

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Systematic Review of Parenting Style and Children's Emotional Intelligence: Recent Updates on Western and Non- Western Families

Azadeh Mousavi, Rumaya Juhari

Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia

**ABSTRACT**

Extant literature highlights certain comparisons between the effect of demanding parenting style in non-Western families (Muslims and non-Muslims) and that of the democratic type of parenting in Western counties on emotional intelligence, which contributes to improvements in mental health. A systematic review was conducted on original published articles using 'parenting style' and 'emotional intelligence' as keywords. Initial data collected from Google Scholar, Science Direct, Web of Science and PubMed were searched using the Rayyan software (26) for relevant articles written in English. However, after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, only 28 articles (14 from each type of society, that is, non-Western and Western) were included in the review. Consequently, the review found that social environment, cultural, religious and economic conditions significantly predicted emotional intelligence.

**Keywords:** Children, emotional intelligence, parenting styles, culture, religious.

**Corresponding Author:**

Rumaya Juhari, PhD

Email: rumaya@upm.edu.my

Tel: +603-97697052

**INTRODUCTION**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) pertains to the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings as well as that of others to improve mental health (1). Literature on emotional intelligence emphasized that people with higher EI display adaptive emotional and psychosocial functioning, such as having more positive developmental outcomes in relation to mental health, subjective well-being, life satisfaction, better academic engagement, job performance, and leadership qualities (14, 2). Identifying potential predictors of emotional intelligence is essential for practitioners such as family psychotherapists, teachers, and parents to better understand the development of early adolescents and contribute to their well-being.

Parenting style has been associated with emotional intelligence. A society's cultural background, be it individualistic or collectivistic, plays a vital role on parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive). Authoritarian parenting is practiced more in collectivist countries and is not regarded as an unfavorable mode of parenting than in individualist societies (24).

**Emotional intelligence**

According to literature, there are three major models of emotional intelligence, namely, ability, trait and mixed models. Salovey and Mayer (1990) emphasized the ability framework which states that EI is a type of general intelligence which consists of four factors, including, the ability to perceive, appraise, express, and regulate emotions. Furthermore, Petrides and Furnham defined emotional intelligence as a personality trait that is associated with an individual's general performance. As for Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence is a combination of the main aspects of personal competence (i.e., self-regulation, self-awareness, self-motivation) and social factors like social awareness, social competence, and social skills (1).

**Parenting styles**

Parenting style refers to parenting behaviors which affect the child's emotion and behavior (1). The effects of different forms of parenting may be influenced by heredity, culture and characteristics of the child (14). Baumrind (1967) identified three main parenting styles based on their demanding nature. Authoritative parents act in a responsive, reasonable and sufficient manner toward their children. This style of parenting is more common in Western cultures. In non-Western societies, authoritarian parenting is usually practiced, which involves demands for children to obey rules and decisions without providing any clarification or feedback. On the other hand, permissive parenting style entails responsive but undemanding parents (1, 4).

### **Authoritative parenting style and emotional intelligence**

The various features of family communication such as being responsible and involved have a significant role in the development of children's emotions (9). Likewise, Aghili (2014) stated that children raised by authoritative parents have greater self-discipline, self-efficacy, and emotional maturity (3). Equally, friendly discussions between parents and their children help the latter to recognize their own emotions (9). Sarkhoni (2016) found a link between authoritative parenting style and higher EI in adolescents. Similarly, warm parenting style had a close relation with higher EI among Iranian students (11). Adolescents raised by authoritative parents display better psychological flexibility, which is an important component of emotional intelligence. Literature has shown that an authoritative parenting style is positively associated with emotional regulation (1), mental health (1, 3) and better behavioral outcomes of children (1, 12). On the other hand, other studies did not find any significant relationship between adolescents' EI and their perception of their parents as being authoritative. Instead, other variables, like cultural values and temperament, have been found to affect EI and the enhancement of adolescents' emotions (13).

