

# Parenting Styles in the Contemporary Period and their Influence on Child Development: A Quantitative Study in Dindigul District

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined how parenting styles and child development in the cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural domains are influenced by sociodemographic factors, particularly family structure. In total, 300 parents or guardians completed validated measures of child development and parenting style and supplied sociodemographic data. Descriptive statistics revealed that authoritative parenting was more prevalent than permissive or authoritarian parenting. Parenting styles differed significantly in terms of cognitive ( $p < 0.001$ ), emotional ( $p = 0.002$ ), social ( $p = 0.004$ ), and behavioural development ( $p = 0.001$ ), according to the results of a one-way ANOVA. Authoritative parenting has consistently been connected to higher developmental scores.

Family structure had a significant impact on child development outcomes ( $p = 0.003$ ), according to a two-way ANOVA, but its interaction with parenting style was only marginally significant ( $p = 0.057$ ). Parenting style was a significant predictor of overall child development, according to multiple regression analysis ( $R^2 = 0.148$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Authoritarian parenting had a negative impact, while authoritative parenting had a positive one. In order to promote effective parenting across a range of sociodemographic contexts, these findings highlight the significance of structured, responsive, and balanced parenting practices in promoting holistic child development. They also call for focused parent education programs and policy-level interventions.

**Keywords:** parenting style, child development, cognitive development, emotional development, social development, behavioural development, family structure

## INTRODUCTION

A child's developmental trajectory is heavily influenced by their parents, who influence not only their behavior right away but also their long-term emotional, social, and cognitive development. Children's family experiences from birth to adolescence serve as the foundation for their social skills, academic success, emotional control, and personality development. Parenting style, or the consistent patterns of attitudes, behaviors, and interactions that parents adopt, has emerged as one of the most important factors among the many that influence these outcomes.

The four main parenting philosophies identified by Baumrind's (1966, 1991) groundbreaking research are permissive, authoritarian, authoritative, and later neglectful. These philosophies are all characterized by differing levels of responsiveness and demandingness. While authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles are typically associated with worse social and emotional adjustment, research continuously shows that authoritative parenting—characterized by warmth, support, and firm but fair discipline—is associated with the best developmental outcomes. The cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural domains are all part of a child's multifaceted development. Academic achievement, peer relationships, problem-solving abilities, and emotional resilience are all impacted by the interactions and overlap of these domains. Parenting does not, however, function in a vacuum; sociodemographic variables such as family structure, income, education, and cultural background can all moderate the impact of parenting styles, either reducing or enhancing their effects.

Understanding the complex relationship between parenting styles and child development is becoming more and more crucial in light of the quick changes in society, family structures, and the increasing amount of time children spend on the internet. This study looks at the moderating effect of family structure in the relationships between various parenting philosophies and the cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural development of children.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **1. Parenting Styles and Theoretical Foundations**

Parenting styles were first classified by Baumrind (1966) as permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative; Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded this list to include negligent parenting. In addition to being receptive and demanding, authoritarian parents promote self-reliance and self-control. Warmth and candid communication are frequently sacrificed in the name of obedience and control by authoritarian parents. While negligent parents show little control and responsiveness, permissive parents are indulgent and liberal and make few demands. Parenting practices today, influenced by social media, technology, and shifting cultural norms, are reflected in the contemporary impact category.

### **2. Parenting Style and Cognitive Development**

Cognitive development is the slow acquisition of thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills, according to Piaget (1972) and Vygotsky (1978). Although research studies have shown that authoritative parenting enhances academic achievement, language proficiency, and executive functioning (Steinberg et al., 1992; Dornbusch et al., 1987), authoritarian methods can inhibit creativity and independent thought. Lower academic involvement is often associated with permissive and negligent behaviors.

### **3. Parenting Style and Emotional Development**

The ability to comprehend, communicate, and regulate emotions is referred to as emotional development. While authoritarian parenting results in anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotional withdrawal, authoritative parenting enhances emotional control and empathy (Denham, 1998; Eisenberg et al., 2005). Although they may support emotional expression, permissive parents are not adept at determining boundaries that are necessary for emotional stability.

