

## Empirical Studies on Parenting Styles: A Trend Analysis

Maryam Farzand<sup>1</sup>, Yagmur Çerkez<sup>2</sup> and Çise Çavusoglu<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Near East University, Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance,  
 Faculty of Education, Nicosia, Cyprus

<sup>3</sup>Near East University, Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Education,  
 Nicosia, Cyprus

Telephone: <+90 392 6802000 - 5110>, <+90 392 6802000 - 5334>

E-mail: <sup>1</sup><maryammalick@yahoo.com>, <sup>2</sup><yagmur.cerkez@neu.edu.tr>,  
<sup>3</sup><cise.cavusoglu@neu.edu.tr>

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**ABSTRACT** The purpose of this study was to examine the existing trends in research on parenting styles (PS) published in selected professional sources during the period of 2008-2017. Content analysis was used to investigate scientific articles related to PS. There was a total of 530 articles which were found to be relevant to the purpose of this study. The results of the analysis showed that the articles related to parenting styles have remained considerably high over the years because of the importance and seriousness of its role in an adolescent's character and personality building. Considering the low number of qualitative studies, it is recommended that further studies should employ this approach to investigate various aspects of parenting styles in depth. Moreover, interventions should be carried out to improve and enhance the effectiveness of parenting and consequently the psychosocial success of adolescents

### INTRODUCTION

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, two philosophers' work has largely influenced the child rearing and parenting concepts. The first of these scientists was Locke (1970), who pointed out that the early experiences a child went through were very important to his/her development throughout his/her life (Spera 2005). The second important scientist in child development was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In 1762, he proposed that children should primarily interact with the environment to learn from their surroundings and more specifically from their parents and home environment instead of studying the reality from books (Rousseau 1998).

Many studies have focused on parent-child interaction and its importance over the life span of children. Dreikurs (1957) proposed that in early childhood, children's misbehavior is largely caused when a child perceives himself as not welcomed by his/her social circle. He argued that the child then try to seek attention of others and when they do not receive it, they try to gain power, then revenge and finally they feel themselves as inadequate. He emphasized that a democratic family style that gives the child enough attention is

very important to promote adequate individual development (Wright 1957; Goddard and Dennis 2003).

Although several studies had been published on parenting before her, Diana Baumrind was the pioneer researcher who classified different parenting styles known as "Baumrind's Parenting Typology" (Baumrind 1967). She explained that there were two dimensions with two possible aspects in each case, describing the behaviors of parents to raise healthy children. These were responsiveness vs. unresponsiveness and demanding vs. undemanding (Baumrind 1967). Baumrind has also classified three initial parenting styles, which are authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive. Later, Maccoby and Martin worked on Baumrind's three parenting styles and put them in two distinct categories (see Table 1) having four parenting styles that describe parents' behaviors during child rearing (Maccoby and Martin 1983).

**Table 1: Maccoby and Martin's four parenting styles**

	<i>Responsive</i>	<i>Unresponsive</i>
Demanding	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Undemanding	Permissive	Neglectful

The quality of parent-child interactions affects a child's behavior (Lee et al. 2006; Liem et al. 2010; Timpano et al. 2010), personality, as well as his motivation (Cummings and Davies 2002). Earlier studies have shown that children raised by authoritative parents had better mental and social adjustment (Darling 1999). Children who had warm and responsive mothers were found to develop effectance motivation as well as the ability to interact with the environment effectively (Messer 1993). They were more successful in dealing with their environment (White 1959; Deci and Ryan 1987; Ginsburg and Bronstein 1993; Gottfried et al. 1998). Motivated children were also found to perform high academic achievement (Boggiano et al. 1988; Gottfried 1990).

Culture is one important variable that affect parenting styles. In other words, parents from different cultures use different parenting styles. Some cultures tend to favor authoritative parenting, while others display authoritarian parenting style (Dwairy et al. 2006; Khodaii et al. 2008). For example, in Asian countries, authoritarian parenting style was observed to be dominant and considered to be beneficial for the children (Keshavarz and Baharudin 2009). On the other hand, in some countries, such as Spain (Musito and Garcia 2004), Portugal (Rodrigues et al. 2013) and Brazil (Martínez et al. 2007), permissive style was considered to be better and more compatible with their culture by the parents. Moreover, Hill (1995) stated that the same parenting style can result in different outcomes on children across different cultures. For example, in many Middle Eastern countries, parents exercise control over their children and are strict in their behavior. These children show no depressive signs when tested in comparison with children belonging to American culture, where authoritative parenting is more acceptable and desired (Dwairy 2008; Pezzella 2010).

