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Parenting Styles in Relation to Socioeconomic Status, Education, and Generation

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## Parenting Styles in Relation to Socioeconomic Status, Education, and Generation 2

Parents often question whether or not they are raising their children in the best way possible and how to most effectively ensure their children turn out to have all of the tools to be successful in life. Research has illustrated the several different types of parenting such as authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful. Authoritarian parenting puts more pressure on the child and presents the parents in a way that does not allow compromise, showing that their way is the only way possible. Consequently, authoritative parenting focuses on developing a relationship with the child and one that is high in communication between both parties. Permissive parenting gives children free range and the parents give the child little guidance. Lastly, neglectful relationships left the parent completely uninvolved from the child. These examples are only a few methods to the complex process that is parenting. Overall, the authoritative parenting style was found to be the most effective out of the presented methods after examining household socioeconomic status and a child's success in their education.

### **Types of Parenting and its Effects on a Child's Education**

Children with authoritative parenting tended to perform better within their education for several reasons. Authoritative parents on average are more involved in their children's lives and kept them focused on their education (Majumder). They are more likely to keep the kids consistent with their schoolwork and encourage them to achieve a high performance. In addition, these children are more likely to obtain this status because their parents are willing to guide them through the process of attaining these goals. Furthermore, those with involved parents had a 5.5% less likelihood of being high school dropouts and on average 1.1 years more of school than children who

didn't (Majumder). These parents also maintained a balance between being responsive and demanding. They held their children to a high level of demand, but were also very open to communication if their children were having trouble hitting these goals (Majumder). If the balance were unequal, the children would not have been as receptive. Authoritative parents that were able to maintain both of these qualities had kids develop a better work ethic and therefore reflected on their high academic status. This study also helped to show how these types of parents would have more of an immediate impact on a child's education rather than one that took place over time.

The authoritative style also helped children to feel more equipped while living on their own, making positive life strategies, and make their own decisions (Sartaj). For example, in one study 200 college students were looked at from the ages of 16 to 29 years old (Sartaj). They were given a questionnaire to fill out and the results illustrated that children of authoritative parents had better home, health, and emotional adjustments (Sartaj). Moreover, it was found that authoritative styles of parenting showed acceptable social skills and a lower number of adjustment problems to the school environment (Dong). These children often felt more comfortable within their school surroundings and peers. Similarly, this could be due to the level of comfort the children feel while at home. In turn, the decisions these children make are often similar to those that their parents would like or approve of showing how the deep relationship developed between parent and child greatly impact one another.

Authoritarian parents tended to have very high expectations of their children but provide little guidance on how their children can achieve these elevated standards. One example of this could be parents putting tremendous pressure on their child to achieve

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straight A's. However, they could neglect the fact their child could be struggling in a subject and not get them the extra help one may need to achieve the high standard. In another study, the children had to rate their economic class and social behavior in a peer assessment measure (Dong). It was found that authoritarian parenting was positively associated with aggression and negative social behavior (Dong). Their parents ridiculing them after not meeting their expectations could cause this negative social behavior and make he/she believe they may not be good enough. Consequently, authoritarian parents had negative relationships with all of these aspects due to the lack of support they provide their children with (Sartaj). The authoritarian style of parenting focused on the parent giving only their rules and no reasoning behind them.

When comparing both authoritative and authoritarian styles of parenting, it is essential to understand their main components. The authoritarian style is not as child centered as compared to the authoritative style, instead focusing more on what they want their child to do and not what the child would do. When comparing the two, because of the child centered relationship and open communication, children with authoritative parents tended to perform better in school because they were more likely to get the extra help and guidance they may need. Whereas, authoritarian parents had a higher level of demand, but were little help in giving their child the components to achieve these goals.

Furthermore, children with permissive parents tended to be very uninvolved in the entire process of their child's education. For example, a more permissive approach to parenting results from parents having a low level of demand (Miller). It would not be unusual for these parents to be completely "hands off" and allow their child to figure out their education on their own. They display a distant relationship with their children and

rules are not as enforced. These children tended to have a poorer performance in school when their grades were examined (Majumder). However, when comparing both permissive and neglectful parents, children parented by permissive parents had better educational outcomes than children led by uninvolved parents (Majumder). This would be due to the fact that even though given very little attention, permissive parents would still give minor support as opposed to none at all for their children.

When examining neglectful parenting towards education, they showed no attention to their children at all, resulting in them having the poorest performance in education. The parents would not give their children any guidance; therefore the children may have felt as though they didn't have to do any of the work in school. More so, they had no one looking out for their best interests or making sure they felt the need to get high grades in order to be successful.

### **Socioeconomic Status and Resulting Behavior**

Those parents living in low-income areas with their children did not use the best and most effective way of parenting when it came to raising their children. As a result, these low-income areas could greatly benefit from extra guidance when raising their children. One study offered a solution to this problem. It showed that low-income areas could greatly benefit by giving parents the opportunity to learn about different ways of parenting. One solution was implementing parenting programs that helped to improve parenting consistency, and positivity. These in turn helped children interaction and emotional communication skills and control (Bøe). Furthermore, another study demonstrated that populations that were less wealthy and educated saw more obedience.

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In addition, those with low socioeconomic status saw that the way they parent their children does have an impact on their behavior (Bøe). One study examined this while children filled out a questionnaire that required them to put down their strengths and difficulties, the parents were left to complete a form that had them evaluate their own emotional level, economic level, and education level (Bøe). As a result, the study suggested that parenting practices did influence the mental health of the children (Bøe).