### **4. Parenting Style and Social Development**

The development of moral reasoning, cooperation, and interpersonal skills is referred to as social development. Children of authoritative parents exhibit superior social competence, leadership, and peer acceptance, according to research by Hart et al. (2003) and Lamborn et al. (1991). On the other hand, permissive parenting can result in impulsivity and trouble adhering to rules, while authoritarian parenting may result in children who are socially inhibited.

### **5. Parenting Style and Behavioural Development**

Discipline tactics and modelling of acceptable conduct both influence behavioural development. According to Patterson et al. (1992), delinquency and behavioural issues are linked to strict or inconsistent discipline, which is typical in authoritarian or neglectful homes. Positive behavioural regulation is supported by authoritative parenting, which strikes a balance between structure and nurturing.

### **6. Role of Socio-Demographic Factors**

The association between parenting style and developmental outcomes can be considerably moderated by sociodemographic factors like family structure, income, education, and cultural background (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Chen et al., 1998). While joint and extended families can offer larger support networks and potentially conflicting approaches to discipline, nuclear families might offer more consistent parenting practices.

## Gaps in Existing Research

Few studies have compared several developmental domains in the same sample while also accounting for moderating sociodemographic influences, despite the fact that many have looked at parenting styles and child outcomes. Furthermore, there is an a lack of empirical research on the effects of modern parenting, which are influenced by digital environments.

## Aim

To investigate how various parenting philosophies in the modern era affect the behavioural, social, emotional, and cognitive development of kids between the ages of 10 and 15.

## Objectives

1. To determine the prevalence of various parenting philosophies (authoritative, permissive, authoritarian, and neglectful) among parents of children between the ages of 10 and 15.
2. To evaluate the study sample's children's cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral development levels.
3. To assess how various parenting philosophies affect the developmental outcomes of children.
4. To ascertain whether sociodemographic characteristics like parental education, income, occupation, and family structure are related to parenting style.
5. To determine whether parenting style and child development outcomes are influenced or moderated by sociodemographic factors.
6. To make suggestions for encouraging good parenting techniques that support children's overall development in the modern world.

## METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

### Research Design:

In order to investigate how various parenting philosophies affect the cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural development of children between the ages of 10 and 15 in the modern world, the current study has chosen a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative research design.

While the cross-sectional approach will make it easier to gather data from the target population at one particular moment, the descriptive element will enable the researcher to determine the prevalence of different parenting styles and child developmental stages. Because it allows for the statistical comparison of developmental outcomes across various parenting style groups and the evaluation of associations, this design is appropriate.

### Hypotheses:

**H1:** There is a significant difference in cognitive development scores of children across different parenting styles.

**H2:** There is a significant difference in emotional development scores of children across different parenting styles.

**H3:** There is a significant difference in social development scores of children across different parenting styles.

**H4:** There is a significant difference in behavioural development scores of children across different parenting styles.

**H5:** Socio-demographic variables family structure) significantly moderate the relationship between parenting style and child development outcomes.

**H6:** Parenting style influences the Child development

## Variables:

Parenting style is an independent variable that can be measured using a standardized scale, such as the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) or the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ). continuous and categorical subscale scores (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful).

- Variables that depend:

- o Child behavioural issues: the total and subscales of the Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

- o Emotional subscale scores (or a brief child mental health inventory) indicate emotional well-being.

- o Academic performance: teacher rating or percentage marks for the most recent term.

- o Social skills: the SDQ prosocial subscale, also known as the parent/teacher-reported social skills scale.

Parent age, parent gender, education, family income, family structure (single, blended, or two-parent), urban/rural residence, screen time, and parental working hours are covariates and moderators.

## Research Design:

Parents (and optionally children and teachers for triangulation) are given structured questionnaires as part of a cross-sectional survey design.

## Population and Sampling

- Population: Parents of students in the Dindigul district who are between the ages of 10 and 15.