### **Authoritarian parenting style and emotional intelligence in different cultures**

Parenting style highlights the behavior of parents towards their children which creates an emotional environment. Asghari and Besharat (2011) indicated, there is a more significant connection between autonomy rather than warmth and involvement with parents among adolescents in Iran (4). Hence, a hostile or a negative environment could lead to insecurity or emotional reactivity among children (14). Asian and African students have been found to have low self-esteem and self-concept; however, they derive more benefits from authoritarian parenting style when it comes to their academic performance and psychological adjustment (15, 16, 17).

Moreover, among Americans (i.e., of European and African race), children had more behavioral issues and were considered to be out-of-control due to harsh parenting style (17). Similarly, in a study in Arab countries, it has been observed that students are often subjected to higher verbal, physical and emotional abuses by their teachers, which are regarded as normal even though they manifest aggressive behaviors since the authoritarian parenting style is not deemed as a form of oppression of children in Arabic societies (12, 18). A majority of Muslim children consider the authoritarian parenting style as normal because in Muslim societies people devote a lot of time in practicing the principles written in the Quran about respect to parents and elders (19). In other words, the authoritarian parenting style in traditional cultures is known as a type of positive demandingness parenting (7, 4). In fact, a study by Hill (2007) revealed a significant relationship between

parental harsh discipline and higher levels of warmth among Mexican adolescents, which implies a caring and supportive family relationship (25). Hence, the unique ethnic beliefs and cultural background of a society may shape parenting style, family dynamics, and child development.

### **Permissive parenting style and ei**

A control-free and wrathful parenting style which encourages child autonomy is closely associated with emotional regulation, which is in turn related to EI (6). In the same way, adolescents who are raised by permissive parents have limited opportunities to exhibit misbehaviors and experience pressure from peers to participate in different activities (20).

## **METHODS**

The Rayyan (2016) software (26) was used to screen articles for the purpose of conducting a knowledge synthesis study as a suitable checklist for judging and controlling the quality of studies.

### **Search strategy**

To search for potentially relevant articles published without a stipulated time frame, several databases were explored using the Rayyan software, including, Google Scholar, Science Direct, Web of Science and PubMed. The keywords or search terms were: 1) "parenting style\*" OR "parenting\*" OR "parents' behavior\*" OR "parents' relationship\*" OR "parents' operation\*" 2) "emotional intelligence\*" OR "emotional development\*" OR "emotional health\*" OR "emotional socialization\*" OR "emotional management\*" OR "emotional regulation\*" 3) "culture\*" and 4) "religious\*". They were all placed within titles and abstracts to retrieve a large data.

### **Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The present review included studies which met the following criteria: (a) consisted of a sample of young individuals with a mean age of 6 to 18, (b) the outcome variable analyzed was child emotional development, (c) the predictor variables assessed were emotional ability, parenting relationship, culture and religiosity, and (d) the research design was either cross sectional/comparative, cohort/longitudinal, qualitative, or quantitative. On the other hand, studies were excluded if: (a) they were non-English publications, (b) they did not investigate the direct relationship of parenting style, culture, and religiosity with children's emotional intelligence, and (c) their sample consisted of lesbians, gays, or non-humans, which are not generalizable to the sampling frame of the present study.

### **Assessment of study quality**

The primary articles were screened, and the main researches were extracted from databases via Rayyan tool (26) according to the criteria in Figure 1.

## Critical appraisal

Critical evaluations relating to quality and internal validity were performed. Specifically, the articles were critically assessed if: (1) the research questions and objectives were well-stated, 2) the sample was representative of the study population, 3) the research procedures were sufficient, 4) the results were discussed sufficiently, and 5) the results presented were in accordance with the objectives of the study. Accordingly, details about the research locale (i.e., country), sample size, mean age and empirical findings are presented in Tables I and Table II.

## RESULTS

In total, 87,000 articles pertaining to the relationship between parenting style and emotional intelligence were identified by the Rayyan software (26). Firstly, the titles and abstracts of selected articles were screened based on the inclusion criteria. Accordingly, 699 papers met the inclusion criteria; although, only 36 were accepted after the initial screening for relevant and duplicate full-text publications. Finally, only 29 papers were included in the review while 670 were excluded due to failure to meet all necessary criteria (see Fig. 1). Specifically, 75% of the papers were irrelevant, 6% were duplicates,

and 19% were not fully accepted among the excluded studies.

