

## The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Kindergarten Children's Social Skills

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**Abstract:** The discussion that takes place in this article sheds light on the relationship between parenting styles and social skills among children. The aim of this study is to (i) identify the level of parenting style practised by parents; (ii) identify the level of social skills among children; (iii) identify the level of social skills among children according to the domains; and (iv) determine the relationship between parenting style and social skills among children. The researcher used the parenting style instrument by Baumrind and *Preschool and Kindergarten Behaviour Scale* (PKBS-2). The parenting style instrument comprises 32 items, whereas PKBS-2 contains 42 items. The instruments have been employed to gather data about parenting style and social skills among children, categorised into three (3) domains namely social cooperation (A1), social interaction (A2) and social independence (A3). From the outcome, parenting style significantly influences the social skills among preschool children. This indicates that a responsive parenting style is important in ensuring that the children's social skills develop in full form. The impact of this work is to help parents practise a responsive parenting style to ensure that their children will have a formidable set of social skills.

**Keywords:** *Parenting style, social skills, parenting, PKBS-2, preschool students*

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### 1. Introduction

Good social skills are instrumental to children in the preschool phase. This is reasoned by the fact that during preschool education, children require social skills such as the capability to socialise, interact, converse, share and many others. The preschool expects the children to become engaged actively in the teaching and learning process (P&P) with the teacher. According to a study by *Children and Youth Health* (CYH), children's capabilities to form friendships, cooperate, mutually help one another, demonstrate empathy, be patient, become a good listener, socialise with peers, interact positively and listen to, and follow teacher's instructions, are crucial. Children can negotiate, cooperate and share after they interact and socialise with one another (Hasan & Zaini, 2021). These youngsters who build their socialisation experience and have stable emotions, can adapt to the school environment and show good performance academically (Nachiappan et al., 2017).

The studies by Yu et. al, (2021) and Renny & Shahin, (2020) suggested that children's psychological well-being depends on the parenting style practised by their parents. This is harmonious with the discovery by Tur-Porcar (2017) showing that the type of parenting style significantly contributes to the formation of children's behaviour and social skills. Parents who give their children the right push and encouragement, who normally issue warnings and punishments that are appropriate to discipline the children and who are engaged in discussions about their children's problems or disciplinary issues, exhibit an authoritative parenting style (Razak and Hashim, 2022).

Conversely, these authoritarian parents harbour high hopes towards their children but they are slightly nonchalant about the children's feelings and desires. According to Shahin (2020), children raised by authoritarian parents often rebel, feel vengeful, panic, and anxious, become quiet, and shy, have low self-esteem, lack the motivation to be independent, and have negative thinking. Meanwhile, the permissive parenting style involves parents who are too soft-spoken and flexible towards their children, tending to their every need without protest or restriction. Such a parenting style is characterised by a very low parental control where they see their children as mature individuals leading to low reliance on the parents.

The parenting style practised by parents is the main determining factor for the behaviour shown by the children. The social skills among children are important to help them acclimatise to the school environment in their schooling years. According to Maleki et al, (2018), social skills are the basis of the lives of children, helping them to accommodate to the social environment where the behaviour they show is consistent with the norms

of the society. Similarly, Soto-Icaza, Aboitiz, and Billeke (2015) asserted that children's capability to socialise in their social realm is closely connected to their communication and interaction skills.

The objectives of this study are (i) to identify the level of parenting style among parents; (ii) to identify the level of social skills among children; (iii) to identify the level of social skills among children according to the following domains (a) social cooperation (A1); (b) social interaction (A2); and (c) social freedom (A3). Finally, to determine the relationship between parenting style and social skills among children.

## 2. Literature Review

Parents are the first educators when it comes to forming the personality of every individual, where a family is the smallest pillar in society (Muallifah & Fatcholli, 2024). Thus, parents play a vital role in educating and supporting the holistic development of their children. According to Muallifah and Fatcholli (2024), the parents' success in educating their children is influenced by their skills and parenting style. Muslim religious scholars like Ibn Khaldun also emphasised the importance of parental responsibilities in providing religious knowledge, instilling moral and social values, stimulating the children's thinking, and equipping them with practical knowledge ready for their vocational preparation in the future (Zur Raffar et al., 2021). Additionally, Zur Raffar et al. (2021) stated that the significance of social education to children is to inculcate the principles of respecting the rights of others and showing polite and considerate behaviours to society.