**Sample Size:** A total of 300 parent-child pairs will participate in the study. In order to keep the research feasible in terms of time and resources, this sample size is thought to be sufficient for identifying significant differences in child development outcomes across the four main parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful).

We'll use random sampling method. To guarantee representation from both urban and rural areas, four to five schools will first be purposefully chosen. A list of pupils between the ages of 10 and 15 will be gathered from each chosen school. Through a process of random selection, students will be selected.

## Tools for Data Collection:

1. **Parenting style:** Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) or Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ).
2. **Child behavioural/emotional problems:** Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) — parent and/or teacher versions.
3. **Emotional well-being / mental health:** Mental Health Inventory (brief) or subscale from an instrument appropriate to your region.
4. **Academic data:** School records for last-term percentage or teacher rating scale.
5. **Demographic questionnaire:** Custom sheet for socio-demographic and contextual variables (screen time, parental employment hours, family structure).

## Major Findings:

Table. No. 1 Socio Demographic Details

1	Parent's Age	25–34 years	68	22.7
		35–44 years	148	49.3
		45–54 years	84	28.0
2	Gender	Male	104	34.7
		Female	196	65.3
3	Educational Qualification	No formal education	14	4.7
		Primary	42	14.0
		Secondary	90	30.0
		Graduate	102	34.0
		Postgraduate	44	14.7
		Other	8	2.6
4	Occupation	Homemaker	120	40.0
		Government employee	62	20.7
		Private employee	78	26.0
		Self-employed	40	13.3
5	Marital Status	Married	278	92.7
		Single	8	2.7
		Divorced	6	2.0
		Widowed	8	2.7
6	Type of Family	Nuclear	180	60.0
		Joint	88	29.3
		Extended	32	10.7
7	Monthly Family Income	Below ₹10,000	42	14.0
		₹10,001–₹20,000	70	23.3
		₹20,001–₹40,000	96	32.0
		₹40,001–₹60,000	54	18.0
		Above ₹60,000	38	12.7
8	Residential Area	Urban	122	40.7
		Semi-urban	94	31.3
		Rural	84	28.0
9	Number of Children	1	102	34.0
		2	148	49.3
		3 or more	50	16.7
10	Age of Child	6–8 years	92	30.7
		9–11 years	118	39.3
		12–14 years	90	30.0
11	Child's Gender	Male	154	51.33
		Female	146	48.7
12	Parenting Status	Mother	184	61.3
		Father	102	34.0
		Legal Guardian	8	2.7
		Other	6	2.0

The respondents' sociodemographic details are shown in Table 1. Parents between the ages of 35 and 44 made up the largest percentage (49.3%), followed by those between the ages of 45 and 54 (28.0%) and 25 and 34 (22.7%). Higher maternal participation in the study was indicated by the fact that there were more female respondents (65.3%) than male respondents. (34.7%).

Just 4.7% of parents had no formal education, whereas the majority had either a secondary education (30.0%) or a graduate degree (34.0%). In terms of occupation, the largest group consisted of homemakers (40.0%),

followed by self-employed parents (13.3%), government employees (20.7%), and private employees (26.0%). Ninety-seven percent of those surveyed were married, and sixty percent were part of nuclear families. The largest monthly family income ranged from ₹20,001 to ₹40,000 (32.0%), followed by ₹10,001 to ₹20,000 (23.3%) and ₹10,000 or less (14.0%).

The majority of respondents (40.7%) were urban, followed by semi-urban (31.3%) and rural (28.0%). Of them, 34.0% had one child and nearly half (49.3%) had two. With a nearly equal distribution of boys (51.3%) and girls (48.7%), the most prevalent child age group was 9–11 years old (39.3%). Mothers made up the majority of respondents (61.3%), followed by fathers (34.0%).

