

# Parenting Style and Its Influence on Student Discipline Problem and Student Happiness in Malaysia

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## Abstract

Parenting style is one of the factors which can influence the occurrence of student discipline problems in school. There are four types of parenting styles according to Baumrind's Theory of Parenting (1991) which are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful. This paper reviews the influenced of parenting style towards students' disciplinary problems and students' happiness in the Malaysian perspective by conducting Literature Review. The findings of this study are based on the findings of studies which conducted by previous researchers. In addition, this study also examines the types of parenting styles that are often practiced by parents which their children involved with disciplinary problems in school. The parenting style practiced by parents can influence the child's personality and behavior, which is indirectly associated to the disciplinary problems.

## Keywords

Parenting Style, Student, Discipline Problem, Happiness, Malaysia.

## 1. Introduction

The discipline problem among students is becoming a common thing in the society. This problem is now becoming more common with as there is news broadcast on television and in local newspapers. However, this issue is becoming increasingly concerning with the involvement of the police. This is because the offenses committed by some of the students are not only minor offenses but already have criminal elements.

There are several factors that contribute to the occurrence of student discipline problems in schools. Azizi and Rohaya (2010) have identified a total of 7 factors that are the cause of this problem. Among them are student self-factors, parent or family factors, community factors, school factors, mass media factors, government factors and peer factors.

Based on several studies from past researchers such as Breda (2014), Donkor (2015) and Gase et al. (2016), stated that parent or family factors become one of the main factors contributing to student discipline problems. Furthermore, it was found that parenting style is one of the variables often associated with student discipline problems (Zins, 2013; Bezrukova and Samoylova, 2015; Woude et al., 2016). Not only that, the behavioral problems faced by children are likely from lack of emotional awareness and their ability to manage emotions (Zeman et al, 2002).

## 2. Research Problem

Through the writing of John Locke (1689) in an essay on human understanding, the child is born with a 'tabula rasa' or blank slate. The values and beliefs delivered by parents will be easily infused in their children. Parents have a role to play in instilling good values in their children. Therefore, parents have a very important role in educating a child to be a better person.

A child's morality starts from home (Ghafani, 2007). The family institution is the first school for a child and the parents becoming the child's first teacher. Parents carrying a big responsibility in shaping a good personality in the child. Mental, physical, and social development are influenced by the things which taught and shown in a family

(Azizi et al., 2012). Furthermore, there is a possibility that if a child misbehaves, it could be to the behavior which the child acquired from the family (Azizi et al., 2012).

A child's behavior is believed can be influenced by parenting style shown by the parents. Azizi et al. (2012) stated that if the parenting style applies strict firmness and discipline, there is a possibility that children will behave aggressively. On the other hand, if the parents pamper the child too much or do not care about the child at all, this will cause the child to have more violent behavior. Thus, there is a possible relationship between parenting style which apply by the parents and disciplinary problems committed by child in school. In addition, there might be a relationship between the occurrence of misbehaviors and a child's emotional intelligence. This is because many children who are involved with various social problems caused by a lack of skills to recognize and control their emotions (Rahman et al., 2008).

### 3. Literature Review

#### 3.1 Parenting Style

Baumrind (1967) has introduced three types of parenting style which are authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. In 1983, Maccoby and Martin have extended the study of Baumrind (1967). As a result, Maccoby and Martin (1983) have introduced another type of parenting style which known as neglectful or uninvolved. Table 1 shows the parenting style model divided according to the dimension of control and emotional.

Table 1: Parenting Style Model

		Emotional Dimension	
		Friendly, open and caring	Not friendly, not open and not caring
Control Dimension	Demands need to meet the target, firm	Authoritative	Authoritarian
	No demands need to meet the target, permissive	Permissive	Neglectful or Uninvolved

Each of the parenting styles have its own characteristics. These characteristics could affect on the children personality. Table 2 shows the characteristics of each parenting styles and its affect towards children personality.

Table 2: Parenting Styles' Characteristics and Effect on Children Behavior

No.	Characteristics	Effect on Children Personality
1.	Overly controlling, punishing, firm, unwilling to explain or consider rules.	Ineffective and inefficient in social interactions.
2.	Encouraging, assertive, listening to opinions, willing to give explanations and consider rules.	Ability in social interaction, responsible, has self-control, likes to try new things and is always self-satisfied.
3.	Lack of involvement, not punishing, not being too hopeful, giving freedom.	Weak self-control and weak leadership traits.
4.	Neglecting responsibilities in parenting.	Anti-social, immature, has psychological problems and often has no direction of purpose.

Source: Schickedanz, J. A. (2001).

