INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

OPEN ACCESS JOURNAL

Vol 15, Issue 4, (2026) E-ISSN: 2226-6348

The Relationship between Parenting Styles and the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines: Perspectives of Preschoolers Parents in Lanzhou City, Gansu Province, China

Wei Bingqing
Sultan Idris Education University
Email: P20202001148@siswa.upsi.edu.my

Loy Chee Luen
Sultan Idris Education University
Corresponding Author Email: loy.cl@fpm.upsi.edu.my

DOI Link: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v15-i4/29359

Published Online: 08 November 2026

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between four parenting styles and China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines from the perspective of parents in Chengguan District, Lanzhou City, Gansu Province, China. A quantitative correlational design was used, with questionnaire data collected from 709 parents. The parenting styles include Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved parenting, while eight dimensions in China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines include (i) Beauty of hometown and motherland, (ii) Caring, respecting and socialize, (iii) Rules and social adaptability, (iv) Nutritional health and physical, (v) Sensory experience, (vi) Awareness of security, (vii)Self-care and awareness, (viii) Readiness to primary school. The findings revealed that Authoritative Parenting had a significant positive relationship with CFEG ($\beta = .234$, $p < .001$), followed by Permissive Parenting ($\beta = .152$, $p < .001$), whereas Authoritarian and Uninvolved Parenting showed no significant relationships. These findings provide partial support for Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory and the responsiveness–demandingness framework, suggesting that parental responsiveness, communication, constructive guidance, and active involvement are particularly relevant to the implementation of family education guidance. The study extends previous parenting research by demonstrating that different parenting styles are differently associated with the implementation of CFEG rather than uniformly influencing family education practices. The findings highlight the need for parent education and family support initiatives that strengthen responsive communication, appropriate behavioural guidance, and active parental participation in implementing CFEG across its eight developmental domains.

Keywords: Parenting Styles, China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines, Family Education, Parents' Perspectives, Chinese Parents

Introduction

Family education plays an important role in preschool children's development because it provides the first and most immediate environment in which parents pass on values, set behavioural expectations, support learning, and guide everyday development. In China, family education has received growing attention in both education policy and legislation. The *Law of the People's Republic of China on Family Education Promotion* defines family education as the education, guidance, and influence provided by parents or guardians in areas such as minors' moral character, physical development, life skills, cultural literacy, and behavioural habits. The law also encourages parents to use scientifically informed parenting approaches, recognise preschool children's individual differences, and coordinate family education with schools and the wider community (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2021).

Despite these policy developments, having formal guidance does not necessarily mean that parents apply it consistently in everyday family life. Parents may understand and practice family education guidance in different ways, and these differences may be associated with their parenting styles.

Parenting Styles are generally classified into four types include Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive, and Uninvolved parenting. These styles differ in the degree of parental responsiveness, control, communication, and involvement. Recent studies in China have found that parenting styles are related to parents' educational beliefs, their level of involvement in children's learning, and the learning environments they provide at home (Xia, 2022; Cui & Greger, 2024). However, relatively little research has examined whether each of the four parenting styles is related to parents' implementation of the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG), especially in western China.

A key research problem is the limited understanding of how different parenting styles are associated with parents' implementation of the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG), particularly among parents of preschool children in western China. Recently, research on parenting styles has primarily focused on their relation to children's academic, behavioral, emotional and developmental outcomes. Little attention has been given to the implementation of formal family education, and hence how parents translate family education guidelines into effective parenting in everyday life is largely unknown. To address this gap, the present study examines the relationships between authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved parenting and the china family education curriculum guidelines on perspectives of preschoolers' parents.

Literature Review

Several previous studies found correlations between children's learning and behavior and their parents' educational involvement as well as the parenting styles the parents were employing. Parenting styles are usually defined based on two dimensions of parental behavior, i.e. responsiveness and demandingness. These two dimensions result in four different types of parenting, which are Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive and Uninvolved parenting. In a study on Chinese parents' school-readiness beliefs and parenting styles Cui and Greger (2024) found patterns of relations between both variables and how parents support children's school-readiness.

