

# Dynamics of parenting styles: a child guidance program

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**Abstract:** This study examines the effects of parenting styles on the physical and mental health of first-grade students. By statistically analyzing questionnaires from 158 mothers of students and 100 samples, it was found that authoritarian and uninvolved parenting styles were positively associated with physical and mental health, while authoritative and permissive parenting styles were negatively associated. The most prevalent parenting style was authoritative, but authoritarian and non-participatory had a greater impact on physical and mental health. Parenting styles were not related to the age of the mother, the number of children, the level of education and employment status.

**Keywords:** parenting styles; authoritarian; authoritative; permissive; uninvolved; physical and mental health

## 1 Introductory

Recently, a buzzword “spoilsport parents” has emerged in China, referring to parents who are overly strict, restrictive or focused on rules and discipline. Parents serve as their children’s first teachers, and their behavior affects their children’s development. Although the relationship between parenting styles and children’s physical and mental development is controversial in academia, appropriate parenting practices can have a positive or negative impact on children’s physical and mental health. However, while previous studies have focused on parenting styles of students in middle school and above, this study will examine the relationship between parenting styles and the physical and mental health of first grade elementary school students . Also Hypothesis 1: Parenting styles do not affect learners’ physical and mental health. Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between parenting styles and mothers’ demographic characteristics.

## 2 Rationale

The results of the study show:

- \* Half of the mothers of first-graders are 30-35 years old.

- \* Most mothers have a bachelor’s degree, a regular job and only one child at home.

- \*Authoritative parenting is common among mothers, followed by permissive, non-participatory and, finally, authoritarian parenting.

- \*Parenting styles have a significant impact on the physical and mental health of first-grade students. Authoritarian and non-participatory styles were positively associated with physical and mental health, and authoritative and permissive styles were negatively associated with physical and mental health.

- \*There was no significant correlation between the demographic characteristics of the respondents and parenting styles.

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### 2.1 Frequency distribution of participants’ demographic characteristics

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age		

30-35 Years Old	49	49
36-40 Years Old	26	26
41-45 Years Old	14	14
46 years old or above	11	11
Number of Children		
One	73	73
Two	23	23
Three	4	4
More than Three	0	0
Educational Attainment		
Doctoral	4	4
Master	4	4
Bachelor	58	58
Secondary School	19	19
None of the Above	15	15
Employment Status		
Regular	78	78
Temporary	14	14
Unemployed	8	8

N=100

Table 1 shows that the largest number of participants, 49%, were between the ages of 30-35; 26% were mothers between the ages of 36-40; 14% were mothers between the ages of 41-45; and the smallest number, 11%, were 46 years old and older. The legal age of marriage for Chinese women is 20, and the data suggests that participants married or gave birth in their 20s. In addition, 73% of families had only one child, 23% had two children, and 4% had three children. In terms of educational attainment, more than half of the participants had a bachelor’s degree, 58%, followed by parents who had graduated from secondary school. In terms of employment, the highest number (78%) had regular jobs, 14% worked part-time and 8% were currently unemployed. This indicates that working mothers, despite their busy schedules, have time to care for their children, which is important for their overall development.

### 2.2 Determine the dominant parenting style

**Table 2: Mean values for each type of upbringing**

Parental Type	Frequency	Average Mean Value	Ranking
Authoritarian Parenting Style	18	2.51	4

Authoritative Parenting Style	38	3.46	1
Permissive Parenting Style	29	3.28	2
Uninvolved Parenting Style	15	2.58	3

Table 2 shows the prevalence of the four parenting styles among mothers, and the ordering of the means reveals the participants’

perceptions of the effectiveness and desirability of the different parenting styles. Overall, authoritative parenting styles were the most popular, followed by permissive parenting styles. These results emphasize the importance of positive, supportive and communicative parenting styles for parent-child relationships and child well-being.

**2.3 Pearson Related Analysis**

**Table 3. Influence of Parenting Style on the Physical and Mental Health of Elementary School Students**

	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Uninvolved	Physical Health	Mental Health
Authoritarian	1					
Authoritative	-.666**	1				
Permissive	-.576**	.684**	1			
Uninvolved	.502**	-.653**	-.489**	1		
Physical Health	.721**	-.724**	-.648**	.707**	1	
Mental Health	.691**	-.742**	-.598**	.562**	.864**	1

\*\* 0.01 level (two-tailed), significantly correlated.

