

Parenting Style and Adolescent Mental Health Outcomes: A Cross-Sectional Study Among Senior High School Students in Bandung, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescent mental health problems are increasing and have become a significant public health concern, as adolescence represents a critical developmental transition characterized by physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. Parenting style is recognized as an important determinant of adolescent mental health. Inappropriate parenting styles, such as authoritarian and permissive approaches, have been associated with emotional problems, including anxiety, depression, and behavioral regulation difficulties.

Methods: This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design. The sample consisted of 246 students recruited from five senior high schools in Bandung Indonesia. Adolescent mental health was assessed using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), while parenting style was measured using the Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ). Data were analyzed using Spearman's rank correlation test.

Results: The majority of respondents reported democratic parenting (66.7%), and more than half were classified as having normal mental health status (51.6%). Statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between parenting style and adolescent mental health ($p = 0.032$; $p < 0.05$), with a very weak positive correlation ($r = 0.136$).

Conclusion: Parenting style was significantly associated with adolescent mental health, although the strength of the relationship was very weak. Democratic parenting was associated with more favorable mental health outcomes compared to authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. These findings highlight the importance of collaborative efforts between families and schools to support optimal adolescent psychological development.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent mental health has become an increasingly important public health concern. Adolescence represents a critical developmental transition from childhood to adulthood, characterized by significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. These developmental transitions are often accompanied by psychological challenges, including emotional and mental health problems, particularly among senior high school students who are in late adolescence. Several factors have been identified as contributing to adolescent mental health outcomes, including parenting style, peer influence, gratitude levels, and gender differences (Ningrum, 2023). Among these factors, parenting practices play a crucial role in shaping adolescent mental health through both family and school-related environments that constitute adolescents' daily social context.

Parenting style, defined as the manner in which parents nurture, guide, and regulate their children, is a fundamental determinant of emotional, behavioral, and psychological development. However, some

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adolescents are raised in environments characterized by excessively harsh or overly permissive parenting practices (Fitri et al., 2018). Such conditions have been associated with an increased risk of emotional dysregulation, behavioral problems, hyperactivity, and difficulties in peer relationships. Previous studies have shown that adolescents experiencing mental health problems are more likely to originate from families characterized by authoritarian or permissive parenting styles (Handayani, 2021). Therefore, adolescent mental health cannot be examined independently of the interaction between family parenting practices and the broader school environment, which represents a primary social setting during adolescence.

Schools serve not only as educational institutions but also as central social environments where adolescents engage in daily interactions and psychosocial development. Consequently, the school environment plays a significant role in influencing adolescent mental health outcomes. Evidence suggests that adolescents raised in less supportive family environments are more vulnerable to emotional and psychological problems. Conversely, a positive and supportive social environment contributes to healthier psychological development and improved emotional well-being (Kholifah & Sodikin, 2020). According to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (2018), there has been a notable increase in emotional and mental health disorders among adolescents, particularly anxiety and depressive symptoms. Furthermore, findings from the Indonesian National Adolescent Mental Health Survey indicate that approximately one-third of adolescents reported experiencing sadness, anxiety, or emotional regulation difficulties within the past year (Wilopo, 2023). These conditions are influenced not only by individual factors but also by external determinants, including insufficient parental support and unfavorable social environments.

Regional data from the Bandung District Health Office (2023) further highlight the magnitude of this issue. Among 96,850 adolescents aged 15–18 years who underwent mental health screening across 62 primary healthcare centers, approximately 22.2% were identified as experiencing emotional and mental health problems. Given the substantial prevalence and the potential influence of family-related determinants, this study was conducted to analyze the relationship between parenting style and adolescent mental health among senior high school students in Bandung

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional design, which allows for objective measurement and efficient data collection at a single point in time. The study sample consisted of 246 senior high school students recruited from five schools in Bandung Indonesia. Adolescent mental health was assessed using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), while parenting style was measured using the Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ).

RESULTS

Table 1. Distribution of Parenting Styles and Adolescent Mental Health n = 246

Parenting style	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Democratic	164	66,7
Permissive	38	15,4
Authoritarian	44	17,9
Adolescent Mental Health	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Normal	127	51,6
Borderline	53	21,5
Abnormal	66	26,8

Table 1 shows the majority of respondents were exposed to a democratic parenting style, accounting for 164 individuals (66.7%). Regarding adolescent mental health status, more than half of the respondents were classified within the normal category, comprising 127 individuals (51.6%).

