

# Analyzing the Extent of Authoritarian Parenting on Academic Achievement: Ethical Lens

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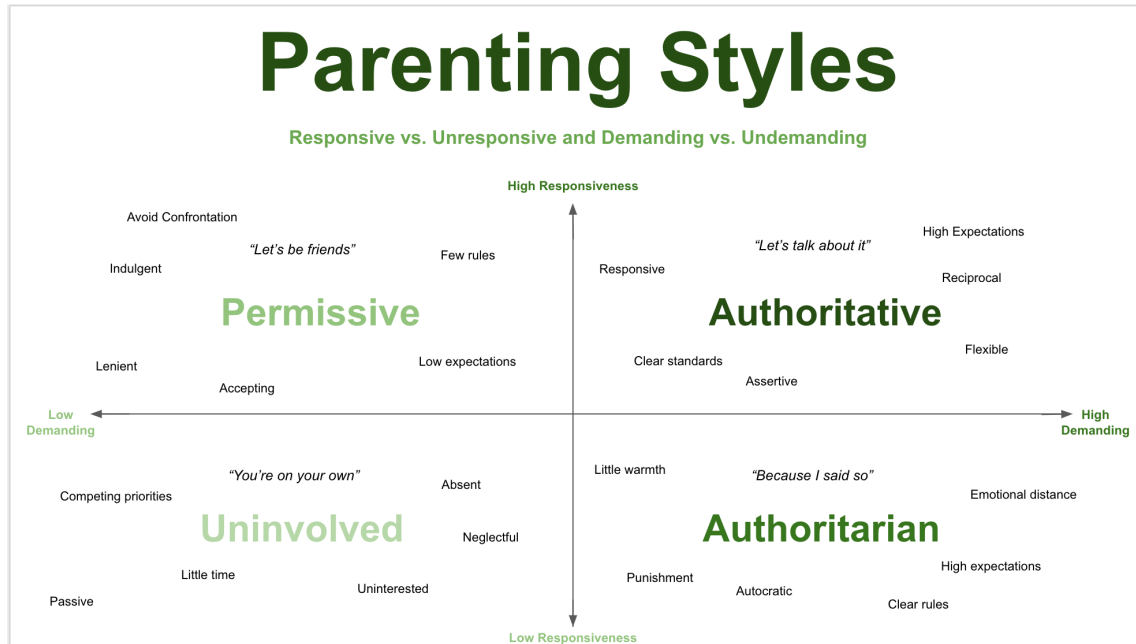
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## ABSTRACT

Parenting Styles loosely define psychological constructs for describing common tactics and methodologies for child-rearing; however, not all are equal. The parenting style a child is raised with can have significant, and sometimes detrimental effects, on all aspects of the child's life, such as academic success. The majority of parenting strategies fall into four categories: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved, with the former two displaying firmness and demandingness and the latter two displaying a lack of control or strictness. Among Authoritarian and Authoritative parenting, there is a crucial difference between warmth and responsiveness displayed with the child (e.g. an Authoritarian parent is much less likely to openly communicate or have emotional interactions with their child as opposed to an Authoritative parent). This difference of emotional warmth between authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles creates a prominent disparity between the two styles. The discrepancies posed by these parenting styles then have significant implications on the academic success and wellbeing of children.

## **Introduction**

According to Khalida Rauf and Junaid Ahmed from the Department of Psychology Federal Urdu University for Arts, Science & Technology, Authoritarian Parenting is defined as displaying less warmth, harsh disciplinary behaviors, and lack of uniformity (see fig. 1). This can greatly influence a child's life in various ways: academic achievement, behavior problems, motivation, and confidence (Rauf & Ahmed 62). Having such a profound effect on a child, the debate regarding whether this particular parenting style positively or negatively affects a child academically is one of significance. In terms of ethics, different cultures and individual families perceive this parenting style in various ways, some believing it is ethically unjust and others believing it is perfectly acceptable. It is important to establish the effectiveness of this parenting style from more than just an analytical perspective to see the specific effects it has on children. The primary concern is that the style uses abusive practices.

