



## Parenting Styles Across Different Countries of the World: Comparative Analysis and Psychological Perspectives

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Parenting styles play a significant role in a child's development, influencing emotional regulation, cognitive abilities, social relationships, and identity formation. While fundamental psychological theories of parenting, such as Diana Baumrind's typology (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles), are widely recognized, their cultural application varies significantly across different regions. This article presents a psychological analysis of parenting styles across different countries of the world with a focus on their cultural roots and developmental outcomes.

### Parenting in Europe: Focus on Autonomy and Individuality

European parenting, particularly in Western and Northern Europe (Germany, Sweden, France, Netherlands), is often associated with an authoritative style. This style is characterized by high responsiveness and reasonable demands. Parents who follow this style tend to encourage their children's independence, provide emotional support, and use reasoned explanations rather than punishment.

From a psychological perspective, European parenting emphasizes the development of self-identity and autonomy. Children are taught independent thinking, questioning authority, and making age-appropriate decisions. This style results in increased self-confidence, cognitive flexibility, and adaptive behavioral strategies.

There are some differences in Southern and Eastern Europe. In Italy and Spain, parents exhibit more emotional expressiveness and family closeness, often combining authoritative and permissive styles. In Eastern Europe, for instance, in Poland and Romania, elements of authoritarian approaches may still be observed, often linked to historical and political contexts. Nonetheless, there is a noticeable trend across the continent towards more egalitarian parent-child relationships.

Given that the authoritative parenting style dominates in Europe, it contributes to greater autonomy and emotional well-being among European children.

A study<sup>1</sup> conducted in 2020 focused on parenting styles, values internalization, and self-esteem in Spain, Portugal, and Brazil shows the following Statistical data:

- Authoritative style (high warmth, high demand): 28%;
- Permissive style (high warmth, low demand): 22.1%;
- Authoritarian style (low warmth, high demand): 22.1%;
- Uninvolved style (low warmth, low demand): 27.7%.

The other study<sup>2</sup> also assesses how culture shapes parenting practices in Spain, the USA, Germany, and Brazil. While authoritative parenting remains the optimal style, its use varies by country:

- **Spain:** Parents often use authoritative and permissive styles, emphasizing emotional warmth and flexibility in discipline. This reflects cultural values that prioritize family harmony and warmth.
- **United States:** American parents prioritize authoritative parenting, especially in middle and upper-class families, although there is a growing trend towards intensive parenting. Parents are increasingly involved in their children's activities, education, and emotional development, driven by societal pressure.

<sup>1</sup>Martinez I, Garcia F, Veiga F, Garcia OF, Rodrigues Y, Serra E. Parenting Styles, Internalization of Values and Self-Esteem: A Cross-Cultural Study in Spain, Portugal and Brazil. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2020 Mar 31;17(7):2370.

<sup>2</sup> Garcia F, Serra E, Garcia OF, Martinez I, Cruise E. A Third Emerging Stage for the Current Digital Society? Optimal Parenting Styles in Spain, the United States, Germany, and Brazil. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2019 Jul 2;16(13):2333. doi: 10.3390/ijerph16132333. PMID: 31269653; PMCID: PMC6651095. write about parenting style



- **Germany:** German parents primarily use authoritative approaches, which include clear rules and expectations but also encourage independence and self-regulation, aligning with Germany's cultural values.
- **Brazil:** In Brazil, parents often use permissive and authoritarian styles, heavily influenced by social and economic conditions. Economic and social inequality often leads to authoritarian styles in low-income families.

### Sweden

Over the past 50 years, Sweden has seen a significant decline in authoritarian parenting practices, with a shift towards more egalitarian and autonomy-supportive approaches. This change coincides with legislative reforms and cultural influences regarding children's rights.

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## Parenting in Asia: Focus on Obedience and Family Harmony

In most Asian cultures (China, Japan, South Korea, India), parenting styles are often authoritarian or "training" in nature. These approaches emphasize discipline, hierarchy, and academic achievement. They reflect collectivist values, where the needs of the family and society take precedence over individual desires.

From a psychological perspective, Asian parenting often requires a high level of involvement and control, particularly in terms of education and moral development. In China, "xiaoshun," and in Japan, "koyoiku mama," describe parents who are deeply involved in their children's academic success, often at the expense of emotional independence. These styles may have positive outcomes in academic and social behavior but are also associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and perfectionism.

