



The Influence of Parenting Styles on Children's Emotional Intelligence in Early Childhood Education: A Study at TK Sahabat Bekasi

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of parenting styles on the emotional intelligence of Group B children at TK Sahabat Bekasi. A quantitative approach with a survey method was employed, involving 32 children and their parents selected through total sampling. Research instruments comprised Likert-scale questionnaires measuring three parenting styles (democratic, authoritarian, and permissive) and children's emotional intelligence. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression with SPSS 22. The findings revealed that parenting styles significantly affect children's emotional intelligence ($R^2 = 0.374$; $p < 0.05$). The highest contribution came from the democratic parenting style (3.7%), followed by permissive (3.17%) and authoritarian (2.72%). These results confirm that democratic parenting—characterized by open communication, guided freedom, and respect for children's opinions—is more effective in supporting emotional intelligence development. The study highlights the importance of consistently applying democratic parenting and suggests that educators provide parental education on positive parenting strategies.

Keywords: Parenting Styles, Emotional Intelligence, Early Childhood, Education

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INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is a crucial aspect of child development, especially in early childhood, because it plays a fundamental role in learning readiness, social interaction, and character formation (Goleman, 2021). Unlike cognitive abilities that mainly emphasize intellectual capacity, emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, regulate, and express emotions appropriately and establish empathy and positive social relationships (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Muslim, 2022). Research shows that children with higher emotional intelligence exhibit greater resilience, self-confidence, and stronger academic performance compared to peers with lower levels of emotional regulation (Mashar & Astuti, 2022).

Parenting style is one of the most decisive external factors in shaping children's emotional intelligence because parents are the first educators and role models who provide direct guidance in emotional and social learning (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Ellya Novera et al., 2021). Parental attitudes, communication styles, and approaches to discipline strongly affect how children perceive emotions and interact with others (Suryani, 2019; Syarbini,

2016). Baumrind's typology classifies parenting into three primary forms: authoritarian, permissive, and democratic (Santrock, 2022). Each style carries consequences for children's emotional growth, making it essential to investigate their impact on emotional intelligence in early childhood education.

Authoritarian parenting is characterized by rigid rules, strict control, and limited opportunities for children to express themselves. This style tends to suppress self-confidence and autonomy, often producing children who are anxious, submissive, and less adaptable in social interactions (Wulan, 2018; Resky, 2019; Khan, 2021). Hidayat (2021) confirmed that authoritarian parenting can limit children's ability to communicate emotions openly, thereby hindering social development. These patterns illustrate that high control without warmth may damage emotional competence in children.

In contrast, permissive parenting emphasizes freedom with minimal control, often accompanied by indulgence and leniency. Although this style may initially give children a sense of autonomy, it frequently results in poor self-regulation, weak empathy, and a tendency to ignore social rules (Dewi, 2023; Wahyuni, 2024). Research indicates that children raised in permissive households often become dependent, impulsive, and struggle to adapt to structured environments such as schools (Darling & Steinberg, 2023). These findings highlight the need for balanced boundaries in parenting.

Democratic parenting, also called authoritative, combines warmth and responsiveness with structured discipline. This style provides children with clear rules and expectations while allowing them to express their opinions, encouraging independence, responsibility, and emotional maturity (Hurlock, 2017; Muris, 2022). Several studies affirm that democratic parenting supports children in developing empathy, resilience, and stronger social skills (Erdaliameta et al., 2023; Putri, 2020). In practice, this parenting approach offers the most conducive environment for emotional intelligence growth compared to authoritarian and permissive parenting.

Observations at TK Sahabat Bekasi revealed diverse parenting practices influencing children's emotional behavior. Teachers reported that children from democratic families could better regulate emotions, work collaboratively with peers, and express feelings constructively. Conversely, authoritarian parenting often resulted in children with low confidence and a reluctance to communicate. In contrast, permissive parenting tended to produce demanding, less disciplined children, and they were prone to tantrums (Field Notes, 2025). These findings reinforce the importance of studying how parenting styles affect emotional intelligence in specific contexts.