Furthermore, those with high socioeconomic status saw an increase in a child's independence. One study looked at how 90 nations and 227, 431 participant's socioeconomic status shaped parenting and then therefore influenced child socialization. Those nations that had more wealth and educated populations saw an increase in independent children (Bøe). Socioeconomic level was also able to predict child involvement because higher classes were more likely to support independence and not obedience (Heejung). These high classes could indicate the authoritative type of parenting because they are more able to provide the opportunities one would need to achieve their parent's high standard of life. These higher classes could also afford to give their children the tools they may need to achieve being independent.

Moreover, it was critical to understand the different impacts that internal and external problems could have on a family. External problems could be considered more environmental based whereas internal had to do with the family dynamic itself. A model was developed that demonstrated how external problems through parental emotional well-being was associated with the parenting style they chose to use. For example, if a parent was unhappy with their economic status they may be more willing to take that anger out on the family. When examining the internal problems it was usually related to

the family's economy. Increased amounts of stress could be seen because of possible issues with money. Those with low socioeconomic households saw that the results suggested that parenting practices did influence the mental health of the children.

### **Generational Differences and Family Structure Change**

Over the years, the authoritarian parenting style has changed mostly between the mother and father dynamic. The data to support this came from three different time periods 1958, 1981, and 2011 and primarily focused on the country Sweden (Trifan). In this study, it focused on how authoritarian parenting practices and roles have changed in the past 50 years (Trifan). There was a shift in thinking that the mother was the caregiver and the father as the "decision maker" (Trifan). As a result, mothers and fathers began to take more of an equal role in parenting. The father would have most likely taken a more authoritative role towards his family in asserting that his way was the only way whereas the mother would have been more authoritative and listening to the children.

Authoritarian parenting was the first parenting style to be studied by scholars. It is most likely that these changes have occurred because of the way society has been developing. Even within the families structure there was a hierarchical organization but now the shift is more towards being equal. The use of intergenerational transmission of parenting and in a study focusing on Australian parents, the current generation was asked to rank and evaluate themselves into being less authoritarian (Trifan). In all, the findings suggested that parenting styles could be used as strong predictors of aggression (Moudgil).

Today, new social parenting trends are also emerging, and one of the most popular is the stay at home dad (Williams). In an article by the *New York Times* it



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examined how family structure has changed over the past several years. James Griffioen and his wife were forced to take a critical look at how they were going to raise their family. Both lawyers decided against enrolling in a full time day care and made the decision for James to stay home (Williams). With more focus on society accepting stay at home dads, what once was a small margin in society is now becoming a new trend. According to a study done in 2011, only 16% of American households contained the “bread winner husband” without a mom working at all, indicating increases in households that have both parents working or a mother working full time (Williams). According to the article men who have left the workforce to become full time stay at home fathers was around 176,000, according to a recent United States census data (Williams). In addition to this, approximately 626,000 fathers work part time but remain the primary caregivers to their children under 15 (Williams). This shift in parenting trends signifies that society is accepting of different approaches as opposed to only traditional ones.

“Daddy and Me” groups are also becoming a new force on playgrounds everywhere (allows other dad and child socialization) (Williams). Lance Somerfeld is the founder of NYC Dads Group, a support network that connects fathers all around the city and provides events for fathers to attend with their children (Williams). This article argues that anyone can be the breadwinner and support one’s family. NYC dads group “Daddy and Me” is not the first of its kind and brings stay at home dads together to allow socialization with each other and their children. Overall, this article shows a change in family structure and how the norms in parenting have changed for this current generation.

Today, people can also see a more helicopter parents with the millennial generation. Helicopter parents do not allow their children to become independent on their own (Morrison). There is a constant parent/ child connection but one so intense that it does not give the child the opportunity to do things for themselves. However, it often leaves children with these types of parents feeling lost because they were not taught how to take care of themselves. In an article written in the *Los Angeles Times*, the column raised very interesting points on the concept of helicopter parenting and how it has successfully ruined the millennial generation (Morrison). For example, a helicopter parent may not physically be there but now via smart phone it is worse than ever because of the constant connection between parent and child. In most cases it was common to see the mother take on the helicopter parent role. And even though it was overly child centered, parents more so wanted to do things in their way. Though some may argue that this is beneficial other see that it does not provide the opportunity to give children the independence they need in order to grow. In addition, it made a very good point about millennial's after high school. As some millennial's choose to join the army it seems as though those that decide to go to a four-year college are being given more coddling than those risking their lives for their country (Morrison). Overall, this article puts into perspective how this particular type of parenting has not given children enough independence to grow on their own.

In conclusion, after examining household socioeconomic status and a child's success in their education, the authoritative parenting style was found to be the most effective. It provides a relationship that both the children and parents can work on achieving together. When the socioeconomic status of each household was looked at,

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parent involvement tended to be higher in those with a higher social class, possibly due to the time and focus they were able to give their children because they did not have to work all hours of the day. Lastly, it was interesting to see the new generational trends. No longer are stay at home fathers looked at in a way that questions why they are not in the office but as an equal when taking care of their family. Support and social groups such as “Daddy and Me” is now a common thing to see ruling the public playgrounds that allow for both socialize for fathers and children. Overall the findings showed that, the best method found for parenting was the authoritative style, high socioeconomic status provides the ability for a parent to have high involvement in a child’s life, and new parenting trends are getting rid of the societal norms.

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