#### 3.2 Authoritarian Parenting Style

Authoritarian parenting style are often associated with a strict way of parenting and educating child. This parenting style stress more on a high level of child discipline (Baumrind, 1971). This parenting style is all about rule and there is no explanation why the rule been set. The child is not allowed to give any views. The child needs to follow every rule. There is no space for the child to arrange their own life. If the child fails to comply with the rules, there will be a punishment for the child. The parents believed that this is the best way in teaching and educating the child.

However, this parenting style will cause the child to not have high self-confidence and do not dare to make any decisions on their own. Due to that, the child will be independent and always expect the parents will help them in every situation. Moreover, there is possibility for the child to be a cheater as they want to avoid being punished (Morin, 2019). Tiger Parents and Helicopter Parents are often associated with parents who adopt authoritarian parenting style (English, 2016).

### **3.3 Authoritative Parenting Style**

Authoritative parenting style, the parents are firm in educating the child but tend to be more flexible. According to Baumrind (1971), parents for this parenting style are easier to interact with the child in deciding. Parents who adopt this parenting style have a balance between responsiveness and demand (Saifuddin Abdullah, 2007). Just like authoritarian parents, authoritative parents also set rules for their child along with punishment if they fail to follow. However, authoritative parents will explain to the child the reasons for the rule and punishment which been made.

Authoritative parents will allow the child to express their opinions. However, not all opinions and views are accepted. This discussion is meant to let the child understand what is good and bad for them. Furthermore, involvement of parents in a discussion with the child can create good communication between both parties (Sudiantha, 2014). Authoritative parenting style create more positive effect on a child. The child will be more courageous, independent, positive, and confident to face challenges in the future. The child will develop a good social relationship with others and a sense of trust can be enhanced (Baumrind, 1971; Santrock, 1995). Sriyanto et al. (2014) state that a child can acquired assertive behaviors such as being firm, honest, open, and respectful of the rights of others through this style of parenting. Free-range Parents and Attachment Parents are among the examples of authoritative parenting style (English, 2016).

### **3.4 Permissive Parenting Style**

Permissive parenting style are less firm and more relaxed. According to Baumrind (1971) and Santrock (2007), permissive parenting styles do not fully involve the child, but still controlling over child for certain aspect. Parents of this style will usually give full freedom to the children and just let their child to do anything without any control. Parents of this style do set the rules but if the child breaks it, the parents will just let it go and follow their child's wishes. The parents believe that a child should not be controlled by an adult, and they should give an extensive freedom (Decey and Kenny, 1997).

However, permissive parenting style can cause a child to acquire disciplinary problems as well as low academic achievement (Wulandari, 2018). It is believed that the adolescents which raised by this type of parenting style are typically immature in various psychosocial aspects (Baumrind, 1975). Besides, a child will also experience personality disorders such as becoming aggressive, rebellious, and like to dominate over something (Nazarudin, 2020). This may cause that a child often feel that their parents are only concerned about themselves, and their work compared to the child's affairs. In addition, there is a possibility that a child can involve to unhealthy activities such as free sex, alcohol, and drug intake (Caspi, et al., 1995; Moffitt, 1993).

### **3.5 Neglectful or Uninvolved Parenting Style**

Neglectful or uninvolved parenting style is undemanding and uncaring way of parenting a child. Parents of the parenting style show very little love, attention, mental and moral support, protection, and supervision to their children (Shahimi, 2018). Parents know very little about their children. It is because the parents do not spend much time with their child. However, based on Morin (2019), some parents who being neglectful over their child are often unintentionally (Morin, 2019). This may happen as the parents being too busy with their jobs.

The child who raised by this type of parenting style often have problems and crisis with their parents. As the child could not spent much time together with their parents, there will be no mutual understanding between a child and the parents which cause the two parties of not having a close relationship. If the parents try to show their love towards the child, there will be a doubt in the heart of a child in valuing the love. The child who been raised by this parenting style always associated with low level of school performance and often causes behavior problem (Morin, 2019).

### 3.6 Discipline in Malaysia Perspective

In general, discipline is a procedure or rule that aims to shape the personality of students in line with religious practices, societal norms, and laws in a country. Meanwhile, The Cabinet Committee to Review the Implementation of the National Education Policy of 1979 (*Jawatankuasa Kabinet Mengkaji Pelaksanaan Dasar Pelajaran Kebangsaan Tahun 1979*) defines discipline as;

*“The willingness of an individual to respect and abide by the law whether the discipline is imposed from outside or voluntarily. Discipline also means a person’s willingness to work or do something in an orderly manner, willingly, respect the rights of other individuals. Willingness to practice good behavior and not interfere with the interests of others. Willingness to respect each other and have a spirit of helping each other. Willingness to improve the existing situation through constructive efforts and willingness to serve the community.”*

Based on the book ‘School Disciplinary Procedure Guide for Headmasters and Teachers’ published by the Ministry of Education Malaysia in 1981, there are two types of acts that are considered as violating discipline, which are acts that are explicitly prohibited and acts that are implicitly prohibited. Acts that are explicitly prohibited include several legislations which are the (School Discipline) Regulations 1959, School (Magazine) Regulations 1958, School Associations Regulations 1956, and School (Visitation) Regulations 1957. Meanwhile, Acts that are implicitly prohibited is an act other than that provided for in the acts that are explicitly prohibited. In general, all conduct-related acts, contrary to the moral and sexual code of conduct, which may cause injury to another student and may bring harm to society and its institutions, are classified as implicitly prohibited acts.

