***The Influence of Parental Styles on The Social-Emotional Development of Children Aged 3 to 6 years old***

**Abstract**

Parental engagement in children’s lives significantly contributed children’s social-emotional development. A child’s social-emotional development was influenced by their upbringing, personal experiences, and surrounding environment. This study examined the influence of parental styles on the social-emotional development of children at an early age. Utilizing quantitative, correlational research, the study focused on 100 parents as respondents with children aged 3 to 6 years old. The data was collected using survey questionnaires consisting of two parts. It was conducted at Sitio Quiabaton, Barangay Dominga, Calinan, Davao City. The results revealed that authoritative parenting was the most practiced parenting style among parents or guardians. As shown in the findings, there was no significant relationship between the two variables. However, using multiple regression analysis, it showed that parenting styles had a significant influence on the social-emotional development of learners aged 3-6 years old. The analysis revealed that the authoritative parenting style affected the development of learners, cultivating positive self-perception, while authoritative and permissive styles demonstrated a negative influence that limited the emotional growth of the child. Thus, parental active engagement in their children's lives, providing strong emotional support, guidance, and constant interaction, made it more likely for children to develop healthy relationships with others, empathy, emotional regulation, and self-confidence. Therefore, parental participation in the children's daily lives was highly encouraged, as it was of great importance in nurturing their social-emotional skills, making them socially adept individuals.

*Keywords: parental styles, social-emotional development, parental involvement, Children*

**Introduction**

Based on the study of Vaezghasemi et al (2023), children’s social-emotional health relates to their experiences and management of emotions, to learning processes and to the establishment of meaningful relationships. Children encountered various factors that turned out to be the barriers in developing their social-emotional skills. The failure in school, they had been judged and ridiculed, they felt isolation, and they were bullied and rejected. In addition, a study from Malti, T. (2020) children who experienced violence in early life were associated with negative implications for their mental health, both concurrently and in later development.

Globally, in Bandung, Indonesia children lacked interaction and communication because they become introverted and impatient (Suhana, M. 2017). Children withdrew from social life and preferred to be alone, imprisoning themselves in their comfort zone. Building friendships and communicating with others was not their priority. Children became distant from their environment and deprived themselves of a real life experience. As cited from “Impact of digital media on emotional, social and moral development of children (2008), Umberto Galimberti stated that there was a high level of malnutrition among young people in their emotional development. Another problem found in Netherlands, based on the study of Nabi, R & Wolfers, L. (2022), that children exposed to a heavy screen-based media diet could compromised important aspects of child development, as critical social interaction was displaced and emotion perception, understanding and management are diminished.

In the Philippines, Malolos et al (2021) since the beginning of the pandemic, children have been subjected to multiple threats to their mental health, adding insult to injury several concurrent factors in Philippine society exacerbate this. Due to the different catastrophe that the country is facing, a report on the Filipino children nowadays is experiencing stress, anxiety and depression. A study conducted by Molina, C., Vergara, J., & Manalo, M.A. (2025) contemporary students tend to get easily stunned by the daily challenges, such as dealing with social and emotional turmoil of their academic life. This creates conflict on their emotional mindfulness and problems on how to handle relationships with others. Children are currently facing mental health issues and have been aggravated by the environment they are living in.

If this problem remains unaddressed this could be a pathway to develop negative health and social outcomes. As cited from edu-solve.com, this might be the impact of inadequate social-emotional development namely; academic struggles, behavioral issues, poor mental health, difficulty forming relationships, and lower resilience. And these may lead to social isolation. Due to the increasing behavioral problems of children, therefore conducting this study is a great need.

The result of this study benefited the parents and guardians, teachers and future researchers. It promoted a positive environment for the children and provided experiences that helped children from 3 to 6 years old develop a healthy relationship with others.

**Objective**

The objective of this study was to determine the influence of different parental styles on the social-emotional development of children aged 3 to 6 years old. The hypothesis (H₁) stated that parental style significantly influences the social-emotional development of children aged 3 to 6 years old.

This study is based on the Epstein’s (2009) parental-involvement framework. Epstein’s framework encompasses three overlapping spheres: “the family, the school, and the community” ; these spheres influence a child’s growth and development (Harris O. 2029). Parental involvement is defined as those behaviors shown by the parents, both in home and school settings, meant to support the development of their children’s social/emotional skills and facilitate their educational success (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Goleman, 1998). Daily parent-child interactions are crucial in the child’s social-emotional development. As cited in Roy & Garcia (2018) parents need to make a conscious and intentional effort to facilitate the development of academic and social-emotional skills in children. Parents’ support system for their children is of utmost importance in social-emotional development, as it develops the ability to understand and manage emotions, set goals, embrace empathy for others, and make responsible decisions.