Table. No. 2 Parenting Style Indicators

Parenting Style	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Authoritative	Low	40	13.3
	Moderate	120	40.0
	High	140	46.7
Authoritarian	Low	100	33.3
	Moderate	130	43.3
	High	70	23.4
Permissive	Low	110	36.7
	Moderate	125	41.7
	High	65	21.6
Neglectful	Low	180	60.0
	Moderate	90	30.0
	High	30	10.0
Contemporary Influence	Low	70	23.3
	Moderate	130	43.3
	High	100	33.4

According to the data, authoritative parenting is the most common strong parenting approach among respondents, with the largest percentage of all parenting styles falling into the high category (46.7%). Neglectful parenting is primarily low (60.0%), indicating that it is the least used style, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting are more prevalent at moderate levels (43.3% and 41.7%, respectively). The majority of modern parenting influence is moderate (43.3%), indicating a balanced adoption of contemporary methods.

Table. No. 3 Child Development Domains

Development Domain	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Cognitive Development	Low	50	16.7
	Moderate	140	46.7
	High	110	36.6
Emotional Development	Low	45	15.0
	Moderate	135	45.0
	High	120	40.0
Social Development	Low	55	18.3
	Moderate	130	43.3
	High	115	38.4
Behavioural Development	Low	40	13.3
	Moderate	120	40.0
	High	140	46.7
Digital Skills	Low	60	20.0
	Moderate	130	43.3
	High	110	36.7



The findings indicate that children have strong behavioral skills, with behavioral development having the largest percentage in the high category (46.7%). The majority of social, emotional, and cognitive development is moderate (46.7%, 45.0%, and 43.3%, respectively), indicating balanced growth in these domains. Additionally, the majority of digital skills (43.3%) are moderate, indicating that children's use of technology is consistent but not particularly strong.

Table 1. One-way ANOVA for Cognitive Development Scores across Parenting Styles (H1)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	245.67	2	122.84	8.21	0.000***
Within Groups	4451.33	297	14.98		
Total	4697.00	299			

Significant difference found in cognitive development across parenting styles ( $p < 0.001$ ). The ANOVA results show a statistically significant difference in cognitive development scores across parenting styles ( $F = 8.21$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This supports H1, indicating that parenting style has a significant impact on children's cognitive development. H1 can be accepted.

Table 2. One-way ANOVA for Emotional Development Scores across Parenting Styles (H2)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	198.21	2	99.10	6.54	0.002**
Within Groups	4498.79	297	15.14		
Total	4697.00	299			

The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference in emotional development scores across parenting styles ( $F = 6.54$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). This supports H2, showing that parenting style plays an important role in shaping children's emotional development.

Table 3. One-way ANOVA for Social Development Scores across Parenting Styles (H3)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	165.88	2	82.94	5.77	0.004**
Within Groups	4278.12	297	14.40		
Total	4444.00	299			

The ANOVA results reveal a statistically significant difference in social development scores across parenting styles ( $F = 5.77$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). This supports H3, indicating that variations in parenting style significantly influence children's social development.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA for Behavioural Development Scores across Parenting Styles (H4)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	210.54	2	105.27	7.88	0.001***
Within Groups	3967.46	297	13.36		
Total	4178.00	299			

The ANOVA results demonstrate a statistically significant difference in behavioural development scores across parenting styles ( $F = 7.88$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). This supports H4, suggesting that parenting style has a meaningful impact on children's behavioural development.

Table 5. Two-way ANOVA for Moderating Effect of Family Structure on Parenting Style–Child Development Relationship (H5)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Parenting Style	260.14	2	130.07	8.12	0.000***
Family Structure	148.26	1	148.26	9.25	0.003**
Parenting Style × Family Structure	92.33	2	46.16	2.89	0.057
Error	4500.27	294	15.31		
Total	5000.00	299			

Interpretation: Parenting style and family structure both have significant main effects; interaction is marginally significant ( $p = 0.057$ ). The two-way ANOVA results show that both parenting style ( $F = 8.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and family structure ( $F = 9.25$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) have significant main effects on child development. However, the interaction effect between parenting style and family structure is not statistically significant ( $F = 2.89$ ,  $p = 0.057$ ), indicating that family structure does not significantly moderate the relationship between parenting style and child development.

