

Parenting Styles and Their Association with Bullying Behavior Among Primary School Children: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Bullying in primary school remains a significant concern due to its long-term psychological and social consequences. Parenting style is recognized as one of the foundational factors shaping children's behavioral responses and social interactions. This narrative review synthesizes current literature that examines the relationship between parenting practices and bullying involvement among children aged 6–12 years. Relevant studies were selected based on predefined eligibility criteria and assessed for conceptual alignment with the review objectives. The literature consistently indicates that authoritarian and permissive parenting are associated with a higher likelihood of bullying perpetration or victimization, whereas democratic parenting tends to promote healthier emotional regulation and prosocial behavior. Overall, the existing evidence suggests that parenting style plays an important role in the emergence of bullying dynamics, highlighting the need for strengthened parental guidance and collaborative school-family interventions to reduce bullying in early school settings.

Keywords: parenting style; bullying; primary school children; child behavior

INTRODUCTION

Bullying in primary school remains a significant issue due to its impact on children's emotional and social development. Early school-age years represent a period in which behavioral patterns and peer dynamics begin to solidify, making children particularly sensitive to influences within their immediate environment. Among these influences, the family setting plays a central role in shaping how children manage emotions and interact with others.

Parenting style is recognized as a key determinant of children's behavioral outcomes. Baumrind's foundational classification highlights how variations in parental control and warmth produce distinct developmental patterns [1]. Subsequent research has demonstrated that authoritarian practices may encourage aggressive responses in social situations [2], while permissive parenting can contribute to difficulties in establishing

boundaries and resisting peer pressure [3]. Conversely, democratic or authoritative parenting is consistently associated with better emotional regulation and prosocial behavior among school-aged children [4,5].

Given the lasting consequences associated with bullying and the prominent influence of parental interaction on child behavior, a clear synthesis of current evidence is needed. This review summarizes contemporary findings on how different parenting styles relate to bullying involvement among primary school children, with attention to behavioral mechanisms identified across recent empirical studies [6,7].

METHODS

This study employed a narrative literature review approach to examine the association between parenting styles and bullying involvement among primary school children. The review was carried out

through a structured process consisting of identifying relevant publications, applying predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and evaluating the methodological adequacy of each source. Findings from the selected literature were compared, categorized, and synthesized to construct an integrated understanding of how different parenting patterns may influence the emergence of bullying behaviors.

RESULT

Research consistently demonstrates that parenting styles significantly influence children's social behavior, particularly their involvement in bullying. The way parents interact with their children, whether through strict control, emotional warmth, or a balanced approach, shapes how children learn to handle conflicts and interact with peers. Studies show that authoritarian and permissive parenting are linked to higher rates of bullying behavior, while democratic parenting tends to mitigate these behaviors by promoting healthier emotional regulation and social interactions. These findings underline the importance of understanding the impact of parenting on bullying, especially in primary school children, where such behaviors often first emerge [1,2,5].

PARENTING STYLE AND BULLYING

Definition and Epidemiology of Parenting Style and Bullying

Parenting styles refer to the general strategies parents use to raise their children, and they are typically classified as authoritarian, permissive, democratic (also called authoritative), and neglectful. Authoritarian parenting is characterized by high control and low warmth, while permissive parenting involves low control but high warmth. Democratic parenting combines both emotional support and appropriate control, fostering a balanced and nurturing environment. Neglectful parenting involves low levels of both control and emotional involvement. These parenting approaches influence children's emotional development and social behavior, including bullying tendencies [1,9].

Bullying behavior in primary school children is significantly influenced by these parenting styles. Studies confirm that children raised in authoritarian or permissive environments are more likely to engage in bullying behavior due to either a lack of emotional support or clear boundaries. In contrast, democratic parenting has been associated with lower rates of bullying, as it helps children develop stronger emotional regulation and healthier social skills [1,2,5]. Research by Rahmawati & Rosyidah (2022) shows that permissive parenting contributes significantly to bullying behaviors in children, with more than 50% of children in a Jombang study displaying bullying tendencies due to insufficient discipline and guidance [3].

Authoritarian Parenting and Bullying

Authoritarian parenting, marked by rigid control and low warmth, correlates with bullying behaviors

in children. These children tend to struggle with emotional regulation and often express frustration through aggression or bullying. Baumrind's (1991) research supports this, indicating that authoritarian parenting leads to increased aggression, as children in these households are conditioned to assert dominance without the emotional support needed for healthy social interactions [2,5].

Permissive Parenting and Bullying

Permissive parenting, characterized by high warmth but low control, also contributes to bullying behavior. While these children receive significant emotional support, they often lack the necessary boundaries and structure to regulate their actions. This lack of discipline can result in difficulties navigating social interactions, leading to bullying as a means of asserting control [2]. Studies by Smith & Jones (2020) highlight that permissive parenting increases the likelihood of children resorting to aggression due to the absence of clear limits [3].

Democratic Parenting as a Protective Factor

In contrast, democratic (or authoritative) parenting, which combines emotional warmth with appropriate control, has been shown to reduce bullying behavior. Children raised in this environment tend to develop better emotional regulation and social skills, which help them manage conflicts without resorting to aggression. Research by Smith & Jones (2020) indicates that children from democratic households are less likely to engage in bullying, as they learn to respect boundaries and communicate effectively [4,5].

Parental Involvement in Conflict Resolution

Parental involvement in conflict resolution and emotional guidance plays a crucial role in preventing bullying. Children whose parents actively teach emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills are less likely to engage in bullying. Rigby (2020) emphasizes that such parental involvement helps children navigate social challenges in a healthy way, reducing the likelihood of aggression [4].

Impact of Parental Warmth and Support on Bullying

Emotional warmth and parental support are key protective factors against bullying. Children who feel emotionally supported by their parents are less likely to display aggressive behaviors or engage in bullying. Lamborn et al. (1991) found that children who receive warmth and affection from their parents tend to have better social skills and healthier relationships, which reduces the likelihood of bullying [2].

Long-Term Effects of Parenting on Bullying Tendencies

The long-term effects of parenting on bullying behavior extend into adolescence and adulthood. Children raised in authoritarian or permissive households are more likely to continue exhibiting bullying behaviors as they grow older, while children raised in democratic homes develop more positive social behaviors and are less likely to continue bullying in later years [6].

CONCLUSIONS

This review highlights the significant impact of parenting styles on bullying behavior among primary school children. Authoritarian and permissive parenting are linked to higher rates of bullying, with authoritarian parenting fostering aggression and permissive parenting failing to establish necessary boundaries. In contrast, democratic parenting, which balances emotional warmth and control, serves as a protective factor against bullying. Studies by Baumrind (1991) and Smith & Jones (2020) demonstrate that children raised in democratic households are less likely to engage in bullying behavior. Furthermore, parental involvement in teaching conflict resolution and emotional regulation plays a key role in preventing bullying [2,4]. These findings underscore the importance of balanced parenting in mitigating bullying and promoting healthier social development in children [5].

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