Parenting style is the behaviour that the parents adopt to educate, care for, and form their children's behaviour where parents stand out as an integral factor in the lives of the children (Mokhtar & Mohamed, 2024). According to Ahmad and Kutty (2024), parents' mistakes in educating their children can become detrimental to the individual, family, society as well as to the nation. At the same time, it can pose a great negative impact on the children's emotional and mental development such as being deprived of love, having unstable emotions, low self-esteem, disciplinary problems and many more. Parents and caretakers will be able to make smarter decisions in lending support to the children's growth and well-being by understanding how different parenting styles can influence the development of the children (Kausar & Afaq, 2024).

Muhammad Suwayd, as cited by Fariddudin et al. (2022), stated that the development of social skills seeks to train children to become able to adapt themselves to society, be it with adults or peers. This is important because the exponential growth of technology and social media can hurt children. The study further stated that the extensive use of social media can lead to poor self-confidence, can be damaging to mental health, and can disturb one's emotions. The best parenting style can help control negative behaviour and support children's development of social skills. Thus, parents need to be creative in choosing the best method to develop the social aspect within their children (Fariddudin et al., 2022).

Desa et al. (2015) discussed parenting skills, family functions, and psychological well-being among parents who examined the social issues caused by family dysfunction using the Parenting Behaviour Scale. This study adopts the quantitative approach using questionnaires involving 231 respondents in the areas of Alor Star, Kota Bharu, and Klang Valley, including 20 Likert Scale items. This study aims to reflect on the scenarios in society and the requirement of psychological knowledge to build a prosperous family.

Nonetheless, the previous study by Mohammad Rawi et al. (2017), looked into the relationship between the type of communication and parenting style with the deviant behaviour among teenagers. This study discussed the social issues related to teenagers' involvement in delinquency due to the lack of family attention. This study used Albert's Social Cognitive Theory and Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, with a sample of 48 teenagers at the Interactive Workshop, Social Welfare Department Pahang, through a quantitative study using instruments and questionnaire. Researchers hope that future studies can look into the appropriate parenting style for different situations to ensure the mental development of teenagers and to prevent deviant behaviour.

In general, not all children have a well-off family; a lot of them have lost their parents at a young age, they may have lost one parent, or both their parents and their financial situation is dire (Nashihin, 2019a). The laws dictate that every child has the right to live, be cared for, be guided with love stay with their family and receive due attention (Nashihin, H., 2022). The role of the parents is very important in realising the rights of the

children, and one of the efforts in achieving this is by setting up alternative agencies such as the Children's Welfare Board (LKSA) or orphanages (Hafidz & Nashihin, 2021).

According to Razak & Hashim (2022), parents must be wise in choosing the appropriate parenting style for their children's positive development. Children's development experts found that behavioural issues among children and teenagers often stem from ineffective parenting styles. Baumrind (1967) classified parenting styles into three types: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Parents practising the authoritative style are associated with the acts of providing consolidation and encouragement to their children. Parents have a role in forming children's personalities and behaviour while increasing their self-development to produce productive individuals. The parenting style practised influences the behaviour, social skills, emotional and psychological well-being, and the parent-child relationship (Che Husin et al., 2023).

According to Abdul et al. (2023), social skills are one of the most important skills in the lives of children as the social skills development at this early stage helps children face various social situations in their lives. This is also a remarkable stage, as it helps children's development to become more productive. The social interactions of the children involve their relationship with other children, influencing one another until a relationship pattern is established (Hasan & Zaini, 2021).

In a study by Hasan & Zaini (2021), social skills are defined, by Children and Youth Health (CYH), as the capability to make friends, learn to cooperate, be mutually helpful, have patience, empathise, listen well, interact with peers, communicate positively and follow instructions. Other than that, Abdul et al. (2023) in their studies referred to Docksay (2010) concerning children's development of social skills that can have a positive effect not only on the interpersonal aspect but also on their academic achievement.