If a student commits an act that is considered a violation of school discipline, the school has the authority to impose punishment. The Ministry of Education Malaysia (1981) interprets punishment as something painful which caused by a wrongdoing. Punishment should be imposed by a person in authority such as the Headmaster or a teacher authorized by the Headmaster. However, before giving a sentence, there are some important factors that need to be considered. Among the factors that need to be considered are the severity of an offense, similar cases, the frequency of a student committing an offense and the student's background. This factor is to ensure that the punishment given can prevent the student as well as other students from repeating the same wrongdoing. Among the punishments that can be imposed on a student are expulsion from school, suspension of school sessions for some period and other common punishments such as corporal punishment (caning), detention, fines, and warnings.

### 3.7 Emotional Intelligence and Happiness

Salovey and Mayer (1990, 1993) define emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor and control the emotions of oneself and others and use them to drive their thoughts and actions. Meanwhile, Bar-On (2005) uses the term ‘emotional-social intelligence’ in discussing emotional intelligence. He defines emotional intelligence as:

*“... a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relates with them, and cope with daily demands.”*

Emotional intelligence is not only important in one’s success but also for one’s well-being. Emotional intelligence is better to be formed from an early age. It is because, according to Alina Turcule and Cristina Tulbure (2014), the first opportunity to develop the elements of emotional intelligence is when the child is early in their development. It is believed that children who acquire a high level of emotional intelligence, they able to control their emotions better and able to maintain their own happiness.

## 4. Methods

The objective of this paper is to compare the findings of the relationship between parenting style and discipline problem among Malaysian students. Secondary Data Review (SDR) approach is used in this paper. The findings regarding the influenced of parenting style towards students’ discipline problem and happiness in Malaysia have been reviewed in several academic journals and websites.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Relationship between Parenting Style and Student Discipline Problem

A study by Rathakrishnan and Abd Rahim (2008) was conducted to examine the influence of authoritarian, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles on involvement in drug usage. 100 students from a secondary school in the district of Papar, Sabah were randomly selected for this study. The analysis from this study shows that there is no significant relationship between authoritarian (0.17), authoritarian (0.19) and permissive (0.15) parenting styles with involvement of student in drug usage. The results of the analysis showed that there was no relationship because the correlation value was not at an insignificant level ( $k > 0.05$ ). Table 3 shows the result of correlation between parenting style and students' involvement in drug usage.

Table 3: Result of Correlation Between Parenting Style and Students' Involvement in Drug Usage

	<b>r</b>
<b>Authoritarian parenting styles with student involvement in drugs</b>	0.17
<b>Authoritative parenting style with student involvement in drugs</b>	0.19
<b>Permissive parenting style with student involvement in drugs</b>	0.15

Furthermore, a study by Yusof et al. (2019) studied the relationship between parenting style and drug abuse risk among youth. 123 students in Chembong district, Negeri Sembilan were selected for this study. The findings of the study show that there is a significant relationship between permissive parenting style with the risk of drug abuse among youth ( $r = 0.119$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). For authoritarian parenting styles, the findings of the study indicate a weak and positive relationship ( $r = 0.61$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Meanwhile, for authoritative parenting style, the findings that show a very weak and negative relationship ( $-0.005$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, the risk of drug abuse is not influenced by this type of parenting style. In addition, most students have parents who practice an authoritative parenting style. Table 4 shows the relationship between parenting styles and the risk of drug abuse.

Table 4: The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Risk of Drug Abuse

<b>Parenting Styles</b>	<b>Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tail)</b>
<b>Authoritarian parenting styles</b>	0.119** 0.000
<b>Authoritative parenting style</b>	0.61** 0.000
<b>Permissive parenting style</b>	-.005** 0.000

A study by Yahaya et al. (2012) studied the relationship between parenting style with student misbehavior in primary school. This study involved a total of 130 respondents consisting of primary school students in the district of Johor Bahru, Johor. Most parents of the students in this study practiced authoritative parenting style. Table 5 shows the frequency distribution of parenting styles practiced by respondents' parents.

