

The Relationship of Authoritarian Parenting with Social Anxiety in College Students

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ABSTRACT

College students are in early adulthood, a developmental stage vulnerable to psychological pressure, including social anxiety. One of the contributing factors to this condition is authoritarian parenting, which is typically characterized by strict control, lack of open communication, and high parental expectations. These traits can negatively affect an individual's mental health. This study employed a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional and correlational approach. A total of 75 undergraduate nursing students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sukabumi were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) and the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS), and analyzed using the Chi-Square test. The results revealed that 65.3% of the respondents experienced authoritarian parenting, and most reported moderate to severe levels of social anxiety. Statistical analysis indicated a significant relationship between authoritarian parenting and social anxiety among students ($p = 0.001$). Authoritarian parenting was positively correlated with social anxiety levels. The higher the authoritarian style in parenting, the higher the level of social anxiety experienced by the students. This study highlights the importance of balanced parenting approaches and emotional support to minimize the risk of social anxiety disorders among college students.

Keywords: authoritarian parenting, social anxiety, students, mental health, parents

INTRODUCTION

A university student is an individual who is pursuing higher education at a university, institute, college, or academy, and is studying in a specific field of knowledge. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), a university student is defined as “a person who seeks knowledge at a higher education institution.” (Launa et al., 2022). At this stage, individuals strive to build their own lives. In early adulthood, university students are required to adapt to the college environment, and the inability to adjust may affect their mental health, including the emergence of anxiety.

Anxiety can be interpreted as feelings of discomfort, fear, tension, and excessive worry about something, which can actually come from the individual's personal thoughts (Juliyanti & Pujiastuti, 2020). Anxiety disorders are common in 3-5% of adults and usually appear in childhood or adolescence. One of them is social anxiety where individuals feel excessive worry about social judgments or interactions.

Social anxiety is a specific anxiety disorder that makes a person feel uncomfortable in a crowd and feel anxious about the judgment of others (Setyarini & Munawaroh, 2021). Causative factors include interactions with strangers, self-judgment, past experiences, self-esteem, and genetic factors (Melati et al., 2022). Social anxiety can start from rejection in parenting, such as a lack of attention or excessive control from parents, which can affect a person's mindset into adulthood and cause anxiety.

According to WHO data, the prevalence of mental disorders in Indonesia reached 9.8% in 2021, with depression at 6.6%. This figure is expected to increase until 2024. Globally, anxiety disorders are highest with 300 million cases, followed by depression with 280 million. Research from the Mental Health Care Community Caucus shows that after the 2024 election, the prevalence of anxiety disorders will increase to 16% and depression to 17.1%.

Research Harries et al. (2023), showing a significant relationship between parenting and psychological disorders. Parental parenting plays a crucial role in the formation and development of a child's emotions, as factors within the family and surrounding environment also influence their social and emotional development (Dhiu & Fono, 2022). Therefore, the role of parents is important for children's mental health. Authoritarian parenting that enforces strict rules and ignores children's input can lead to psychological problems (Delvecchio et al., 2020). This makes the child less trained in social skills, potentially leading to social anxiety.

Research Jefferies and Ungar (2020) in seven countries including Indonesia showed that social anxiety increases over time, as many as 36% of adolescents have levels of social anxiety above the limit. Globally 1 in 3 adolescents experience social anxiety. Social anxiety negatively impacts children's performance in school (Archbell & Coplan, 2022), difficult to have friendships (Bird et al., 2021), and increasing the prevalence of bullying victims (Acquah et al., 2016). The causes include internal factors (cognitive and personality) and external factors (culture and parenting) (Simpson, 2022). Research focuses more on internal factors, while studies on parenting as external factors are still few. Parental parenting has a profound effect on adolescents' mental health before they interact with the outside world.