Table 2. Cross-Tabulation Between Parenting Style and Adolescent Mental Health (n = 246)

Parenting Style	Adolescent Mental Health							
	Normal		Borderline		Abnormal		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Democratic	94	57,3%	37	22,6%	33	20,1%	164	100%
Permissive	9	23,7%	11	28,9%	18	47,4%	38	100%
Authoritarian	24	54,5%	5	11,4%	15	34,1%	44	100%
Total	127	51,7%	53	21,5%	66	26,8%	246	100%

Table 2 shows democratic parenting was associated with a higher proportion of adolescents classified as having normal mental health (57.3%). In contrast, authoritarian parenting was associated with the highest proportion of adolescents in the abnormal category (47.4%). Although permissive parenting was also associated with a predominance of normal mental health status (54.5%), a substantial proportion of adolescents remained in the abnormal category (34.1%). Overall, normal mental health status was observed in the majority of respondents (51.7%).

Table 3. Association Between Parenting Style and Adolescent Mental Health (n = 246)

Variabel	Hasil Uji Korelasi Spearman's Rank		
	N	p-value	r
Parenting Style and Adolescent Mental Health	246	0,032	0,136

Table 3 shows the statistical analysis revealed a p-value of 0.032, which is below the significance threshold of 0.05. This finding indicates a statistically significant association between parenting style and adolescent mental health. The correlation coefficient (r = 0.136) suggests a very weak positive relationship between parenting style and adolescent mental health among senior high school students in Bandung.

DISCUSSION

The present study found that the majority of respondents (66.7%) experienced democratic parenting, a pattern widely aligned with what developmental psychologists describe as authoritative parenting. According to Diana Baumrind, who first conceptualized major parenting typologies, democratic or authoritative parenting is characterized by high responsiveness combined with appropriate levels of demandingness. Parents who adopt this style tend to provide clear behavioral expectations and consistent discipline while also maintaining warmth, open communication, and respect for the child's autonomy. Within the context of senior high school students, such an approach is developmentally appropriate, as adolescence is marked by increasing demands for independence, identity exploration, and emotional self-regulation.

The predominance of democratic parenting among respondents suggests that many families in the study setting foster balanced interaction patterns. By granting autonomy while maintaining structured supervision, parents create an environment that supports both competence and connectedness. Adolescents raised in such contexts are more likely to internalize rules, develop self-discipline, and engage in adaptive decision-making. Emotional support and constructive dialogue further facilitate psychological security, which serves as a protective factor against emotional disturbances. This aligns with Nur Utami and Raharjo (2021), who conceptualized parenting style as a consistent pattern of parental attitudes and behaviors shaping developmental trajectories within familial and sociocultural frameworks.

The findings are consistent with Dewi et al. (2024), who identified a significant association between parenting style and adolescent mental health outcomes, particularly noting that democratic parenting was linked to a lower risk of emotional and psychological disturbances. Adolescents who perceive their

parents as supportive yet firm may develop higher levels of self-esteem, emotional regulation, and resilience. Warm and communicative parenting practices encourage adolescents to express concerns and seek guidance when facing stressors, thereby reducing the likelihood of internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression (Riany, 2017).

Despite these positive associations, the weak correlation coefficient observed in the present study indicates that parenting style accounts for only a modest proportion of variability in adolescent mental health outcomes. This finding is important, as it highlights the complexity of adolescent psychological well-being. Mental health during adolescence is shaped by a constellation of interacting influences that extend beyond the family environment. While parenting practices form a foundational context for development, they operate alongside peer dynamics, academic demands, digital exposure, community safety, and broader sociocultural pressures.

Solehati et al. (2022) demonstrated that overall family environment quality and parental involvement significantly predict adolescent psychological well-being. A supportive family environment contributes to emotional stability, secure attachment, and adaptive coping mechanisms. However, Solehati and colleagues also acknowledged that family processes interact with external stressors. For example, even adolescents from nurturing families may experience psychological strain when exposed to chronic academic pressure or peer conflict. Conversely, some adolescents from less optimal parenting environments may demonstrate resilience when supported by positive school climates or mentoring relationships.