In-depth review of the current literature has also shown that mothers and fathers have different parenting styles towards their children (Putnam et al. 2014). These differences were also observed in relation to the gender of the child too. For example, fathers were found to be influential on their daughters' emotional fulfillment more than mothers, while mothers favor their sons more in various matters (Conrade et al. 2011). It has also been observed that same parents used different parenting styles towards their

daughters and sons, that is, a more authoritative style may be used towards daughters, while authoritarian style is preferred for sons (Osorio and González-Cámara 2004; Kagitçibasi 1996).

Despite the importance of parental role in a child's character building and success in different spheres of life, there appears to be lack of a recent review of the trends in research in this area. Such a review can help practitioners, researchers and even parents to pinpoint the parenting behaviors that result in unhealthy personalities and emphasize the parenting behaviors that result in more fruitful outcomes. Thus, the current study aims to provide this perspective to researchers as well as practitioners and parents to help develop insights into better parent-child relations as a flourishing parent-child interaction boosts the mental health of both the children and the parents (Dwairy et al. 2006).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary goal of this study is to summarize the recent trends in research on parenting styles and their impact on the development and well-being of adolescents. Thus, research studies on parenting styles that have been published in academic periodicals during 2008-2017 were analyzed according to their year of publication, type of analysis conducted in the research, sample of the study and the country in which the study was carried out. Parenting is of pivotal importance because it lays the foundation of the personality structure on which the entire life of an adolescent is based. Thus, the results of this analysis will better inform our understanding of perceptions of parenting styles in the field and their consequences on adolescents' developmental processes as well as assisting researchers in identifying the trends and gaps in the recent literature.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In order to identify the overarching trends in the recent literature on parenting styles, content analysis was performed. An analysis of trends in literature provides an understanding of the recent paradigms, developments and debates in the field (Erford et al. 2010), while content analysis allows for an analysis of certain characteristics of the content of a given text (Co-

hen et al. 2011; Krippendorff 2004). As the first step of this analysis, electronic database of SCOPUS was scanned for journals in social sciences. Then, using the key words “parenting style,” the search was conducted within the relevant journals. The search was also limited to publications between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 to 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and to empirical research articles only. In other words, books and review articles were excluded. In addition, articles focusing on the development of adolescents were selected. The original search yielded 666 articles. Every article in this original sample was scanned for relevance by reviewing its title and abstract. Articles that did not primarily focus on parenting styles were excluded from the study. Typical examples of such articles that were excluded are cultural impacts on parenting, consequences of, single parents, and so on. Articles published in languages other than English were also excluded. Once these articles were eliminated, a total of 530 articles remained in the sample.

To carry out the analysis of the content of the selected articles, a coding scheme was used where the year of publication, research design used in the study (qualitative, quantitative or mixed), document language, the age of the participants, the sample size and the country were noted down. These coding schemes were then grouped and transferred into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to be analyzed using percentages and frequencies. Finally, the results of the analysis were presented in tables and graphs to observe the trends in the field in the last 10 years on parenting styles.

## RESULTS

### Document Types

A total of 530 documents related to parenting styles were included in the study (see Table 2). There were 491 (92.6 %) journal articles, 15

**Table 2: Distribution of published documents by type**

<i>Document type</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Journal articles	491	92.6
Conference papers	15	2.8
Articles in press	12	2.3
Reviews	12	2.3
Total	530	100.0

(2.8%) conference papers, 12 (2.3%) articles in press and 12 (2.3%) reviews published between the years 2008 to present.