Parents tend to choose a parenting style based on their ethnicity and culture, level of education and income with a variation of parenting styles observed in different communities and individuals (Lari, 2023). Zarra-Nezhad et al. (2022) stated that parents are the most significant factor in children's development. Baumrind (1991) identified three commonly used parenting styles: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative, and discussed how these styles play an important role in children's behavioural outcomes. The authoritative style involves high reactions and hopes from children (Lari, 2023). This style balances reaction and hope. In turn, the authoritarian style pays attention to the safety of the children and this is depicted by Yadav & Chandola (2019), as unique, demanding, rigid, and controlling. Baumrind (1991) also identified the permissive parenting style that encompasses a supportive and friendly approach without setting any limitations.

Any parenting style is often recognised through social interactions and it seldom takes place when an individual is alone (Zarra-Nezhad et al., 2020). According to Lari (2023), an effective parenting style is important to ensure that our children grow in the right environment and build their capacity to address social issues effectively. Sukatin et al. (2020) stressed the fact that parenting style is important for children's social development, helping to avert issues that can emerge at the preschool level, such as the reluctance to play with friends, the fact that they do not want to share and show less cooperative attitude when they are playing. Syahrul & Nurhafizah (2021), added that family, early social experience, and the environment influence the children's social development. Social development needs to take place earlier when children start interacting within and outside their homes (Anzani & Insan, 2020). In the work by Nabila et al. (2022), it is discovered that a better parenting style leads to better social skills among children, whereas a weak parenting style hurts social development.

Several studies have been established such as the studies by Rizka & Bacotang (2018), aiming to identify the relationship between parenting style (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) and social skills (social cooperation, social interaction and social freedom) among preschool children in Banda Aceh. 242 parents from two preschools in Banda Aceh were chosen as the samples for this quantitative study. The Parenting Style and Dimension ) Questionnaire (PSDQ) and the Preschool and Kindergarten Behaviour Scale (PKBS) were adopted to collect the data through the survey. Data were analysed using the Pearson Correlation.

Even so, in previous studies conducted by Salavera et al., (2022) results were analysed from the emotional and social scales that are associated with parenting style, and it shows that children raised under the democratic

parenting regime tend to get higher marks in social skills compared to children educated under other parenting regimes, and they have average marks in emotional skills. It is found that parenting style has a direct influence on social skills, which is likely to become better when emotions act as a mediator between the two constructs. This result points to the fact that parenting style is closely associated with both emotional and social skills. Another discovery establishes that emotions play a mediating role in the relationship between parenting style and social skills. Given the impact of parenting style on emotional and social skills, more studies are required to address this issue.

Additionally, the study by Paz et al., (2021), examined the relationship between parenting style and social skills developed among students of Form 12 in a school in the Zone IV district, Zambales during the academic year 2018-2019. This study uses a descriptive survey from selected secondary schools in the Subic district. It is found that the authoritative parenting style was named by students as the style most frequently used by their parents, while the parents only sometimes adopt the authoritarian, permissive and neutral approaches.

The study by Yankati & Patil (2024), looked into the parenting style of the mothers to preschool children in rural and urban areas in UAS, Dharwad, from 2020-2023. Samples comprise 200 parents (100 from rural areas and 100 from urban areas) with children aged 3-6 years who go to Anganwadi and attend the daycare centre. The correlation research design is adopted to determine the link between the parenting style and factors related to children in rural and urban settings. The mothers' parenting style tool developed by Robinson helps to measure the parenting style, and a questionnaire was used to gather information about the children's era.

Parenting is the factor that influences the formation of children's personalities, such as making children feel uncomfortable and having the tendency to withdraw from society, showing the preference to be alone, and finding it difficult to trust others leading to poor academic performance in school (Makagingge et al., 2019). Zarra-Nezhad et al. (2022), stated that social skills involve good interactions with other people. The capability to interact with others and to form a good interpersonal relationship, such as talking, making friends, showing good behaviour, and caring for other people's feelings, is also known as social skills (Yadav & Chandola, 2019).