All of the studies reviewed provide support for the differential effects of the three types of parenting style on the level of emotional intelligence among students of diverse cultural background. Social resources are vital for global self-worth and well-being. Additionally, parenting is challenging because of the numerous responsibilities which parents need to carry out for their children to reach developmental milestones at the right time. Goleman (1995) suggested that the first school for emotional learning is the family. This highlights the importance of the family particularly the parents in fostering children's emotional intelligence. Additionally, Goleman (1995) underscored that a close emotional attachment and sufficient communication between the parent and the child provide an avenue for the latter to grow up emotionally and socially competent, responsible, independent and confident (22).

According to Skinner and Morris (2007), Western studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and authoritative as well as permissive parenting styles. In contrast, emotional intelligence has been found to have a negative

**Table I:** Description of children emotional intelligence studies that have been critically reviewed among Non-Western countries

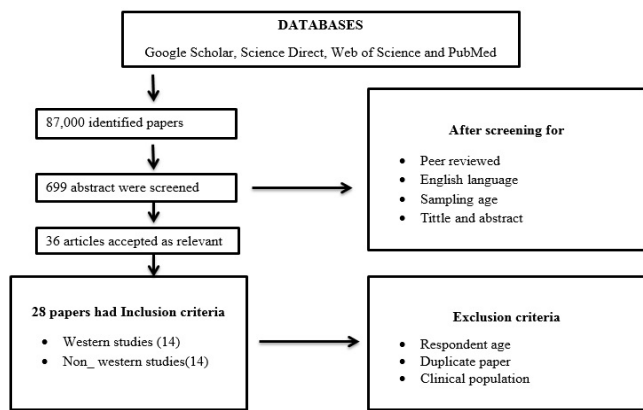
Study	Place of Study	(P.S) and (EI)			Sample Characteristics
		IVE	IAN	SSIVE	
Ang and Goh (2006)	Singapore	√			Adolescent (12 to 18)
Joyce M. Terwase et al., (2016)	Nigeria			√	N= (294) 12-17 years
Salimynezhad and Yusef poor (2015)	Iran		√		elementary schools
Aghili and Kashani (2014)	Iran	√			62 boys and 48 girls high school
Mathibe (2015)	Africa		√	√	grade 10's student
Sarkhoni (2016)	Iran	√	√		secondary school students
Asghari and Besharat (2011)	Iran		√		(18 – 22)
Chong and Chan(2015)	Singaporean	√			Adolescents
Liau, Teoh, and Liau (2003)	Malaysia	√			(N = 203) secondary school students
Devi and Uma (2013)	India	√	√		
Shalini et al.,(2013)	India	√			(N=973 ) 16-18 years-Pre University college students
Amirabadi (2011)	Iran	√			(N=200 ) high school girl
Shen et al., (2018)	USA		√		Asian adolescents
Dwairy et al (2006)	Egypt	Rural female	Rural male and Urban Female		(N = 351) adolescents

**Table II:** Description of children emotional intelligence studies that have been critically reviewed among Western countries

Study	Place of Study	(P.S) and (EI)			Sample Characteristics
		IVE	IAN	SSIVE	
Perkin (2003)	New Hampshire	√			Sixth-grade students (N = 252)
Morris (2007)	USA	√			(12 to 18) years old adolescence
McDowell et al (2008)	USA	√			(N = 103) 10 years Children attended nine elementary schools
Alegre (2010)	USA	√			Review paper
Ackard et al (2005)	USA			√	(N = 4746) students in public schools
Nelson et al (2012)	USA	√			3 years old children
Shen et al., (2018)	USA	√			adolescent
Zarra-nezhad et al.,(2014)	Finland	√			primary school student
Stratton and Herman (2010)	Columbia	√			children
Năstăsăa and Sala (2012)	Romania			√	adolescent
Mestre et al.,(2016)	Valencia			√	9 to 12 years-316 girls and 294 boys (N = 610)
Turculega and Tulbureb (2014)	Canada	√			childhood
laura elena (2011)	Romania	√			teenager
Argyriou (2016)	Greece	√			(N=127) 15–19 years