Social-Emotional Development

* Healthy Interactions with Others
* Expresses a range of emotions
* Regulates social-emotional responses
* Shows empathy for others
* Shares and Engages with others
* Demonstrates independence
* Display positive self-image
* Cooperates with daily routines and requests
* Shows range of adaptive skills

Parental Styles

* Authoritative
* Authoritarian
* Permissive

*Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study.*

**Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative, correlational research design to examine the relationship between parental styles and the social-emotional development of children aged 3 to 6 years old. This approach to data collection allowed researchers to study phenomena that might have been difficult or unethical to manipulate experimentally. Cohen, Manion, and Marrison (2007) stated that correlation involved the collection of two sets of data, one of which was retrospective, and the relationship between them was determined. Meanwhile, Creswell (2012) stated that in correlation research designs, investigations used the correlation statistical test to describe and measure the degree of association (or relationship) between two or more variables.

The respondents in this study were the parents or guardians of children aged 3 to 6 years old enrolled at Quiabaton Elementary School, located in Quiabaton, Dominga, Calinan, Davao City. A total of 100 parents or guardians were selected for the study through purposive sampling, specifying that the participants were parents or guardians of children within the specified age range of 3 to 6 years old.

Before the study began, the researchers obtained approval from the school principal of Quiabaton Elementary School to distribute questionnaires to the eligible parents or guardians. The parents were asked for their consent to participate, and were assured that their answers would remain private and anonymous. The questionnaires were handed out through the school and sent through google forms and social media accounts. The completed questionnaires were collected one week later, giving parents enough time to answer them.

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part focused on gathering information about parental styles (authoritarian, authoritative, permissive) using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) (32-item version), which was developed by Robinson et al, 2001), This scale identified the specific approach each parent used in raising their child and was available for use without any copyright issue. The second part assessed the children's social-emotional development using the Social-Emotional Assessment/Evaluation Measure (SEAM™) checklist developed by Jane Squires, PhD et al published in 2014 by Brookes Publishing, it included key indicators such as emotional regulation, social interaction, and behavior in response to social cues. Pearson correlation was used to find out the correlation between parenting style and social-emotional development of children aged 3-6 years old. Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 was used for analysis.

During the implementation, the researchers ensured that ethical considerations were strictly observed. These included obtaining informed consent from all participants, maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of responses, protecting participants from harm, and ensuring that participation was entirely voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time after properly explaining the details of the study. Parents were asked to complete the questionnaire at their most convenient time, and submissions were made through social media platforms. However, it was acknowledged that there might be a minimal economic risk, as participants could incur additional mobile data expenses, which was considered as part of ethical review.

**Results**

***Table 1. Descriptive Table***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables and Their Indicators** | **Standard Deviation** | **Mean** | **Verbal Description** |
| **Parenting Styles** | **0.347** | **3.31** | **Moderate** |
| Authoritative Parenting | 0.418 | 3.79 | High |
| Authoritarian Parenting | 0.400 | 3.24 | Moderate |
| Permissive Parenting | 0.730 | 2.91 | Moderate |
| **Social-Emotional Development** | **0.583** | **3.42** | **High** |
| Healthy Interactions with Other | 0.594 | 3.55 | High |
| Express a Range of Emotions | 0.430 | 3.58 | High |
| Regulates Social-Emotional Responses | 0.526 | 3.51 | High |
| Shows Empathy for Others | 0.743 | 3.38 | Moderate |
| Shares and Engages with Others | 0.730 | 3.42 | High |
| Demonstrates Independence | 0.858 | 3.20 | Moderate |
| Display Positive Self-Image | 0.743 | 3.44 | High |
| Cooperates with Daily Routines and Requests | 0.834 | 3.28 | Moderate |
| Show Range of Adaptive Skills | 0.730 | 3.41 | High |

Presented in Table 1 was the descriptive level of parenting styles and the social-emotional development of learners. The parenting style overall mean score was 3.31, which was moderate, implying that the parenting styles practiced by the participants were balanced. The low overall SD score of 0.347 indicated that most parents provided similar responses. The Authoritative Parenting Style had a mean score of 3.79, which was high, indicating that it was the most commonly used style among parents. In contrast, the Authoritarian parenting style had a mean score of 3.24, and the Permissive parenting style had a mean score of 2.91, both of these styles fell within a moderate range, meaning that most parents used these styles sometimes and not extensively.

In terms of social-emotional development, the overall mean score was 3.42, which was high, indicating that, on average, learners displayed a good level of social-emotional skills. The moderate overall SD score of 0.583 meant that learners varied in their social-emotional development. The indicators, healthy interactions, expressing emotions, regulating responses, sharing, and positive self-image scored high, suggesting that learners performed well in these areas. However, empathy, independence, and cooperation with routines had mean scores that were moderate, indicating that these areas of learners were somewhat less developed.

***Table 2. Table of Relationship***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Independent Variable** | **Social Emotional Development (DV)** | | | |
| **r-value** | **p-value** | **Decision on Ho** | **Interpretation** |
| **Parenting Style** | 0.030 | 0.765 | Accept | Not Significant |

As shown in Table 2, the relation of parental styles on the social-emotional development of learners had an r-value of 0.030, indicating a very weak positive relationship. The p-value of 0.765, which was p > 0.05, showed that the independent variable was not statistically significant with the dependent variable, thus, the null hypothesis (Ho) was accepted.

