

# OVERPROTECTIVE PARENTING PATTERNS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Imtiyaz Choirunnisa, Fadhillah Elok Ramadhani, Syarifuddin, Sani Safitri  
Universitas Sriwijaya, Indonesia

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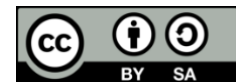
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## ABSTRACT

Parenting plays an important role in the mental health and development of children. Overprotective parenting is one of the parenting styles that has received great attention in mental health research, which is characterized by excessive supervision and protection of children. This article aims to examine overprotective parenting and how it can affect children's mental health. The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. This method provides an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon or event, where in this study the researcher distributed a questionnaire as a tool to collect data. The results of this study indicate that 61.9% of children raised in an overprotective environment tend to have difficulty facing challenges, taking risks, and developing the social skills needed to succeed in life. In addition, they are more susceptible to mental health problems such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety.

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## Corresponding Author:

Imtiyaz Choirunnisa,  
Universitas Sriwijaya, Indonesia  
Email: [imtiyazcn04@gmail.com](mailto:imtiyazcn04@gmail.com)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Children are the most important part of the family whose presence is highly anticipated. Parents want their children to develop normally, so they have a certain way to treat them. They will not treat their children carelessly, they use special strategies to ensure that their children develop well (Priyana, 2023). Parents have a very important role in the development of a child. Pre-school children tend to imitate the behavior and personality of their parents, because they learn from what they see. Therefore, in order for a child's personality to develop well, it is very important to apply good attitudes, behaviors, and language from an early age. A child's personal and social development is greatly influenced by good family education. Good parenting can meet the needs of children and give them the opportunity to show that they are also part of the people around them (Khamim, 2021).

Parenting is one of the most important components that can influence a child's behavior, emotions, and development. How a child is raised by their parents can have a major impact on their mental health throughout their life. Overprotective parenting has become a major subject of child mental health research in recent years. This parenting style is often characterized by overcontrol, overprotection, and overinvolvement in the child's life. The role of parents is very important in shaping a child's development, as they provide support, guidance, and boundaries. However, some parenting behaviors, such as overprotectiveness, can hinder adolescents' ability to face challenges, make decisions independently, and develop social skills (Priyana, 2023).

There are times when parents give freedom to a child with the aim that the child can develop what they have. Some parents give their children freedom, but they still have control over them. However, some parents overprotect their children, giving them unreasonable defenses against physical or psychological dangers and harm, making the child completely dependent on them or having no sense of independence (Sagala & Yarni, 2023). These overprotective parents often exhibit behaviors such as constant monitoring, strict rule-setting, preventing children from being independent and more dependent on parents, and being too involved in

children's activities. This behavior may be caused by fear, anxiety, or the desire of parents to avoid unwanted things (Priyana, 2023) .

According to Purwanto, parents often overprotect their children for several reasons. Parents unknowingly help and facilitate their children in everything because they are afraid of the potential dangers that can befall them. Second, parents are worried that their children will misbehave, get angry if their wishes are not fulfilled, and do not want to face difficulties, so that children only get used to what they have. Third, parents often do not realize that children must understand and be accustomed to the rules (Wardana & et al. in Harlina, 2023) . In addition, one of the factors that makes parents overprotective of their children is because they want to maintain the values of the norms that exist in a family. Every family has norms or rules that they follow in their daily lives. Parents sometimes become overprotective to ensure that their children follow the values and norms that exist in a family.

Parents who are overprotective of their children can affect their emotional development. Children with overprotective parents tend to experience negative emotional reactions because the parenting is not in accordance with their developmental stage. Children need to make various efforts to develop their emotions so that they can control them and direct them in a positive direction. Children who have overprotective parents need to have the ability to control their emotions well and maintain their emotional stability to avoid negative impacts such as maladaptive behavior, which is behavior that does not help in dealing with situations and often makes problems worse. If they want to remain emotionally stable, children must have the ability to control their emotions in the right way (Amalia et al., 2021) .

Protecting children is basically a good thing, but overprotection can also have many negative effects. This study aims to examine overprotective parenting and how it can affect children's mental health. To achieve this goal, researchers will analyze and review various sources and related studies to understand why overprotective parenting can affect children's mental health. Therefore, it is hoped that this study can help raise parents' awareness of the negative impacts of overprotective parenting on children's mental health. With this information, parents can be more careful in raising their children and smarter in protecting them without stopping their development.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative method as the primary research approach. The descriptive qualitative method provides a systematic, factual, and accurate depiction of the phenomena under investigation. Instead of focusing on theory development, this method emphasizes a detailed understanding of the context, process, and significance of the phenomenon being studied. This approach allows researchers to explore and analyze complex research questions flexibly and comprehensively, making it ideal for studies that aim to unravel nuanced and context-specific insights. The methodology aims to present an accurate and rich description of the research problem, offering meaningful interpretations grounded in the participants' lived experiences and the surrounding context.