### Document's Language

English was the most frequently used language in the reviewed documents (n = 498, 93.7%). Seventeen documents were published in Spanish (3.2%), seven were in Portuguese (1.3%), four were in Italian (0.8%), three each in French and Turkish (0.6%), two in Croatian, German and Serbian each (0.4%), and only one (0.2%) document was published in Dutch, Indonesian, Lithuanian and Russian each (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Distribution of documents by language articles**

<i>Language</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
English	498	93.7
Spanish	17	3.2
Portuguese	7	1.3
Italian	4	0.8
French and Turkish	3	0.6
Croatian, German and Serbian	2	0.4
Dutch, Indonesian, Lithuanian and Russian	1	0.2
Total	530	100

### Research Design Used

Three types of research designs have been found within in the research studies reviewed in this study. The most common type employed was quantitative methodology with 77.5 percent of all the studies using this approach (n = 413). Seventy-six (14.3%) of the published documents employed qualitative research methods while only 7.7 percent (n = 41) of all reviewed documents used mixed methods approach (see Table 4).

### The Year of Publication

During the period of 2008 to present, the number of documents related to parenting styles that were published in academic journals showed continuous increase until 2016. While only 49 documents were published in 2008, 70 were published in 2016 (see Table 5). The years with the lowest number of published documents was 2017 (n = 23). The reason for this could be that the review was conducted in early 2017 and there-

**Table 4: Distribution of studies based on research design**

<i>Methodological approach</i>	<i>n</i>
Quantitative	413
Qualitative	76
Mixed	41
Total	530

fore more studies can be published in the remaining months. The years with the highest number of documents published were 2016 ( $n = 70$ ) and 2013 ( $n = 68$ ) respectively.

It has been observed that from the year 2012 on, there has been a steady increase in the qualitative studies while the mixed approach studies have been observed to increase since 2014 (see Table 5).

#### Documents by Authors

The total number of authors who published their work related to parenting styles was 159. Authors who published most articles on parenting style were Soenons B ( $n = 7$ ), Taubman Ban-Ari O ( $n = 6$ ), Vansteenkiste M ( $n = 6$ ) and Garcia F ( $n = 5$ ). Authors who published three or two articles were Asadi M, Azizi K, Barghi I, Besharat MA, Fuentes MC, Kitamura T, Miri M, Muris P, Rodroguiz CM and Sanders MR. In addition to these, many of the articles were co-authored.

#### Documents by Country

Almost fifty-two percent of the documents ( $n = 277$ ) were from four major countries. The remaining documents (48%) were produced by

authors affiliated with 58 different countries (see see Table 6). The countries in which academic articles were published most frequently were the United States of America ( $n = 169$ , 32%), the United Kingdom ( $n = 41$ , 7.7%), Australia ( $n = 34$ , 6.4%) and Spain ( $n = 33$ , 6.2%).

## DISCUSSION

This study analyzed the documents related to parenting styles that were published in various journals, conference papers, press and reviews from 2008 to present. These were found by searching the SCOPUS that showed 92.6 percent were journal articles, 2.8 percent were conference papers, and 2.3 percent were articles in press and reviews. The documents were predominantly in English (93.7%) with the remainder being shared between Spanish (3.2%), Portuguese (1.3%) and other languages. For the past few years, many journals have published articles in different foreign languages (Turkish, German, Spanish, and so on.), which have resulted in an increase in the number of articles in general on parenting styles. This shows that interest in different parts of the world in this area has gained momentum.

In examining the results, it is clearly observed that the content of published documents is highly influenced by the increasing awareness and work done on parenting styles with increase of almost ten percent in the number of articles published within academic journals every year. It also highlights an increased level of interest among parents and capacity among researchers to work on the findings and effectiveness of parenting.

**Table 5: Distribution of publications based on research design over the years**

<i>Year of publication</i>	<i>Quantitative</i>		<i>Qualitative</i>		<i>Mixed</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
2008	42	7.9	4	0.8	3	0.6
2009	36	6.8	3	0.6	2	0.4
2010	40	7.5	4	0.8	1	0.2
2011	47	8.9	4	0.8	3	0.6
2012	36	6.8	9	1.6	3	0.6
2013	52	9.8	11	2.1	5	0.9
2014	54	10.2	12	2.2	6	1.2
2015	40	7.5	10	1.8	10	1.8
2016	54	10.2	11	2.1	5	0.9
2017	12	2.3	8	1.5	3	0.6
Total	413	77.9	76	14.3	41	7.8

A great majority of studies on parenting styles originated from the United States, Europe and Australia. Although the “others” category in the analysis of country of origin of the studies appeared to be high, the category itself represented a combination of countries such as Ethiopia, Hungary, Indonesia, Pakistan, Kuwait, Philippines, Serbia, United Arab Emirates, Tanzania, and so on, where only one published document in the ten year framework was found for each country. This suggests a lack of awareness and importance of the effectiveness of parenting and its impact on the adolescent’s lifelong behavior in these parts of the world. It is consistent with the findings that many underdeveloped and Muslim countries contributed less towards parenting style research and literature (Khodaii et al. 2008).