Further support is provided by Lansford et al. (2021), who emphasized the critical role of parent–child relationship quality in shaping emotional regulation and coping abilities. Parental warmth, consistent discipline, and effective communication were associated with lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms. These findings reinforce the theoretical proposition that parenting influences adolescents not only through behavioral control but also through relational processes. Open dialogue enables adolescents to develop cognitive reappraisal strategies and problem-solving skills, while emotional warmth strengthens attachment security. However, Lansford et al. also underscored the moderating role of sociocultural context. Norms surrounding autonomy, obedience, and emotional expression vary across cultures, potentially altering how parenting styles influence mental health outcomes. This cultural moderation may partially explain the weak association observed in the present study.

Zapf et al. (2024) further identified parental emotional involvement and effective family communication as protective factors against mental health problems. Importantly, these protective effects were amplified when adolescents also experienced supportive peer relationships and positive school environments. This suggests that parenting operates synergistically with other ecological systems. For instance, adolescents who feel understood at home may be more confident in forming healthy friendships. Similarly, adolescents who experience fairness and encouragement from teachers may develop academic self-efficacy, which buffers against stress.

These findings align with ecological frameworks of development. According to Urie Bronfenbrenner, adolescent development unfolds within nested environmental systems, including the microsystem (family, peers, school), mesosystem (interactions among microsystems), exosystem (indirect environmental influences), and macrosystem (cultural values and societal norms). From this perspective, parenting style represents only one component within the microsystem. Its influence on mental health may be mediated or moderated by factors such as peer acceptance, school climate, and socioeconomic conditions. For example, an adolescent exposed to democratic parenting but facing bullying at school may still experience psychological distress. Conversely, supportive friendships may buffer the negative effects of less optimal parenting.

The weak effect size observed in the present study should therefore not be interpreted as diminishing the importance of parenting. Rather, it underscores the multifactorial nature of adolescent mental health. Adolescence is a transitional stage characterized by rapid biological, cognitive, and social changes. Hormonal fluctuations, identity exploration, and increased academic expectations contribute to heightened emotional sensitivity. In this context, parenting provides an essential but not exclusive protective layer. Mental health outcomes emerge from cumulative risk and protective factors interacting over time.

Moreover, the cross-sectional design of the present study limits causal inference. While a statistically significant association was identified, it is not possible to determine directionality. It is plausible that adolescents experiencing psychological difficulties may perceive parenting behaviors differently, potentially influencing self-reported measures (Son, 2020). Longitudinal research would provide greater clarity regarding temporal relationships between parenting practices and mental health trajectories.

The findings also carry practical implications. Given that democratic parenting is associated with lower psychological risk, parent education programs may benefit from promoting communication skills, balanced discipline strategies, and emotional responsiveness. Workshops that teach parents how to negotiate boundaries while respecting adolescent autonomy could strengthen family relationships and enhance protective effects. However, interventions should not be limited to family-level strategies. The weak correlation highlights the necessity of integrating school-based mental health initiatives, peer support programs, and community engagement efforts.

Schools can play a pivotal role by fostering inclusive climates, providing counseling services, and implementing stress management programs (Yunere, 2021). Peer mentorship initiatives may enhance social connectedness, while resilience-building curricula can equip adolescents with coping skills applicable across contexts. Collaboration between families and schools is particularly important, as consistent messaging across environments reinforces adaptive behaviors.

The present study confirms a statistically significant relationship between democratic parenting and adolescent mental health outcomes, consistent with prior literature. Democratic parenting fosters emotional security, autonomy, and adaptive regulation, thereby reducing the risk of psychological disturbances. However, the weak correlation coefficient indicates that parenting style represents only one determinant within a broader ecological system. Adolescent mental health is shaped by dynamic interactions among family processes, peer relationships, academic pressures, and sociocultural influences. Effective interventions must therefore adopt a multidimensional approach that integrates family-based strategies with school and community supports. Such comprehensive efforts are essential for promoting sustainable improvements in adolescent psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the results parenting style plays an important role in influencing adolescent mental health. Democratic parenting was the most prevalent style and was associated with more favorable mental health outcomes, likely due to the presence of emotional support, open communication, and balanced supervision. In contrast, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were associated with a higher risk of mental health problems. Although a statistically significant relationship was identified, the strength of the association was very weak, indicating that adolescent mental health is also influenced by other factors, including the school environment, peer relationships, and social support. Therefore, collaborative support from families and the broader social environment is essential to promote and maintain adolescent mental health

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were disclosed by the writers of this work

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