Socio-economic conditions also shape parenting practices. Many parents in Bekasi face long working hours, leaving children under the care of grandparents or caregivers. This situation reduces direct parent-child interaction, which is essential for emotional development (Bornstein, 2023; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2022). Moreover, financial stress may lead to inconsistent or authoritarian approaches, limiting the warmth and emotional support children need to thrive (Belsky, 2021). Thus, socio-economic pressures cannot be ignored when analyzing parenting impacts on emotional growth.

Parental background factors such as education and psychological stability are equally influential. Parents with higher education tend to adopt democratic parenting, prioritizing communication and reasoning, while those with limited educational backgrounds often rely on authoritarian methods (McLearn et al., 2023). In addition, parents with stable mental health demonstrate greater patience and responsiveness, supporting positive emotional development in children (Lamb, 2022). These findings indicate that parenting practices are not isolated but linked to broader family characteristics.

Culture also plays a critical role in shaping parenting styles. In collectivist societies like Indonesia, parenting often stresses obedience and social harmony, whereas individualist cultures prioritize autonomy and independence (Darling & Steinberg, 2023). These cultural contexts affect how children learn to regulate emotions and interact with

others. For example, children in collectivist settings may develop stronger empathy and cooperation but weaker independence than those in individualist societies. This cultural dimension makes the study of parenting styles contextually relevant to Indonesian settings.

Another factor influencing emotional development is children's temperament, which interacts dynamically with parenting styles. Kochanska and Aksan (2022) argue that children's behavioral tendencies shape how parents respond, creating a bidirectional influence. Strong-willed or highly active children may provoke stricter discipline, while calmer children may elicit more lenient parenting. This reciprocal relationship emphasizes the complexity of parenting outcomes on emotional intelligence.

The rapid growth of digital media has also transformed family dynamics. Parents increasingly rely on online resources for parenting guidance, yet conflicting advice often leads to inconsistent parenting practices (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2023). Moreover, children's prolonged exposure to digital devices presents new challenges in emotional regulation, as it may reduce face-to-face interactions crucial for empathy and social learning (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2022). In such conditions, democratic parenting with clear boundaries becomes more critical.

Empirical studies in Indonesia provide further support for the significance of parenting styles. Sari (2022) showed that democratic parenting enhanced children's emotional intelligence in PAUD Mawar, while permissive parenting weakened empathy and discipline. Similarly, Nugroho (2019) found that authoritative parenting promoted children's independence and emotional maturity. These findings suggest that positive and balanced parenting practices are vital in the Indonesian context.

International research also validates these results. Parents.com (2025) emphasized that gentle parenting, a form of democratic parenting, fosters resilience, empathy, and emotional regulation across cultures. Likewise, McLearn et al. (2023) highlighted that parental warmth and clear expectations universally support children's socio-emotional development. These consistent findings strengthen the argument that democratic parenting provides optimal support for emotional growth.

These findings illustrate that authoritarian and permissive parenting often hinder children's emotional development, while democratic parenting proves most beneficial. This dynamic is particularly evident at TK Sahabat Bekasi, where classroom observations align with existing research. Understanding these parenting patterns is crucial to addressing emotional development challenges in early childhood education. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of parenting styles on the emotional intelligence of Group B children at TK Sahabat Bekasi. By focusing on the relationship between democratic, authoritarian, and permissive parenting and children's emotional growth, the research seeks to contribute empirical evidence to guide parents, educators, and policymakers. The findings are expected to strengthen parenting education programs and support early childhood institutions in nurturing children's emotional intelligence.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey design to examine the causal relationship between parenting styles and children's emotional intelligence in early childhood. A quantitative method was deemed appropriate because it allows objective measurement through numerical data that can be statistically tested (Santrock, 2022; Muris, 2022). Using a survey design, the researcher systematically collected data from all respondents, thereby providing an accurate picture of the actual conditions among the study subjects (Erdaliameta et al., 2023).

The participants of this research were Group B children at TK Sahabat Bekasi, along with their parents. A total of 32 children were involved using a *total sampling* technique, including the entire population relevant to the study (Putri, 2020). This technique was selected because the population size was relatively small, allowing the researcher to obtain

a comprehensive overview without sample selection bias (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Thus, the study's internal validity was strengthened since the findings reflected the actual conditions in the field.