The present findings can be considered alongside research on parenting styles, parental involvement, and school readiness. Lin et al. (2023) examined children's science problem-solving skills, Xia (2022) examined cognitive school readiness, and Cui and Greger (2024) examined parents' school-readiness beliefs and parenting styles. These studies provide related context, but none directly measured parents' implementation of CFEG. Most of the previous studies were focused on children's outcomes, parents' involvement in children's education, rather than parents' formal implementation of family education. China's Family Education Promotion Law has called for enhanced attention to parental responsibility for parenting education, family–school relations, and family education guidance. However, there is still a lack of evidence for the relationships between different parenting styles and parents' implementation of the formal family education curriculum, i.e. the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG). This study examined the relationships between four parenting styles (Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved) and parents' implementation of the CFEG for preschool children in Lanzhou City, in the western China.

This study draws upon the work of several notable researchers regarding parenting styles, including that of child development theorist Baumrind (1966, 1971) and Maccoby and Martin (1983), who extended Baumrind's work by focusing on dimensions of parental responsiveness and demandingness. The four major parenting styles include those of Authoritative Parenting (high responsiveness and appropriate demands); Authoritarian Parenting (high demandingness and low responsiveness); Permissive Parenting (high responsiveness and low demands); and Uninvolved Parenting (low responsiveness and demandingness). By differentiating parenting styles in such a manner, the four can be viewed as distinct entities as opposed to one entity known as Parenting Style.

The theoretical framework for the present study of different families with young children is based on Baumrind's theory of parenting styles (Baumrind, 1966, 1971) extended through the dimensions of parental responsiveness and demandingness by Maccoby and Martin (1983). The four styles of parenting - Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive and Uninvolved - differ with respect to parents' levels of responsiveness and demandingness. While the level of structure or control is an important feature of each parenting style, the quality of parental communication with children and the degree to which parents are involved with their children is also a crucial variable in defining a parenting style. The study examines the relationships of the four parenting styles to the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG). Parents who implement the curriculum are expected to be responsive in their communication with children, to establish and maintain appropriate structures to guide children's behavior and to provide guidance. Children are expected to be actively involved with their parents in all eight of the domains of children's development specified by the CFEG, namely social development, health, safety, self-care, sensory experience, culture, and school readiness for primary school. Therefore, the four parenting styles can be expected to have distinct relationships with CFEG. Instead of treating Parenting Style as a single variable, therefore, the study examines the relationships of each of the four parenting styles to the CFEG.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships between Parenting Styles and parents' implementation of the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG). A correlational approach was considered suitable because the

study focused on identifying statistical relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to parents in Lanzhou City, Gansu Province, China. After the data were screened and cleaned, 709 valid responses were included in the final analysis. Parenting Styles were examined as four separate dimensions include Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive, and Uninvolved parenting. Each style was analysed independently instead of being combined into a single overall parenting score. The questionnaire used to assess parents' implementation of CFEG was developed for this study based on the CFEG document. Parents' implementation of the CFEG was measured across eight dimensions include (i) Beauty of hometown and motherland, (ii) Caring, respecting and socialize, (iii) Rules and social adaptability, (iv) Nutritional health and physical, (v) Sensory experience, (vi) Awareness of security, (vii)Self-care and awareness, and (viii) Readiness to primary school in the questionnaire. For the present article, questionnaire data from parents of preschool children in Chengguan District, Lanzhou City, Gansu Province, China were used to examine the four parenting styles and parents' implementation of the CFEG. Structural path analysis was conducted to assess the direct associations between each parenting style and CFEG implementation.

Findings

This section presents the findings from the 709 valid questionnaires completed by parents of preschool children in Chengguan District, Lanzhou City, Gansu Province, China. It reports the direct associations between Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved parenting and parents' implementation of the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG). Table 1 summarises the path coefficients, significance levels, and hypothesis decisions, while Figure 1 illustrates the four structural paths and the eight domains of CFEG. The theoretical interpretation and practical implications of these findings are addressed in the subsequent sections.