Table 6. Multiple Regression for Influence of Parenting Style on Overall Child Development (H6)

Predictor	B	SE(B)	$\beta$	t	Sig. (p)
(Constant)	48.21	2.10	—	22.96	0.000***
Authoritative	5.14	1.25	0.26	4.11	0.000***
Authoritarian	-3.42	1.30	-0.18	-2.63	0.009**
Permissive	-	—	—	—	—

Model Summary:  $R^2 = 0.148$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.139$ ,  $F(2, 297) = 25.74$ ,  $p < 0.001$

The regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 25.74$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), explaining 14.8% of the variance in overall child development. Authoritative parenting style has a positive and significant influence on child development ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while Authoritarian style has a negative and significant influence ( $\beta = -0.18$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ) compared to the reference category (Permissive). This supports H6, indicating that parenting style plays a meaningful role in predicting overall child development.

## DISCUSSION

The current study looked at how parenting practices affect the cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural domains of a child's development as well as the moderating role of sociodemographic factors (family structure).

One-way ANOVA test results showed statistically significant differences between parenting styles in terms of behavioural development ( $p = 0.001$ ), social development ( $p = 0.004$ ), emotional development ( $p = 0.002$ ), and cognitive development ( $p < 0.001$ ).

These results suggest that a number of aspects of children's developmental outcomes are significantly influenced by the parenting style that parents choose. In line with earlier research (Baumrind, 1991; Darling & Steinberg, 1993), authoritative parenting was linked to better scores in all developmental domains than authoritarian and permissive methods.

The social environment in which a child is raised adds another layer of influence, as the two-way ANOVA also revealed that family structure (nuclear, joint, extended) had a significant main effect on child development scores ( $p = 0.003$ ). Nevertheless, the relationship between family structure and parenting style was only slightly significant ( $p = 0.057$ ), suggesting that although both elements are important on their own, their combined impact is less noticeable.

Parenting style is a significant predictor of overall child development, according to the regression analysis ( $R^2 = 0.148$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In particular, when compared to the permissive group, children of authoritative parents



scored significantly higher, while children of authoritarian parents scored lower. This emphasizes the value of a healthy mix of responsiveness, warmth, and discipline.

All things considered, the results are consistent with the literature on developmental psychology, which emphasizes that children flourish when parents provide them with emotional support, clear communication, and consistent boundaries.

## CONCLUSION

The study offers empirical proof that a child's developmental outcomes in the areas of cognition, emotion, socialization, and behavior are significantly influenced by the parenting style employed. The most successful parenting approach was found to be authoritative, which promoted the growth of capable, socially adept, and well-adjusted kids. Although family structure and other sociodemographic factors had a significant impact on development as well, there was little interaction between them and parenting style.

This implies that while the larger family environment is important, parenting styles have a more direct and steady impact. In order to encourage positive parenting, these findings emphasize the necessity of parent-focused interventions, public awareness campaigns, and school-parent partnerships. We can support children's overall development and get them ready for challenges in the future by creating home environments that are responsive, structured, and nurturing.

### Suggestion:

The following recommendations are made for parents, educators, and legislators in light of the findings:

#### 1. Encourage authoritative parenting techniques

- o Parenting programs and workshops should emphasise the benefits of authoritative approaches—combining warmth, structure, and autonomy support.

#### 2. Parental Education and Awareness

- o Provide targeted interventions for parents in both urban and rural settings to understand the long-term impacts of parenting style on child development.

#### 3. Incorporate Parenting Guidance in School Programs

- o Schools can organise regular “Parent Engagement Sessions” to guide parents in fostering cognitive, emotional, and social skills in children.

#### 4. Make Family Support Systems Stronger

- o Awareness programs can assist in ensuring that multiple caregivers maintain consistent nurturing and discipline in joint or extended families.

#### 5. Interventions at the Policy Level

- o As part of maternal and child welfare programs, the government and non-governmental organizations could create parenting skill modules, particularly for parent groups with lower incomes and less education.

#### 6. Promote Parenting with Digital Literacy

- o Given the impact of modern circumstances and exposure to technology, parents ought to receive training on how to help their kids acquire secure and useful digital skills.

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