The research instruments consisted of two questionnaires. The first was a parenting style questionnaire based on Baumrind's classification, which includes democratic, authoritarian, and permissive styles (Darling & Steinberg, 2023; Hurlock, 2017). The second was an emotional intelligence questionnaire adapted from Goleman's framework, which comprises five indicators: self-awareness, emotion management, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 2021). These instruments were chosen because previous studies had confirmed their validity in assessing the relationship between parenting styles and children's emotional development (Dewi, 2023; Wahyuni, 2024).

Before use, the instruments were tested for validity and reliability. Validity was assessed using Pearson correlation to ensure that each item accurately measured the intended construct, while reliability was tested with Cronbach's Alpha with a minimum threshold of > 0.70 (Mashar & Astuti, 2022). Such procedures are essential to guarantee that the instruments are consistent and trustworthy in producing reliable data (McLearn et al., 2023). Instruments that meet these standards are considered valid for measuring the relationship between parenting styles and emotional intelligence.

The collected data were analyzed using simple linear regression with the aid of SPSS version 22. This analysis was chosen because it is suitable for examining the direct effect of an independent variable (parenting style) on a dependent variable (emotional intelligence) (Erdaliameta et al., 2023). Employing SPSS allowed the researcher to conduct the analysis systematically, efficiently, and accurately. The hypothesis test results then served as the basis for concluding which parenting style had the most decisive influence on children's emotional intelligence at TK Sahabat Bekasi (Sari, 2022; Khan, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The data analysis revealed that parenting styles significantly affect children's emotional intelligence. A simple linear regression test produced a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.374 with a significance value of $p < 0.05$. This indicates that approximately 37.4% of the variation in children's emotional intelligence can be explained by parenting styles, while the remainder is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Table 1. Contribution of Parenting Styles to Children's Emotional Intelligence

Parenting Style	Contribution (%)	Characteristics of Children's Emotional Development
Democratic	3.7%	Manage emotions effectively, show empathy toward peers, confidently express opinions, and develop stronger social skills.
Permissive	3.17%	They have high self-confidence and greater freedom but lack discipline, struggle with emotional regulation, and face difficulty adapting to school rules.
Authoritarian	2.72%	Obedient to rules but emotionally suppressed, withdrawn, less flexible, and face difficulties in building healthy social relationships.

Democratic parenting was found to have the most significant contribution to children's emotional intelligence, at 3.7%. Children raised with this style demonstrated better abilities to manage emotions, show empathy toward peers, and confidently express

their opinions. Permissive parenting contributed 3.17% to children's emotional intelligence. Children from permissive families tended to have greater freedom but lacked discipline in regulating their behavior. Although they displayed high self-confidence, they often struggled to adapt to the rules established in school. Excessive freedom does not necessarily align with strong emotional regulation skills.

Authoritarian parenting had the lowest contribution, at 2.72%. Children raised under authoritarian conditions tended to obey rules but were less able to express their emotions healthily. Excessive control often causes children to become withdrawn and experience difficulties in building social relationships.

Teacher observations at TK Sahabat Bekasi supported the quantitative data. Children from democratic families appeared more active, cooperative, and capable of interacting positively with peers. In contrast, children from authoritarian families often appeared passive in class activities, while those from permissive families were difficult to manage and showed impulsive behavior.

Further analysis also revealed significant differences in various aspects of emotional intelligence. In terms of self-awareness, children raised with democratic parenting scored higher compared to those from other styles. These children could recognize the emotions they experienced and express them appropriately.

Regarding emotional regulation, children from democratic families were better able to control anger or disappointment, while those from permissive families often experienced emotional outbursts. Children raised with authoritarian parenting demonstrated rigid emotional control but lacked flexibility in adapting to social situations that required adjustment. Intrinsic motivation was also more prominent among children raised in democratic households. They were enthusiastic about learning activities, demonstrated curiosity, and persevered when facing difficulties. In contrast, children from authoritarian families often participated out of fear, while those from permissive families lacked consistency in completing tasks.