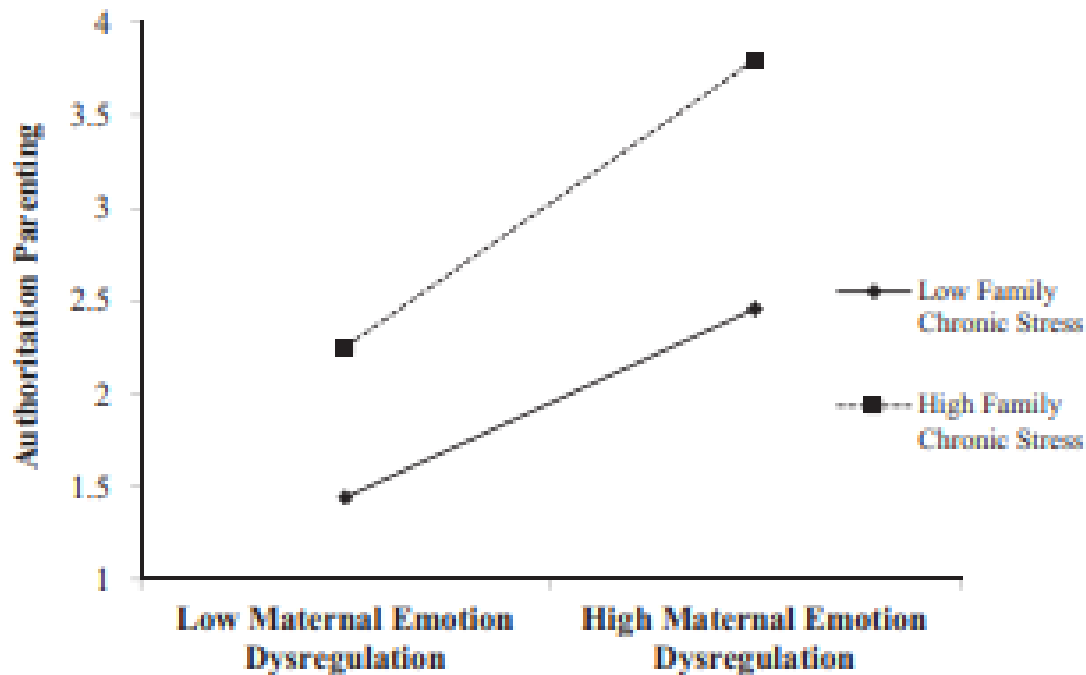


**Figure 1.** The two-dimensional compass of differing parenting styles and their associated values or examples.

Source: Manscill, Dallon. "Parenting Styles." Parenting At Home Family Blog, Parenting At Home, 25 Mar. 2019, <https://i2.wp.com/www.parentingathome.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Parenting-Styles.png?w=1978&ssl=1>. Accessed 30 Nov. 2021.

## The Ethics and Consequences of Authoritarian Parenting

It is important to first establish the topic of ethics in the context of parenting style. To be considered ethical, the parenting style must address the basic needs of a child. Amy Mullen, a writer for the Psychology Press peer-reviewed journal, describes capabilities required to address basic needs as being emotional responsiveness, the ability to connect to others, imagination, and some measure of control over one's environment (Mullen 135). Any method of parenting that does not meet these requirements is deemed as denying basic needs and considered abusive and unethical. Mullen also asserts that abuse can hinder the emotional development of the students (Mullen 140). Zoey Shaw and Lisa Star, writers of the peer-reviewed Journal of Child and Family Studies, explore further into this connection, claiming that methods associated with authoritarian parenting cause dramatic reactions to stress and lowered ability to focus due to an overall decrease in emotional stability (see fig. 2) (Shaw & Star 3509).



**Figure 2.** The results of the study by Shaw & Starr found that greater Authoritarian Parenting was associated with higher family chronic stress and high maternal emotion dysregulation was associated with greater authoritarian parenting.

Source: Shaw, Zoey. Starr Lisa. "Intergenerational Transmission of Emotion Dysregulation: The Role of Authoritarian Parenting Style and Family Chronic Stress." *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, vol. 28 no. 12, Springer Nature, 2019, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=139545897&site=ehost-live>, EBSCO. Accessed 26 Sep. 2021.

