the social environment is different for each individual and hard to be an artificial adjustment.

Furthermore, the social behavior of parents should be more concerned about. Children will spontaneously imitate their parents including their social behavior, which is also a part of social-emotional competence.

5   Conclusion

There is no doubt that the parenting styles play an important role in the development of children's social-emotional competence. The three types of parenting styles impact the development of children's social-emotional competence in different ways. The authoritative parenting style as a flexible way can benefit the children's self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. As for the authoritarian parenting style, it is positive for the children's self-management and responsible decision-making. However, this parenting style is negative for social skills and might cause externalization behaviors. Regarding the permissive parentis, their children are good at social skills. However, this kind of children have a weak ability when meeting difficulties. In most situations, the authoritative parenting style is the best way for children's development because it is the most flexible one among the three parenting styles. Nevertheless, the parenting style should adjust while the situation change. The cultures in different countries is also an important factor influ-

encing the relationship between parenting styles and children's social-emotional competence.   How to help the parents to find their most adapted parenting style is still valuable to be discussed at the time when children are exposed to too much information and lack filtering.

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