Empathy was also more developed in children from democratic families. They understood the feelings of peers who were sad or struggling and showed helpful behavior. Conversely, children from permissive families tended to be egocentric, while those from authoritarian families showed limited empathy due to minimal opportunities for dialogue. Finally, regarding social skills, children from democratic families were more likely to form friendships, cooperate in groups, and respect differences. Children from permissive families often appeared dominant but inconsistent in teamwork, while those from authoritarian families were less confident in taking initiative or leadership roles.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that parenting styles play a critical role in shaping children's emotional intelligence. The significant contribution of democratic parenting highlights that warmth combined with firm structure fosters children's ability to manage emotions, develop empathy, and build social competence (Darling & Steinberg, 2023; McLearn et al., 2023). This result reinforces previous evidence that authoritative or democratic parenting produces more adaptable children and stronger socio-emotional skills across contexts.

The outcomes also align with Goleman's (2021) emotional intelligence framework, which emphasizes the role of supportive environments in developing self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Democratic parenting provides children with two-way communication, recognition, and appropriate boundaries, which serve as essential scaffolds for their emotional development (Muris, 2022).

In contrast, authoritarian parenting limits children's emotional expression due to excessive control and rigid rules. Children raised in authoritarian households often comply with regulations but struggle with self-confidence and social interaction. This is consistent

with the findings of Hidayat (2021), who noted that authoritarian parenting fosters dependency, fear, and anxiety, ultimately hindering emotional growth.

Permissive parenting, while providing freedom, tends to result in children who lack discipline and struggle with emotional regulation. Dewi (2023) found similar results, reporting that permissive parenting often produces spoiled children who are egocentric and less capable of coping with structured social environments such as schools. These outcomes suggest that excessive leniency is equally detrimental to strict authoritarianism.

When viewed through Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the family as the primary microsystem plays a central role in shaping children's developmental outcomes. Daily parental interactions influence children's self-regulation and socio-emotional adaptation (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Belsky, 2021). Thus, parenting style is a family matter and a foundation for children's readiness to interact in broader systems such as school and community.

The results also support Putri's (2020) study, which emphasized that democratic parenting fosters social skills and cooperative behavior in early childhood education. Children raised in democratic families show stronger engagement in classroom activities, demonstrate leadership qualities, and can better empathize with peers. This reinforces the notion that emotional intelligence nurtured at home translates into positive behavior in school environments.

The positive role of democratic parenting in this study is consistent with international research highlighting its universality. McLearn et al. (2023) reported that children raised with warmth and structure consistently perform better in emotional regulation and resilience in diverse cultural settings. This finding suggests that democratic parenting principles can be effectively applied across different cultural contexts, including Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the limitations of authoritarian and permissive styles highlight the dangers of extreme approaches in parenting. Erdaliameta et al. (2023) argued that overly strict and lenient parenting undermine children's ability to develop balanced emotional intelligence. Children need firm, empathetic guidance that allows them to learn discipline while feeling valued and supported.

These findings imply that schools and educators should actively engage parents in promoting democratic parenting. Teachers can provide workshops and counseling sessions to raise parental awareness of how parenting affects emotional development. Similar initiatives have proven effective in early childhood education contexts, where collaboration between schools and parents enhances children's socio-emotional learning (Sari, 2022; Wahyuni, 2024).

Overall, this study strengthens the understanding that democratic parenting is the most effective approach to fostering early childhood emotional intelligence. By balancing freedom with discipline, parents help children develop confidence, empathy, and resilience—skills essential for academic and social success. These results underscore the importance of integrating parenting education into early childhood programs to ensure holistic child development (Chintya & Sit, 2024; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that parenting styles significantly influence the emotional intelligence of early childhood learners. Among the three styles examined, democratic parenting provides the most substantial contribution, as it fosters children's ability to manage emotions, build empathy, and develop social skills. In contrast, permissive and authoritarian parenting tend to hinder children's emotional growth, either by providing excessive freedom or imposing rigid control. These findings highlight the importance of parenting as a foundational factor in shaping children's emotional development.

Parents are encouraged to apply democratic parenting consistently by balancing discipline with affection and maintaining open communication with their children. Schools

and educators are also advised to integrate positive parenting education into early childhood programs through workshops, parent-teacher collaboration, and counseling sessions. Furthermore, future research should expand by examining other influential variables, such as the role of school environments, peer interaction, and the impact of digital media, to provide a more holistic understanding of the factors contributing to children's emotional intelligence.

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