Total Number= (14)  
 Authoritative Parenting style = (IVE)  
 Authoritarian Parenting style = (IAN)  
 Permissiveness Parenting style =( SSIVE)

association between authoritarian parenting style and emotional intelligence. However, in studies in Iran and other Arab countries, emotional intelligence yielded a positive relationship with authoritarian parenting, but negative associations with permissive and authoritative parenting styles (23, 6, 10, 3). In view of these findings, it is safe to say that authoritarian parenting within an authoritarian culture is not as harmful as when it is practiced in a liberal society (18).



**Figure 1: Evidence synthesis of articles related to parenting style and emotional intelligence.** There is a flowchart of the article which used and extracted according to issue and sampling age.

In as much as the Asian and Islamic societies are collectivist in nature and observe a rigid culture, then it is expected that children growing up in the said environment will accept their parents and teachers' inflexible rules and regulations. Notably, within this collective system, disobedience is considered wrong and entails punishment such as isolation and certain restrictions. Therefore, people have the tendency to keep on observing collectivistic practices. In such countries, people do not distinguish themselves from their family; instead, they identify themselves according to their bond with the family.

Moreover, family support has been found to bring about positive self-esteem and self-concept. For instance, paternal authoritarian parenting was positively correlated with self-awareness in girls. Such finding contradicts Baumrind's (1967) supposition that the authoritarian parenting style has a negative effect on emotional well-being in children. In this regard, among Asian cultures, controlling behaviors might be seen as a manifestation of involvement and closeness (25). For instance, Indian adolescents perceive their parents' strictness and demand for obedience as signs of warmth and concern, in contrast to those in Western countries (25).

An interesting finding is that authoritarian parenting in Islamic and Asian societies is not associated with oppression of children's feelings. As emphasized in the Holy Qur'an particularly Surah Al-Asra -Ayaat 24 [17:24], children must fulfill any lawful bequest made by the parents. Several other verses of the Holy

Qur'an speak about respect to parents and the elderly. Specifically, Surah Baqarah - Ayaat 83 [2: 83] states that children must be kind and respectful toward their parents. Likewise, Surah Ahqaf - Ayaat 18 [46:18] has forbidden children to disrespect the elderly, especially the parents.

**DISCUSSION**

Several articles which investigated the association between parenting style and adolescent emotional intelligence were critically reviewed.

**Parenting across cultures (western and non-western families)**

Societies may be influenced by individualism or collectivism. Western societies mainly exhibit individualism in which people perceive themselves as independent. Conversely, collectivism highlights interdependence which is common among Asian and African countries. Such cultural models may directly or indirectly impact parenting styles (24). In the same way, the definition of good parenting varies across different geographic areas. In the Asian and African contexts, authoritarian parenting is ideal and controlling behaviors are not associated with restriction (25). It appears that "controlling" in rigid societies is not considered hurtful but rather a way to protect children. On the contrary, among middle- and upper-class parents in European and American nations, authoritative or democratic parenting strategies are recognized as the ideal parenting style with positive child outcomes (21). In this regard, results of past studies indicate that, since parental behaviors differ across ethnic groups, then, parenting style along with other variables such as cultural values, religiosity and socioeconomic status may be key factors in shaping children's emotional intelligence.