Parenting is the way in which parents shape a child's sense of responsibility and also plays a vital role in their social and emotional development (Arta & Prahesti, 2024). Family attitudes, especially parents, have a great influence on children's growth and development and personality formation (Taib et al., 2020). According to Zakiyyatul (2024), Parenting encompasses various dimensions, including three types of parenting styles: authoritarian,

democratic, and permissive. Parenting styles have a significant impact on the development of children's emotional intelligence (Salenussa & Soetjiningsih, 2022).

Hermawan et al. (2024), authoritarian parenting is a style of parenting that demands complete obedience from the child without providing space for discussion or expressing opinions. Authoritarian parenting causes parents to tend to believe that their actions are always correct, so they feel no need to consider their child's opinions when making decisions (Louw & Rahmatulloh, 2024). Many phenomena in society show that parenting is often neglected to have an impact on children. This parenting style can be seen from the attitude of parents who use power and set rules that force children to follow their rules. Parents apply this parenting style tends to be because they want their children to have good morals, as well as be intelligent and skilled.

Based on the interviews with 10 undergraduate nursing students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sukabumi, the findings revealed that 6 out of 10 respondents stated that authoritarian parenting contributed to the increase in anxiety they experienced. However, research on the relationship between authoritarian parenting and social anxiety among university students remains limited, especially within higher education institutions in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between authoritarian parenting and the level of social anxiety in students, to provide a deeper understanding and serve as a basis for mental health prevention and intervention efforts. Respondents expressed feelings of fear and anxiety when their parents imposed high expectations without allowing room for discussion or the ability to express opinions and make independent decisions. This caused them to feel uncomfortable and burdened.

METHODS

Study Design

This type of research uses a quantitative method with a *cross-sectional* approach. This study used a correlation study to identify the relationship between authoritarian parenting of parents (X) and social anxiety (Y) in college students.

Sample

This research was conducted at the University of Muhammadiyah Sukabumi in October 2024-January 2025. The population in this study consisted of 301 undergraduate nursing students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sukabumi. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling,

which was applied by considering specific criteria. The inclusion criteria were set to determine the characteristics of respondents eligible to participate in the study, such as active students in the I, II, III, IV of the Undergraduate Nursing Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sukabumi, who were cooperative and willing to participate in the research. The exclusion criteria were established to identify respondents who were not eligible, including students enrolled through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program, students on academic leave, and those who experienced difficulties during the research process. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula, resulting in a total of 75 respondents selected for study.

Instrument

The data collection method in this study was obtained by distributing questionnaires. The instruments used in this study used Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire-short version (PSDQ) The result of the adaptation of (Riany et al., 2018), so that it is already in Indonesian form. PSDQ has 3 dimensions with a total of 32 items, and uses a scale Likert with a scale range of 1-5. Scale score indicators used: 1 = never, 2 = occasionally 3 = almost half the time, 4 = often, 5 = always (Benjamin J. Sadock, 2010), a person's anxiety level can be measured using an instrument Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS) Introduced by Max Hamilton in 1959, this category includes 14 items namely feelings of anxiety, tension, fear, sleep disorders, intelligence disorders, feelings of depression, somatic muscle and sensory symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, respiratory symptoms, digestive symptoms, urogenital symptoms, autonomic symptoms, behavior in interviews. The score was graded with a score of 0 = none, 1 = light, 2 = medium, 3 = heavy, 4 = very heavy.

RESULTS

The results of the data analysis of this study are presented in the form of a Table, which are described in the following Table.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Characteristics by Gender, Age, Generation, Parenting, and Anxiety

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Gender		
Man	13	17.3
Woman	62	82.7
Age		
18-19 Years	18	24.0
20-21 Years	49	65.3
22-23 Years	8	10.7

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Force Level		
Level 1	14	18.7
Level 2	12	16.0
Level 3	19	25.3
Level 4	30	40.0
Parenting		
Authoritarian	49	65.3
Permissive	10	13.3
Democratic	16	21.3
Anxiety Level		
Mild anxiety	13	17.3
Moderate anxiety	13	17.3
Severe anxiety	28	37.3
Severe anxiety/panic	21	28.0