Frequency Distribution of Parenting Styles Practiced by Respondents' Parents

<b>Parenting Styles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Authoritative parenting styles	59	45.4
Authoritarian parenting style	15	11.5
Permissive parenting style	36	27.7
Neglectful or uninvolved parenting style	20	15.4
<b>Total</b>	130	100

Based on three types of misbehavior, this study found that the dominant misbehavior for naughtiness misbehavior, physical misbehavior and verbal misbehavior were vandalism, bullying and against the teachers. The analysis of this study found that there was no significant relationship between student misbehavior in school and parenting style with the Pearson Correlation value,  $r = 0.115$ .

Parents who practice an authoritarian parenting style are seen as parents who stifle their children. According to Baumrind (1971), authoritarian parents are restrictive. Children are not given freedom in making choices and every action needs to get permission from the parents. Children are urged to follow every instruction (Santrock, 1998). According to Longmore, Monica and Giordano (2001), parents who have a high level of control will influence on a child's behavior to engage in unhealthy activities. Although this style is considered harsh for some people, but the main purpose is simply just to educate their children. However, there is still a probability for the children to be caught up in unhealthy activities (Rathakrishnan and Abd Rahim, 2008).

Permissive parenting styles are also often associated with children's tendency to engage in unhealthy activities. This is because parents often ignore misbehaviors that can caused a negative effect towards the children (Howenstein et al., 2015). Meanwhile, children who raised by the authoritative parents have shown the best results in the formation of a child's personality (Kuppens et al., 2019). Although authoritative parenting style is said to be the best parenting style, there are also cases of disciplinary problems involving children who are educated with this parenting style. However, authoritative parenting is associated with little to no serious cases disciplinary problems (Hoeve, Blokland, Dubas, Loeber, Gerris, and Van Der Laan, 2008).

## **5.2 Relationship between Parenting Style Happiness of Student**

Socio-emotional development is an important aspect of a child's development. It is believed that a child's behavior can be influenced by the parenting style practiced by the parents. According to Tiller et al. (2003), parenting style can directly influence social and emotional development. Educating and surveillance are very important in developing a child's level of emotional intelligence. Receiving enough love will bring happiness to a child. This is because a stable level of emotional intelligence can form children more confident in relationships and social interactions (Omar and Zakaria, 2018).

Furthermore, a study from Hiang and Kutty (2021) found that there is a significant relationship between the development of emotional intelligence of Iban students in secondary school and authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. Meanwhile, neglectful parenting style showed an insignificant influence on student's emotional intelligence ( $p = 0.710 > 0.05$ ), which can cause a negative impact on the formation of a student's emotional intelligence.

In addition, a study from Shahida Hashim et al. (2012) found that behavioral problems caused by a poor emotional management. Children often show negative emotions such as screaming, getting angry if disturbed or if their requests are not fulfilled. These negative emotions have led children to misbehave such as harassing friends, difficult to understand rules and instructions and less tolerant. This is also supported by Liau et al. (2003) who stated that low emotional intelligence in a child can lead to the occurrence of internal and external behavioral problems.

## **6. Conclusion**

In summary, parenting style can either influence or not influence students' disciplinary problems in school. This is because, there are other factors which can contribute to a child's involvement to disciplinary problems such as individual factors, family factors, peer factors, schooling factors and community factors (Tharshini and Ibrahim, 2020). In addition, most parents adopt an authoritative parenting style. According to Baumrind (1991) and Maccoby and Martin (1983), authoritative parenting style is an ideal parenting style in the formation of a child's personality. Therefore, this is also considered if the parenting style does not affect the disciplinary problems of the students.

In addition, a child's emotional intelligence plays an important role in a child's behavior. A child who is given enough love will grow up in a harmonious and happy atmosphere, and this will help the child to always behave well. Therefore, parents need to further strengthen their relationship with their child so that the child feels comfortable when communicating with parents. Not only that, parents also need to be aware of what their children do when they are away from home. Parents do not need to monitor them 24 hours but just to make sure that the child does not fall into social problems.

Moreover, parents need to build a strong relationship with teachers in the school. Teachers have a role to educate a student and are considered as parents while in school. The good relationship that is highlighted between teachers and parents will give a lesson to the child to respect the teacher as much as they respect their parents. When teachers feel

respected by parents and students, this will raise the spirits among teachers and at the same time create a comfortable and fun learning situation for students.

Society as well needs to play an important role in controlling disciplinary problems among students. The way of blaming other parties such as parents and the school for the behavior of a student should be removed from society, instead it should be replaced with the way of caring towards other children. The children will be the future leaders of our country. It is also our responsible to take care of them. Being honest in giving advice and making complaints to the authorities is not a bad thing to do, but rather shows the responsibility in forming a healthy and positive community.

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