**Economic status, parenting style, emotional well-being**

According to research on the association between economic status and parenting style, mothers from a low-income level in Egypt exhibited more parental monitoring and caring behaviors compared to those in Western countries (12). Additionally, a study among Palestinian families revealed that demandingness and less responsiveness in mothers, which have been practiced for about three generations, reflect the fact that authoritarian parenting is considered valuable in their culture (21). Similarly, as African-American families often exhibit interdependence, secure relationships and groupwork, then, it may be assumed that authoritarian parenting is also valued in their culture. Likewise, Chinese families who live in China or America have been described as controlling and less warm, which typify the authoritarian parenting style (21). In a study among Arab youths, it was observed that they experienced satisfaction rather than suffering amidst the prominence of the authoritarian parenting style (12). In conclusion, practicing authoritarian parenting style in traditional

cultures is considered positive demandingness parenting (7).

### **Parental communication patterns among western and non-western cultures**

Parental communication patterns influence children's overall well-being. Additionally, the way in which parents interact and deal with their kids differs across countries, regions, economic levels, and cultural backgrounds. Notably, although the authoritarian parenting style is characterized by controlling and non-responsive parental behaviors, it does not necessarily negatively impact children in all cultural settings. In other words, parenting differs between cultures. In view of this, the type of parenting mostly practiced in Western countries may not be applicable to non-Western societies. It appears that children in Western societies would benefit more from authoritative parenting; while those in Eastern societies, the authoritarian parenting style which emphasizes strict obedience and respect for the elderly is more suitable. In relation to this, the association between parenting styles and child achievement may also vary across cultures. Therefore, parental autonomy may have a negative effect on children's emotions in independent cultures. On the contrary, in dependent and collectivist cultures, parenting styles characterized by respect to parents, though considered strict, is the norm and is deemed not detrimental to the children.

### **Parental communication patterns according to the Qur'an**

Obedience is a central educational value in Islamic and Asian countries and is not dependent on the social, educational or even economic status of the society; instead, it mostly relies on religious thinking. For instance, Surah Yusuf [12:83] and [18:83] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem speak about blaming children for negligence. Additionally, in the Islamic texts and the Holy Qur'an, the word tarbiat, which means "training" and "supervision" has been used several times to describe parents' role in upbringing their children (7). But this training does not suggest abuse as several verses of the Qur'an indicate that parents are prohibited from punishing the children harshly (23). Needless to say, "training" and "supervision" are not limited to the Islamic culture since among the Chinese, there is a term called Chiao shun which has the same meaning (7). Therefore, because respect to elders is common in Islamic and communal cultures and a duty to Allah, then, high parental control is tolerated. Consequently, the authoritarian parenting does not show a negative effect on children's emotional and mental health among Asian culture. In view of these psycho-cultural characteristics in the Asian and Islamic contexts, issues pertaining to emotional health are profoundly different from those in the Western societies.

Since the greater part of research on parenting style and its corresponding effect on children's emotional health have been conducted among Western children, it is

therefore crucial to carry out related studies in traditional cultures such as Islamic societies. Recently, a growing number of studies across cultures and in relation to universal psychology have been conducted to identify relationships between ethnic constructs and universal ones. On the other hand, it seems that in Islamic countries, parenting practices are primarily affected by the cultural context, particularly religious beliefs. Taken together, it is necessary to conduct a study on parenting styles among non-Western countries.

### **CONCLUSION**

In general, past literature has highlighted the important role of emotional intelligence in promoting the emotional health and well-being of children. Moreover, emotional intelligence has been highly associated with parenting style. Hence, this paper set out to investigate differences in the three types of parenting style, namely, authoritative, authoritarian and permissive across cultures. The demand for obedience and respect for the elderly as a basic responsibility of children to their parents provide justification for the practice of authoritarian parenting style in non-Western societies. However, in Western cultures, authoritative parenting is more common and is mainly characterized by loving, warm and caring behaviors. Gaining better understanding of the unique roles of cultural and religious beliefs in the evaluation of parenting styles may be conducive to the development of healthy well-being in children raised in different ethnic, religious and geographical areas. As long as parenting practices are not abusive and harmful to children's mental and physical health, then a restricting parenting style may not at all be bad. Lastly, the results of this research support the idea that being an authoritarian parent is not necessarily linked with cruelty or harshness. Instead, it may just be construed as parents' means of carrying out their responsibilities to foster positive child outcomes.

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