Methodological trends found within the articles in the selected period indicated that quantitative methods were the most common. This finding suggests an underrepresentation of qualitative or mixed methods that promote contextually bound, critical or interpretive views, and the continued dominance of qualitative choices in the field of psychology and psychological guidance and counseling. However, after the year 2012 an increase in the qualitative research has been observed and an increase in the mixed method design has also been seen since the year 2013. This observation may be an indication that such studies may be gaining prestige in the field and the value of their findings being acknowledged.

The review of the studies incorporated in this study hypothesized that if parents were able to put themselves in their child’s place when parenting, they would be able to respond calmly without judgment, allowing them to accurately assess and improve their parent-child interactions. Results showed that if authoritarian and permissive parents began to use effective parenting skills education, they would automatically begin questioning the effectiveness of their existing parenting styles and start to become more authoritative in practice (Wahler and Williams 2013). Williams and Wahler (2010) stated that authoritative parents are most likely to be successful in parenting as this style of parenting creates an environment in which the child is willing to learn and be parented.

The findings of this study also imply that indicators of parenting could be useful child in-

dicators too. As argued in the Introduction section of this paper, it is documented that the quality of parenting is associated with an array of outcomes representing both the well-being and the success of adolescents’ lives. Adolescents’ assessment in terms of their relation to their parents is relevant because research studies have also suggested strong associations between parenting and adolescents’ future gains or losses as well as their psychological health and well-being. Viewing parents as responsive, interested, but not uncomfortably intrusive, will constitute an important aspect of a satisfying parent-child relationship as seen by the adolescent (Bradshaw et al. 2015).

The results from this study showed that the most frequent or most favored parenting style rated by participants was authoritative, followed by authoritarian, and finally permissive. When analyzed in detail, Black/African-Americans were found to favor authoritative parenting style more than other ethnic groups. This finding proved to be consistent with research studies stating culture’s influence on the parenting style and attitudes which individuals favor and to which they subscribe (Ferrari 2002; Bell 2013).

The results from the current study indicate that there was one significant relationship found specifically between the authoritarian parenting style and children’s degree of negative affect or negative temperament. Given this interaction, children raised specifically in authoritarian households tend to experience and demonstrate more negative emotions, such as fear, anger, guilt, and nervousness than those children raised in authoritative and permissive households. According to Williams (2014), children of authoritarian parents generally tend to display a limited range of emotions, or become emotionally inflexible because they are given very few opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings at home. Furthermore, when they experience unfavorable situations, children from authoritarian homes might shutdown, become emotionally withdrawn or quiet, which are the signs of lower levels of emotional intelligence (Kafetsios 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Parenting styles are a dynamic construct and are very much on the path of being studied more deeply. This paper presented trends that are

evident in published academic articles between 2008 and 2017, highlighting some important trends within the content and methods regarding the concepts and principles of parenting styles. The results of the analysis showed that there had been an overwhelming majority of quantitative studies over other research designs while there is a steady increase in the number of qualitative studies in this area. While USA-based researchers lead the academic stage, researchers in the UK, Australia, Spain and Canada contributed to the development of the field in their countries. However, English remained the dominating language of the reviewed publications. It was also surprising to find out that there were a lot of European countries, such as Finland, Cyprus and Switzerland, with less than 10 publications on this topic in the last 10 years. New Zealand was the only English-speaking country with less than 10 publications within the review period.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Knowledge production is continuous and consistent efforts are needed to understand trends in this area to ensure greater consensus about emergent issues affecting the development of a child for his or her better development both at the physical as well as the psychological level. Although parenting has started to get the attention it always needed around the world, ongoing reflexive research, especially using qualitative methodologies where such concepts as parenting styles, adolescents' reactions and the effects of culture are investigated in depth, are still needed. This will ensure that the theories, methods, principles, and values it purports are adequately translated in both its published and practiced work and that the relationship between these elements is strengthened.

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