There is significant diversity across Asia. In India, parenting styles vary greatly based on region, religion, and socioeconomic status. In urban and educated families, more democratic and communicative styles are emerging, while traditional or rural families tend to maintain stricter norms.

Recent studies about parenting styles indicate the following trends across various Asian countries:

- **Saudi Arabia (2023):** A study<sup>3</sup> conducted in Buraidah, Qassim, with 496 participants, showed the following data:
  - Authoritative: 76.6%
  - Authoritarian: 12.7%
  - Permissive: 10.7% High income and non-traditional living were strongly associated with authoritative parenting.
- **Thailand (2019):** A study<sup>4</sup> on 5,345 young children showed the following:
  - Higher education: 70% decrease in authoritarian and hybrid style adoption.
  - High income: Supports authoritative parenting.
  - Single parents: More likely to use authoritarian style.
- **China (2023):** A study<sup>5</sup> on preschool children aged 3-5 revealed:
  - Authoritative parenting: Positively linked to improvements in children's early skills.
  - Authoritarian parenting: Negatively linked to early skill development.
  - Family social and economic status (SES): Positively correlated with authoritarian parenting and children's early academic abilities.

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## Comparative Perspectives

Although authoritative parenting is widespread and associated with positive outcomes in both Europe and certain Asian regions, differences in cultural and socio-economic factors influence its use. In Asia, high SES and education foster the use of authoritative parenting, while low SES is linked to authoritarian approaches. In Europe, despite limited specific statistical data in recent years, the trend leans towards authoritative parenting, emphasizing autonomy and emotional development.

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<sup>3</sup>Almudhee SN, Al Saigul AM, Sulaiman A. Parenting Style Frequency and Their Sociodemographic Determinants in Buraidah City, Qassim, Saudi Arabia. *Cureus*. 2023 Jul 5;15(7):e41388. doi: 10.7759/cureus.41388. PMID: 37546027; PMCID: PMC10401485.

<sup>4</sup>[https://ace.iafor.org/presentation/submission87243/?utm\\_source](https://ace.iafor.org/presentation/submission87243/?utm_source)

<sup>5</sup><https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1243623/full>



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## Psychological Theories and Cultural Interpretations

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions provide important frameworks for understanding how parenting is shaped and interacts with the cultural environment. For instance, Hofstede's individualism/collectivism dimension explains why European parents focus on independence, while Asian parents emphasize obedience and harmony.

Attachment theory is also closely related. In Europe, parents create secure attachments through sensitive caregiving, whereas in Asia, attachment often involves interdependence and collective responsibility, reflecting the broader structure of family relationships.

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## Cultural Shifts and Hybrid Styles

As a result of globalization, migration, and technological development, the boundaries between traditional parenting styles are increasingly blurred. Hybrid parenting styles are emerging in metropolitan areas of both Europe and Asia. Asian parents are gradually adopting more autonomy-oriented approaches, while European parents are occasionally returning to structured discipline in response to modern challenges.

Migrant families face unique challenges as they try to reconcile their home country's values with the standards of the host society. This can lead to identity conflicts in children but may also strengthen their bicultural competence and resilience.

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## Conclusion

The study of parenting styles across different countries highlights the profound impact that cultural values, historical contexts, and socio-economic conditions have on child-rearing practices. While European parenting often emphasizes autonomy, emotional openness, and individual rights, Asian parenting places a stronger focus on discipline, family harmony, and collective success. These differences are shaped by underlying cultural frameworks such as individualism and collectivism, and are further influenced by each region's social and political landscapes.

However, with globalization and cultural exchange, traditional parenting styles are increasingly blending, leading to the emergence of hybrid parenting approaches. This shift reflects the growing recognition of the need to balance respect for cultural traditions with contemporary challenges in child development.

Ultimately, the most effective parenting style is one that is culturally sensitive and adaptable to the individual needs of children, considering both the local practices and broader global influences. Understanding the psychological outcomes associated with different parenting styles can help parents, educators, and policymakers better support children's emotional, social, and cognitive growth in a rapidly changing world.

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