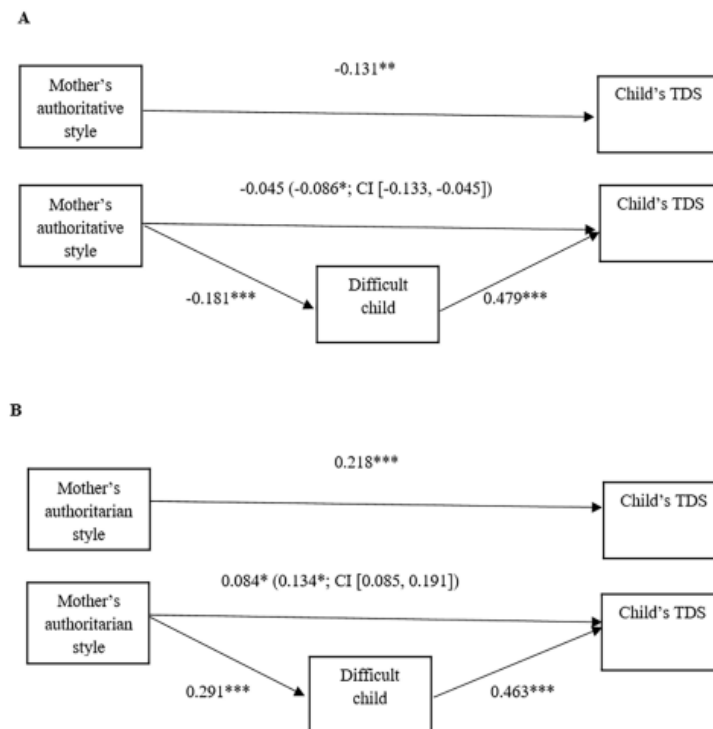
These abilities are integral to the academic success of a student, so not having them will hinder the students' academic success. Since the authoritarian parenting style does not meet certain standards of basic needs - specifically emotional responsiveness and giving children control over their environments - it can be deemed abusive and, therefore, contribute to lowered academic success because of the loss of emotional regulation that comes with abuse.

### Effects of Firmness on Academic Success

Zahra Zahedani, a researcher from the Shiraz School of Medical Sciences, claims that a positive correlation exists between the firmness of a parent and the child's GPA reported on the transcript (Zahedani, Rezaee, Yazdani, Bagheri, Nabeiei 1). The earlier definition of authoritarian parenting aligns with this topic of firmness. Therefore, the perspective observed from simply comparing firmness to academic success is that authoritarian parenting has a positive impact on a child's grades.

## Implications of Authoritative vs Authoritarian Parenting

The prior assertion, however, does not take into account the specifics of the interactions between the parents and children, abandoning any ethical considerations in treatment. Elisa Delvecchio and Alessandro Germani -- researchers from the Department of Philosophy, Social Sciences and Education at the University of Perugia in Perugia Italy -- compare authoritarian parenting to a similar parenting style: authoritative. Authoritative parents tend to show high acceptance and behavioral control, high responsiveness, and warmth to their children, and are affectionate, encouraging, and controlling in a way that promotes child autonomy. They clearly set rules and use reasoning to enforce them by encouraging open communication” (Delvecchio & Germani 515). Like the authoritarian style, authoritative parenting is also firm. The key difference is that unlike the authoritarian, authoritative parenting style provides basic rights for children. It retains firmness while giving the child some level of control over their environment due to its open communication and autonomy between parent and child. Because it also includes emotional responsiveness, authoritarian parenting essentially addresses the ethical flaws of the authoritative version. The researchers presented a Parenting Styles & Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) to gauge the parenting style of the sample along with a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to gauge the psychological impacts (namely emotional control and stress) that these parents were exerting on their children. The results of the study display “The increase in authoritative style significantly predicted a decrease in [negative psychological impacts] (Delvicchio & Germani)” and “There was a positive correlation between authoritarian style and [negative psychological impacts]” (see fig. 3) (Delvicchio & Germani).



**Figure 3.** Authoritative style has a negative correlation to Child TDS (Part A) and Authoritative style has a positive correlation to Child TDS (Part B). Source: Delvecchio, Elisa. Germani, Alessandro. Raspa, Veronica. Lis, Adriana. Mazzeschi, Claudia. “Parenting Styles and Child’s Well-Being: The Mediating Role of the Perceived Parental Stress.” Europe’s Journal of Psychology, vol. 16 no. 3, Europe’s Journal of Psychology, 2020, <https://search.ebsco-host.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=145619522&site=ehost-live>, EBSCO. Accessed 27 Sep. 2021.

Both parenting styles are characterized as firm but each had significantly different results. Since the major difference between authoritative and authoritarian parenting is the abusive characteristics authoritarian parenting exhibits, this study supports the perspective that those abusive characteristics cause negative psychological impacts. These specific impacts are linked to decreased academic performance by Shaw & Star as seen above. Therefore, the authoritarian parenting style contributes to lowered academic achievement because of its abusive nature and lack of ethical concern.

## Conclusion

Through its abusive and unethical characteristics, the authoritarian parenting style causes a significant negative impact on the academic achievements of children. Amy Mullens explains a solution to the abuse and negative impacts on children brought by unethical parenting styles such as the authoritarian: Parenting Licenses. These are provisional licenses that would be granted to prospective parents who lack a high school education or are under 18 only if they have taken a parenting education course, passed a drug test, and have a stable residence and source of income (Mullen 140). By having these qualities verified, parents can be more educated about ethical parenting and use a style for their children that is authoritative rather than authoritarian. This will then positively impact the student's academics due to a combination of firmness and ethical/non-abusive practices.

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