Table 1
Relationship between Parenting Styles and China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG)

Predictor Variable	Outcome Variable	β	*p*	Relationship	Hypothesis Decision
Authoritative Parenting	China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG)	.234	< .001	Significant positive	Supported
Authoritarian Parenting	China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG)	.021	.607	Not significant	Not supported
Permissive Parenting	China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG)	.152	< .001	Significant positive	Supported
Uninvolved Parenting	China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG)	.051	.231	Not significant	Not supported

Table 1 shows the findings for the four different parenting styles and their correlations with the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG) are displayed in Table 1. Authoritative Parenting was positively related to CFEG (β = .234, p < .001). Permissive Parenting also was positively related to CFEG (β = .152, p < .001). Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported. However, Hypothesis 3 was not supported because Authoritarian Parenting was not significantly related to CFEG (β = .021, p = .607). Furthermore, Hypothesis 4 also was not supported because Uninvolved Parenting was not significantly related to CFEG (β = .051,

p = .231). Thus, the relationship with CFEG differs for the four parenting styles with the highest correlations for Authoritative and Permissive Parenting and the lowest correlations for Authoritarian and Uninvolved Parenting.

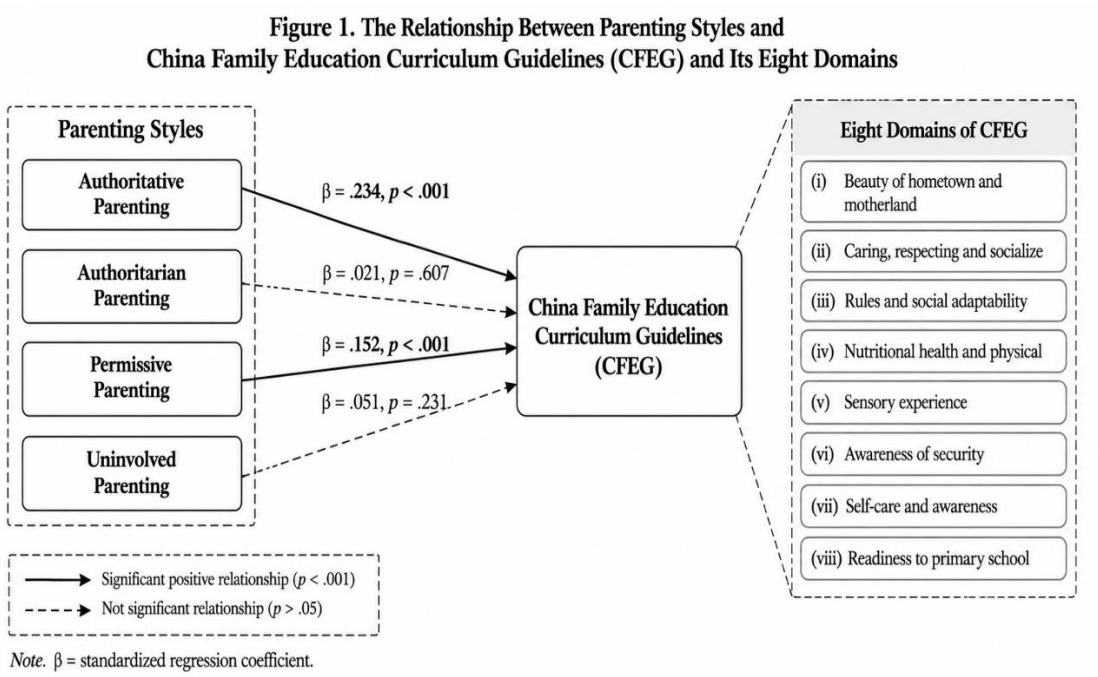


Figure 1: Relationship Between Parenting Styles and the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG) and Its Eight Domains

Figure 1 is an integrated visualization of the statistical pathways among four parenting styles and CFEG and the multi-dimensional structure of China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines for Family Education of Preschool Children. The paths and their corresponding significance values indicate the directions of the relationships and the statistical significance. Eight domains of CFEG are depicted in the figure, namely: (i) Beauty of Hometown and Motherland, (ii) Caring, Respecting and Socializing, (iii) Rules and Social Adaptability, (iv) Nutritional Health and Physical Development, (v) Sensory Experience, (vi) Awareness of Security, (vii) Self-Care and Awareness, and (viii) Readiness for Primary School. As such, the figure is an integrated visualization model which elucidates the inter-relationships among different parenting styles and a multi-dimensional framework of family education.