Based on Table 1, the characteristics of respondents in this study show that the majority were female, totaling 62 individuals (82.7%), while male respondents numbered only 13 (17.3%). In terms of age, most respondents were in the 20–21 age range, with 49 individuals (65.3%), followed by 18–19 years old with 18 individuals (24%), and 22–23 years old with 8 individuals (10.7%). Regarding academic year level, the highest number of respondents came from the fourth year, totaling 30 individuals (40%), followed by the third year with 19 individuals (25.3%), the first year with 14 individuals (18.7%), and the second year with 12 individuals (16%). In terms of parenting styles received, the majority of respondents reported experiencing authoritarian parenting, with 49 individuals (65.3%), while 16 individuals (21.3%) experienced democratic parenting, and 10 individuals (13.3%) experienced permissive parenting. As for the respondents' anxiety levels, most experienced severe anxiety, totaling 28 individuals (37.3%), followed by very severe or panic-level anxiety with 21 individuals (28%), and mild and moderate anxiety with 13 individuals each (17.3%).

Table 2. The Relationship of Authoritarian Parenting with Social Anxiety in College Students

Parenting	Anxiety								Total	P-Value
	Light		Keep		Heavy		Very heavy/ panicking		N	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Authoritarian	6	8.0	10	13.3	19	25.3	14	18.7	49	65.3
Permissive	6	8.0	3	4.0	0	0.0	1	2.3	10	13.3
Democratic	1	1.3	0	0.0	9	12.0	6	8.0	16	21.3
Total	13	17.3	13	17.3	28	37.3	21	28.0	75	100

Based on the results of tabulation of data in Table 2, it can be concluded that the authoritarian parenting style of parents with social anxiety of students at the University of Muhammadiyah

Sukabumi was 6 people (8%), authoritarian parenting with moderate anxiety was 10 people (13.3%), authoritarian parenting with severe anxiety was 19 people (25.3%), authoritarian parenting with very severe anxiety/panic was 14 people (18.7%).

The P-value obtained from the Chi Square test for asymp sig. (2-sided) is 0.001. This value shows a result of $p < 0.05$ and means that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between authoritarian parenting and social anxiety in students.

DISCUSSION

Authoritarian Parenting

Sari (2020), authoritarian parenting is a rule-based approach that forces children to act according to their parents' wishes and children must always obey their requests. Taib et al. (2020), parenting is a form of upbringing that requires children to obey all parental orders and rules, without any freedom to ask questions or discuss. The negative impact of authoritarian parenting on children was found that children who experienced authoritarian parenting tended to have a lack of confidence, difficulty getting along with peers, and lack of initiative, This causes children to have high mental health and anxiety levels adolescents who experience poor mental health can be influenced by internal factors, namely from limited self-expression so that they feel constrained and have a sense of desire rebellious, they want to try everything. Lack of confidence and the child's tendency to withdraw, children may also resist because they feel they do not have the opportunity or freedom to express their opinions (Rusman & Nasution, 2021).

The findings of this study indicate that anxiety tends to be higher among respondents who experienced authoritarian parenting, with the majority of them showing severe to very severe levels of anxiety. The researcher assumes that authoritarian parenting which is often characterized by control, restriction, and limited space for self-expression contributes to increased psychological pressure and anxiety. Furthermore, the fact that most respondents were female and in early adulthood suggests that this group is particularly vulnerable to anxiety, especially during the transitional phase from academic life to adulthood. These results are consistent with previous studies (e.g., Hurlock, Baumrind, and Santrock), which have demonstrated that authoritarian parenting is significantly associated with higher levels of anxiety among adolescents and young adults. These studies explain that excessive parental

control can negatively impact children's mental health. Thus, the findings of this research reinforce the understanding that parenting style plays a crucial role in shaping children's psychological conditions, particularly in relation to anxiety.