***Table 3. Table of Influence***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Independent Variable** | **Social-Emotional Development (DV)** | | | | |
| **r2-value** | **F-value** | **p-value** | **Decision on Ho** | **Interpretation** |
| **Parenting Style** | 0.222 | 10.437 | <0.001 | Reject | Significant |

Table 3 showed the influence of parental styles on the social-emotional development of learners, with an r² value of 0.222, meaning that 22.2% of the differences in learners' social-emotional development could be explained by their parenting style. The f-value of 10.437 indicated a strong influence of parental style on social-emotional development, while the p-value < 0.001, which was p < 0.05, indicated that the results were statistically significant, thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Discussions**

The results revealed that authoritative parenting was the most commonly practiced parenting style among parents or guardians; researchers referred to it as “inductive discipline.” There was evidence that it helped kids become more empathic, helpful, conscientious, and kind to others (Krevans and Gibbs 1996; Knafo and Plomin 2006). In contrast, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were practiced to a moderate extent, reflecting a preference for balanced parenting approaches. Researchers questioned whether it made sense to think of a parent as consistently authoritative, permissive, or authoritarian. Instead, they suggested that parents might shift their approach depending on the situation (Smetana 2017). Successful regulation of emotion and interactions with others contributed to children's overall emotional competence because it was adaptive given the demands of the context and age-related expectations (Cole et al., 1994). However, these areas fell within a moderate range where further developmental support might have been beneficial. Constructive routines were highlighted as a means to provide children with structure, boundaries, and order in their daily lives, promoting family cohesion as well as the feeling of security and belonging in children (Fiese & Everhart, 2008).

The table showed no significant overall relationship between parenting styles and the social-emotional development of learners aged 3-6 years old; parenting styles were not meaningfully related to learners’ social-emotional development in this age group. The possible reason for the lack of significant overall relationship was that social-emotional development in early childhood was influenced by multiple factors, including socio-economic features, risky behavior and gadget usage, and school learning programs (Rachman et al., 2023), as well as educators' coaching styles and their level of communication at school (Arace et al., 2021). Beyond parenting style alone, young learners aged 3-6 years old were in a developmental stage where their social-emotional skills were still rapidly forming (Blair and Raver, 2015) and may not yet have clearly reflected the long-term impact of parenting styles. Another factor was that the respondents might have used inconsistent styles, making it difficult to detect clear relationships.

Among parenting styles, authoritative parenting showed a significant influence on the social-emotional development of learners aged 3-6 years old. The study of pre-primary learners in Lurambi Sub-county, Kenya revealed that the authoritative parenting style affected the social-emotional development of learners. This was in agreement with Baharudin and Kordi (2020), who found that learners raised by authoritative parenting style tended to exhibit increased autonomy, heightened self-worth, and the ability to employ effective strategies for managing stress, thereby cultivating a positive self-perception. Conversely, permissive parenting demonstrated a significant negative influence and hindered learners' social-emotional development, as permissive or inconsistent parenting and a lack of monitoring were generally related to higher rates of physical aggression in children (Rubin, Stewart, & Chen, 1995). Similarly, research had shown that permissive parenting, which included a lack of consistent parental monitoring, was associated with relational aggression at various developmental ages such as preschool age (e.g., Casas et al., 2006), school age (e.g., Sandstrom, 2007; Vaillancourt et al., 2007), and adolescence (e.g., Stocker, 2000). Meanwhile, authoritarian parenting styles showed no significant influence, as the lack of emotional support limited their effectiveness in fostering deeper social-emotional growth.

Based on the study’s findings, it was recommended that parents and teachers applied the authoritative parenting style at home or the authoritative style in school to promote the positive development of the social-emotional domain for every child. Since the present problem in our community at that time was how to raise children effectively, this study encouraged every parent, guardian, and teacher to be warm, responsive, and to set clear boundaries in raising their children.

**Conclusion**

In this study, the results indicated the importance of parental styles on the social-emotional development of children aged 3 to 6 years old. It was found that parents needed to support and guide their children in a very compassionate and gentle way. Authoritative parenting, which showed warmth and structure while emphasizing support, affection, regulation, and fostering autonomy, was deemed highly important. This approach helped children in emotion regulation, allowing them to develop positive behaviors towards themselves and others. When a child possessed strong positive social-emotional skills, they were better able to resolve conflicts, manage stress, make responsible decisions, and establish positive relationships. Therefore, parents' behavior towards their children was of utmost importance as part of the interaction. The social-emotional development of a child relied heavily on how they were raised, their environment, and their experiences.

**Ethical Approval and Consent:**

The researchers obtained approval from the school principal of Quiabaton Elementary School to distribute questionnaires to the eligible parents or guardians. The parents were asked for their consent to participate, and were assured that their answers would remain private and anonymous.

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence):**

The Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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