Discussion

The results showed that parenting styles are differently related to CFEG. For Authoritative Parenting there was a significant positive correlation with CFEG (β = .234, p < .001), and for Permissive Parenting there was a significant positive correlation as well (β = .152, p < .001). Neither Authoritarian Parenting nor Uninvolved Parenting were significantly correlated with CFEG. The present findings can be considered alongside research on parenting styles, parental involvement, and school readiness. Lin et al. (2023) examined children's science problem-solving skills, Xia (2022) examined cognitive school readiness, and Cui and Greger (2024) examined parents' school-readiness beliefs and parenting styles. These studies provide related context, but none directly measured parents' implementation of CFEG.

The findings can be interpreted in relation to Parenting Style Theory (Baumrind, 1966, 1971) and the responsiveness–demandingness framework (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Authoritative parenting combines high responsiveness with clear and appropriate behavioural expectations, which may help explain its positive association with parents' implementation of the CFEG. Permissive parenting also showed a significant positive association, suggesting that warmth and responsiveness may be relevant to CFEG implementation even when parental demandingness is relatively low. However, Authoritarian and Uninvolved parenting did not show statistically significant direct associations with CFEG implementation in this sample. These non-significant findings do not demonstrate that the relationships are absent or that these parenting styles are irrelevant to family education. The proposed explanations involving responsiveness, communication, guidance, and parental involvement should be treated as theoretical interpretations, as the present analysis did not directly test these explanatory processes.

Implications and Suggestions

The findings have practical implications for parents, preschool teachers, family educators, and researchers. Authoritative and Permissive parenting were significantly positively associated with parents' implementation of the CFEG, suggesting that warmth, responsive communication, and active parental involvement may be useful areas of focus in family education support. Parent education programmes in Chengguan District could provide practical examples of how parents can apply the CFEG across its eight developmental domains in everyday family activities. Parents could be supported in listening to children, explaining age-appropriate expectations, and participating regularly in family education. Preschool teachers and family educators could also work with parents to plan relevant activities, discuss implementation difficulties, and share strategies for home-based practice. Such support could combine warm, responsive interaction with clear and age-appropriate guidance.

This study adds a new layer to the understanding of parenting-style theory by applying it to the practical aspect of family education, i.e., the implementation of formal family education guidance as laid out in the eight developmental areas of the China Family Education Curriculum Guidelines (CFEG) for preschool children. The study focuses on parents of preschool children in western China and, thus, adds a specific sociocultural layer to the general findings of previous studies on parenting styles that predominantly reported correlations with children's academic and behavioral outcomes as well as their overall development. By studying the four different parenting styles include Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved Parenting as separate predictors for parents' implementation of the CFEG, this study contributes to the social sciences in a unique way. Its findings can increase the understanding of parenting, of family education, and of parent–child relationships. They will also be useful for designing and evaluating parent education programs as well as for planning and evaluating family support.

The non-significant findings for Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved parenting should not be understood as meaning that these parenting styles are unimportant. Their relationships with children's Self-Regulation may depend on other factors, including cultural expectations, family stress, parent–child interaction, or indirect pathways. Future research could explore possible mediating and moderating factors such as parenting stress, socioeconomic status, parent gender, child age, and family education practices.

Longitudinal and experimental studies are also recommended because the correlational design used in this study cannot establish causal relationships. Future studies could collect data from several sources, including parents, teachers, and children, to reduce reliance on a single reporting source. Including families from other districts and provinces would also help determine whether the findings can be applied more broadly beyond Chengguan District, Lanzhou City.

References

Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of authoritative parental control on child behavior. *Child Development, 37*(4), 887–907. https://doi.org/10.2307/1126611

Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology, 4*(1, Pt. 2), 1–103. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030372

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Cui, S., & Greger, D. (2024). Chinese parents' school-readiness beliefs and parenting styles: Patterns and associated factors. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, Article 1279175. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1279175

Lin, X., Yang, W., Xie, W., & Li, H. (2023). The integrative role of parenting styles and parental involvement in young children's science problem-solving skills. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, Article 1096846. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1096846

Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent–child interaction. In P. H. Mussen (Series Ed.) & E. M. Hetherington (Vol. Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 4. Socialization, personality, and social development* (4th ed., pp. 1–101). Wiley.

Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. (2021). *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China* [In Chinese]. Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. https://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_zcfg/zcfg_qtxgfl/202110/t20211025_574749.html

Xia, X. (2022). Family income, parental education and Chinese preschoolers' cognitive school readiness: Authoritative parenting and parental involvement as chain mediators. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, Article 745093. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.745093