### 3. Methodology

The quantitative method is used to analyse the data that have been gathered systematically (Darussalam & Hussin, 2021). This study will detail the objectives, study questions and the variables concerned. The theoretical approach used to assess and test the study hypotheses and their relationship with the study variables will be based on Creswell & Creswell (2020). This research uses a quantitative method, with the data analysed descriptively and by inference. The study design involves the implementation of the project and, the collection of all the data required based on the objectives, study questions and variables determined (Darussalam & Hussin 2021). Researchers settled for Baumrind's parenting style instrument as cited in Abdul Gafoor et al. (2014) and the *Preschool and Kindergarten Behaviour Scale* (PKBS-2) by Merrell (1994). This parenting style instrument comprises 32 items covering four domains: (i) authoritarian parenting style, (ii) authoritative parenting style, (iii) permissive parenting style, and (iv) neutral parenting style. Meanwhile, PKBS-2 contains 34 items to review the social skills. This instrument was used to obtain data about parenting style and social skills among children, covering three domains: social cooperation (A1), social interaction (A2), and social freedom (A3).

Reliability in research refers to the analysis of Cronbach's Alpha value, where the range accepted and seen as credible is 0.60 above (Darussalam & Hussin, 2021). The table below shows the Cronbach's Alpha value for the research instrument adopted:

**Table 1: The Reliability of the Study Instrument**

Study Instrument	Total number of items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
parenting style	32 items	0.82
social skills	34 items	0.74

### 4. Study Findings

Researchers conducted a pilot study where a total of 58 respondents had taken part in this research. According to Darusalam & Hussin (2021) before the statistical analysis, a set of complete data was keyed into the SPSS *software*, where they were subjected to the data cleaning process to avoid missing data or remote data cases so that the analysis of the study findings can be obtained accurately and the study objectives can be answered (Darusalam & Hussin, 2021, Damanhuri, 2021,). The data cleaning was executed through multiple imputations to verify that all the samples have answered all items and that the variables investigated have received full feedback.

### Descriptive Analysis

According to Darussalam & Hussin (2021), descriptive analysis is used to display information and data obtained for a population and sample. The information shown is the outcome of the data analysis in the form of mean, standard deviation, normal distribution, coding and missing data where it gives a picture of the characteristics of the variables in a piece of research (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Damanhuri, 2021).

The study findings will be tabulated for every variable examined. Three (3) study questions need to be analysed descriptively and one (1) analysed by inference. The questions are as follows:

What is the level of parenting style among parents?

**Table 2: The Overall Frequency of Parenting Style**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Very Frequently (3)	14	24.1	1.35	0.48
Frequently (2)	41	70.7		
Seldom (1)	3	5.2		
Total (N)	58	100		

Table 2 shows the mean value for parenting style which is 1.35 and the standard variation of 0.48. The frequency of a mother's, father's or caretaker's parenting style choosing *seldom* (1) shows that the parenting style (n = 3) equals 5.2 percent, whereas for the frequency *frequently* (2) the parenting style (n = 41) equals 70.7 percent and *very frequently* (3) exhibiting that the parenting style (n = 14) is equal to 24.1 percent.

Thus, this shows that the majority of the parents or caretakers demonstrate their parenting style *frequently* (2) where 70.7 percent is the highest, followed by *very frequently* (3) which is 24.1 percent and finally, *seldom* (1) which is 5.2 percent. The data show that a mother, a father, or a caretaker displays a moderate level of parenting style.

What is the level of social skills among children?

**Table 3: The Frequency of Children's social skills**

Social Skills	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
High (4)	5	12.03	1.50	0.50
Moderate (3)	44	75.90		
Low (2)	6	10.30		
Very Low (1)	3	5.20		

Table 3 shows the mean value for social skills which is 1.50 and the standard deviation is 0.50. The frequency of the children's social skills is based on the assessment of the mother, father or caretaker of the children. The frequency of social skills for the children is Very Low (1) which is (n = 3) or 5.2 percent. Next, the frequency is Low (2) which is (n = 6) or 10.3 percent. The children's social skills then are Moderate (3) which is (n = 44) or 75.9 percent and finally, it is High which is (n = 5) or equal to 12.03 percent.

Therefore, it shows that the majority of the children's social skills are at (2) High level which is equal to 75.9 percent. The second highest is the Low level of social skills which is 10.3 percent, the third one is the High level of social skills which is 12.03 percent and the final one is the Very Low level of social skills which is 5.2 percent.

The data show that the social skills possessed by the children as assessed by their mother, father or caretaker remain at a Moderate level.

What are the levels of social skills among children according to the domains?