Table 3 shows that authoritarian parenting styles are positively associated with physical and mental health and are associated with poorer physical and mental health. Authoritarian parents may resort to strict control and punishment, causing stress and negative health effects on children, who are more likely to suffer from depression and poor emotional regulation [1]. Uninvolved parenting styles are also positively associated with physical and mental health [2], with higher scores being associated with more severe physical and mental health problems. Lack of involved parenting may result in children with high rates of depression, high rates of smoking, poor academic performance, and low levels of psychosocial development [3]. Authoritative parenting is strongly associated

with the physical and mental health of elementary school students and is conducive to fostering positive parent-child relationships and a healthy environment for growth. In contrast, the negative correlation between permissive parenting styles and physical and mental health suggests that higher permissive parenting scores are associated with lower rates of physical and mental problems among students. Children of permissive parents may be more likely to engage in self-destructive behaviors because they lack self-control and impulse control [4].

**2.4 Analysis of parenting styles and students’ physical and mental health**

**Table 4. Analysis of Independent and Dependent Variables of Students’ Physical Health**

Independent Variables	Chi Value	P Value	Cramer’s V value	Decision	Interpretation
Authoritarian	180.968	0.01	0.777	Failed to reject the Ho1	Significant
Authoritative					
Permissive					
Uninvolved					

Note: Dependent variable: physical health

Legend: significant if p-value is less than 0.05. Cramer’s V Strength of association: > .5 is highly associated, .3 to .5 is moderately associated, .1 to .3 is lowly associated, and .0 to .1 is hardly associated.

Table 4 shows that there is a strong correlation between parenting styles and physical health of first graders (chi-square

value 180.968, p<0.01) with Cramer’s V score of 0.777. This indicates that different parenting styles have a significant effect on the physical health of individuals. Parental involvement and appropriate parenting styles are essential in promoting physical health in children.

**Table 5. Analysis of Independent and Dependent Variables of Students’ Mental Health**

Independent Variables	Chi Value	p value	Cramer’s V value	Decision	Interpretation
Authoritarian	29.662	0.01	0.545	Failed to reject the Ho1	Significant
Authoritative					
Permissive					
Uninvolved					

Note: Dependent variable: mental health

Legend: significant if p-value is less than 0.05. Cramer’s V Strength of association: > .5 is highly associated, .3 to .5 is moderately associated, .1 to .3 is lowly associated, and .0 to .1 is hardly associated.

Table 5 shows that parenting styles are significantly correlated

with the mental health of first graders (chi-square value = 29.662, p<0.01, Cramer’s V = 0.545). This is consistent with studies by Darling, Taylor, and McCartney [5] that children of authoritarian parents are more depressed. Makwana et al. [6] stated that parental disengagement may lead to feelings of loneliness and abandonment,

which in turn increases the risk of depression. Fadlillah et al. [7] also found that parenting styles have a significant impact on young children's mental health.

## 2.5 Parenting styles and demographic profile analysis of mothers

**Table 6. Cramer's V Analysis of Parenting Styles and Mothers' Demographic Characteristics**

Independent Variables	Cramer's V	p	Decision	Interpretation
Age	0.203	0.196	Failed to reject Ho2	Not Significant
Number of Children	0.186	0.331	Failed to reject Ho2	Not Significant
Education Attainment	0.133	0.947	Failed to reject Ho2	Not Significant
Employment Status	0.157	0.556	Failed to reject Ho2	Not Significant

Legend: significant if p-value is less than 0.05. Cramer's V Strength of association: > .5 is highly associated, .3 to .5 is moderately associated, .1 to .3 is lowly associated, and .0 to .1 is hardly associated.

Table 6 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between mother's age, number of children, education and employment status and the different types of parenting styles (p-values are all greater than 0.05). This indicates that parenting styles are not influenced by these factors. However, some studies have shown that education level moderates the relationship between parenting styles and anxiety in young children. These results suggest that while certain background factors of mothers do not influence their parenting styles, the level of education may be an important influence.

## 3 Conclusions

It was concluded that authoritarian parenting style and non-participatory parenting style were positively associated with the physical and mental health of first graders, while authoritative parenting style and permissive parenting style were negatively

associated with the physical and mental health of students.

The results of this study are consistent with parenting style theory, emphasizing that the four parenting styles have a significant impact on child development. Authoritative parents focus on fostering children's autonomy and intimacy, permissive parents emphasize affection and do not easily punish their children, and authoritarian parents restrict children's autonomy and prefer punishment, which is detrimental to children's development. Non-involved parents have little communication with their children, which affects their ability to improve. Parents are key individuals in the development of their children, and their parenting style is crucial to their children's physical and mental health. Schools should cooperate with parents to improve students' physical and mental health. This study was limited to a sample of first-grade mothers, and future research could be extended to more grades and include children's ratings of parenting styles to improve objectivity. Demographic factors may not directly influence parenting choices, but contextual factors such as marital status, personal income, and personal beliefs may be more important. Future research could investigate these factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of parenting styles.

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