Social Anxiety

Social anxiety is a common mental health condition, characterized by excessive fear and anxiety in social situations due to concerns about negative judgments from others (Rakhmaniar, 2023). College students who experience severe anxiety occur due to academic stress, future uncertainty, social change, lack of support, financial pressure, and perfectionism. These factors exacerbate each other's anxiety conditions and require special attention to support their mental health. This is in line with the findings Khasanah (2019), showed symptoms of social anxiety, such as cold sweats and trembling when asked to speak in front of the class, in addition to personal shyness, lack of confidence, incompetence, rigidity in social situations, irritability, and lack of hope for the future.

The Relationship of Parental Authoritarian Parenting with Social Anxiety

Based on the results of research by Irsanin (2024), it was found that parenting with authoritarian tendencies is one of the causes of social anxiety in adolescents. Adolescents with authoritarian parenting will lead to negative adolescent behaviors such as, addictive substance abuse, antisocial behaviors such as stealing, truancy, fighting, deviant sexual behavior, and other criminal behavior. Without realizing it, adolescents are prone to depression and stress which can lead to mental health problems. Rahmawaty et al. (2024) the factor of poor parenting can affect mental health in adolescents, one of the biggest factors affecting adolescent mental health is the implementation of authoritarian parenting which is characterized by parenting children to behave as parents want, the freedom to act alone is limited, And children are rarely invited to chat, tell stories with their parents.

Research by Harries et al. (2023) shows a significant relationship between parenting and psychological disorders. Parental parenting affects children's behavior, which tends to imitate actions in the family (Hidayah, 2009). Therefore, the role of parents is important for children's mental health. Authoritarian parenting that enforces strict rules and ignores children's input can lead to psychological problems (Delvecchio et al., 2020). This makes the child less trained in social skills, potentially leading to social anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Based on research that has been conducted at the Undergraduate Study Program of Nursing at the University of Muhammadiyah Sukabumi, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between authoritarian parenting of parents and social anxiety in students. The higher the authoritarian parenting style of parents, the higher the social anxiety in students. On the other hand, the lower the authoritarian parenting style, the lower the social anxiety in students. Authoritarian parenting is strongly related to students' social anxiety. Students who are raised with this parenting style tend to have low self-confidence, lack social skills, and feel pressured by high expectations and tight controls. As a result, they are more susceptible to social anxiety in daily interactions, which can affect their psychological well-being and academic performance.

LIMITATION

In the ongoing research process, researchers face various challenges that affect the smoothness and final results of the research. One of the main obstacles is the difficulty in data collection. Some respondents did not show a cooperative attitude, and some were even reluctant to fill out the questionnaire provided. This situation results in incomplete data collection, thus hindering data analysis that requires complete information. In addition, researchers are also hampered by limited access to the latest journals relevant to the research topic. This makes it difficult for researchers to strengthen the theoretical foundation and compare the results of the research with previous studies. Without adequate access to these sources, researchers face the challenge of ensuring that research results have a strong and relevant theoretical footing.

Based on the results of the research, discussion, and conclusions, the researcher provides suggestions for several parties 1) Parents need to consider parenting styles by providing space for decision-making, open communication, and support in facing social challenges. Parents should also be more concerned about the emotional needs, and the development of children's social skills to reduce the risk of social anxiety, 2) Students with social anxiety are advised to be more proactive in seeking support from friends, family, and counselors. College students can overcome anxiety by participating in activities that improve their social skills, such as organization. Anxiety that arises in social situations can also be treated with relaxation techniques, and 3) Further research is needed to explore other factors that may influence the relationship between authoritarian parenting and social anxiety, such as the role of genetic

factors, social environmental conditions, or the influence of social media. In addition, the research can also provide a deeper understanding of students' personal experiences in dealing with social anxiety related to parenting.

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