- a. Social Cooperation (A1);
- b. Social Interaction (A2);
- c. Social Independence (A3);

**Table 4: The Frequency Of Social Skills Children According To Domain**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Social Cooperation (A1)			1.23	0.48
High	6	10.3		
Moderate	44	75.9		
Low	5	8.6		
Very Low	3	5.2		
Social Interaction (A2)			1.15	0.40
High	0	0		
Moderate	38	65.5		
Low	12	20.7		
Very Low	8	13.8		
Social Independence (A3)			1.54	0.54
High	0	0		
Moderate	45	77.6		
Low	13	22.4		
Very Low	0	0		

Table 4 highlights the mean value for social skills under the domain of Social Cooperation (A1) which is 1.23 and the standard deviation is 0.48, and the next one is the mean value for the social skills from the domain of Social Interaction (A2) which is 1.15 and standard deviation 0.40, and the mean value for the social skills from the domain Social Independence (A3) which is 1.54 with the standard deviation 0.54.

The frequency of the social skills among children for the domain of Social Cooperation (A1) is mostly at a moderate level which is (n = 44) or 75.9 percent. This is followed by a High level of Social Cooperation based on their mother, father or caretaker's assessment with (n = 6) or 10.3 per cent. In the third place, there is the Low level of Social Cooperation which is (n = 5) or 8.6 percent and finally, the Very Low level of Social Cooperation which is (n = 3) or 5.2 per cent.

The frequency of social skills among children for the domain of Social Interaction (A2) mostly remains at the Moderate level which is (n = 38) which is equal to 65.5 percent. This is then followed by the low level of Social Interaction the second place based on the assessment of the children's mother, father or caretaker with (n = 12) which is equal to 20.7 per cent. Then, in the third place, there is the Very Low Social Interaction which is (n = 8) or 13.8 percent and finally the High level of Social Interaction which is (n = 0) or 0 percent.

The frequency of social skills among children for the domain of Social Independence (A3) is mostly Moderate which is (n = 45) or 77.6 percent. In the second place, Social Independence is at a Low level based on the parent's or caretaker's assessment with (n = 13) or 22.4 percent. Then, for Social Independence, the High and Very Low levels note the same reading which is (n = 0) or 0 percent. Thus, the finding shows that the level of social skills among children according to the domain based on the parent's or caretaker's assessment suggests that the social skills that the children have are at a moderate level.

### **Inferential Analysis**

Inferential analysis works by using the whole data to assess the relationship between the variables tested. The Pearson Correlation analysis of 'r' is the inferential statistics used on the data run in the parametric test results where it shows that the data are normally distributed. The correlation test seeks to test the significance level

of the relationship and the direction of the relationship, be it positive or negative, between the variable parenting style and the social skills among kindergarten children aged 5 and 6 years old. Researchers used the interpretation of the 'r' Pearson Correlation Coefficient put forth by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) in Darussalam & Hussin (2021).

Is there any significant relationship between parenting style and social skills among children?

**Table 5: The Correlation Between Parenting Style and Children's Social Skills**

Variable	Social Skills	Significant
Parenting style	.552**	.003

$p < .01$

Table 5 shows the outcome of the correlation analysis where there is a strong, moderate relationship between the variable *parenting style* with the variable *children's social skills* where the correlation of the coefficient value is  $r = .552$ ,  $p < .01$ . This indicates that parenting style has a strong, moderate relationship on the formation of children's social skills. Results show that the correlation of the coefficient value for parenting style with children's social skills is 0.522 and the probability value is .003 tested on the confidence level of .01, whereby this probability value is found to be smaller than the confidence level ( $p < .01$ ). With this, it is shown that parenting style has a positive relationship that is moderate, strong and significant with social skills among children [ $r_{(58)} = .552$ ,  $p < .01$ ].

## 5. Conclusion

This study is conducted to see the association between parenting style and children's social skills in their preschool age. The research outcome shows that the children's social skills are at Moderate and Low levels for these aspects- Social Cooperation, Social Interaction as well as Social Independence. The parenting styles examined are authoritative, authoritarian and permissive, and the parenting styles most demonstrated are authoritative and permissive. The study findings do not highlight the use of the authoritarian parenting style among the respondents involved. However, if further studies are to be done, it is suggested that other aspects are also examined, such as differences by race, location, and state with high crime rate, adding a bigger sample size, addressing gender issues and so on.

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