### *Research Design*

The research design is based on a descriptive qualitative approach, which focuses on understanding the phenomenon in its natural setting. This design allows researchers to investigate real-world issues without manipulating variables or testing hypotheses, thereby fostering an environment conducive to understanding the intricate layers of the phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon under investigation is the influence of overprotective parenting on children's mental health. By employing this approach, the study delves deeply into participants' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences, as well as the broader implications of overprotective parenting on mental well-being. The descriptive nature of this research aligns with its purpose to uncover the underlying patterns and contextual factors that shape this phenomenon, contributing to a holistic understanding.

### *Participants*

The study involved participants who were students enrolled in the History Education Program at Sriwijaya University. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants had relevant knowledge and experiences to address the research objectives effectively. These students were selected because of their exposure to educational theories and developmental psychology, which are integral components of their academic curriculum. Their insights provided a valuable perspective on how parenting styles, specifically overprotective parenting, influence mental health outcomes. The participants ranged in age from 19 to 23 years, encompassing both male and female students. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the research objectives, and informed consent was obtained to ensure ethical compliance and voluntary participation.

### *Measurement*

To gather data, the study utilized a researcher-designed questionnaire as the primary instrument. The questionnaire contained a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, allowing for both qualitative and quantitative insights. The open-ended questions encouraged participants to share their thoughts and

experiences in detail, while the closed-ended questions provided structured responses that facilitated data categorization and comparison. The questionnaire was carefully designed to explore the various dimensions of overprotective parenting, including parental behaviors, communication patterns, and control mechanisms, and their impact on children's mental health. It also included questions that explored participants' understanding of mental health, coping mechanisms, and their perceptions of autonomy and independence. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was piloted with a small group of students to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability of the items.

#### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed a systematic qualitative approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. Responses from the open-ended questions were analyzed thematically, involving several iterative steps: familiarization with the data, coding, theme generation, and interpretation. Thematic analysis was chosen to identify recurring patterns and relationships within the data. The researchers categorized the themes into key areas, such as parental control, emotional impact, and perceived mental health challenges. Meanwhile, responses from the closed-ended questions were analyzed descriptively to identify trends and commonalities among participants. Triangulation was employed to validate the findings by cross-referencing data from multiple sources, including the thematic analysis, related literature, and previous studies on parenting styles and mental health. This comprehensive analysis provided a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, ensuring that the findings were not only grounded in participants' experiences but also aligned with existing research.

Hence, the descriptive qualitative method enabled the researchers to capture a detailed and multifaceted understanding of how overprotective parenting impacts children's mental health. The research design ensured contextual relevance, the participants provided rich and diverse insights, the measurement tools were rigorously developed, and the data analysis approach allowed for meaningful interpretations. Together, these components strengthened the study's credibility, offering valuable contributions to the field of parenting and mental health research.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Children who are raised in an overprotective environment tend to have difficulty facing challenges, taking risks, and developing the social skills needed to succeed in life. They are also more susceptible to mental health problems such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. In addition, overprotective parenting can also hinder children from becoming more independent. When parents supervise and control children too much, they may not have the opportunity to learn to make decisions or solve problems. This can result in over-dependence on parents and an inability to live on their own.

In a social context, children raised by overprotective parents may experience social isolation. When parents limit their children's social interactions or do not allow them to face social challenges independently, children may have difficulty building healthy relationships with peers. As a result, they may experience loneliness, difficulty adapting to different social environments, and even face problems in building good relationships in the future.

Apakah anda sering melihat orang tua anda membuat keputusan untuk anda tanpa meminta pendapat anda?

21 jawaban

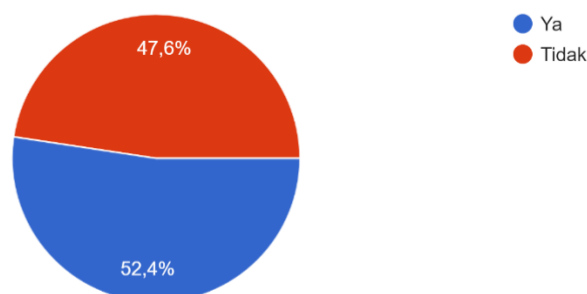


Figure 1. Results of the first question

Overprotective parents tend to exhibit overprotective behaviors. The goal is to protect children from physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Parents with this parenting style are concerned about their children's physical safety even though they live in a relatively safe place. Often, the level of protection provided far exceeds the actual risks. In addition, they also focus on maintaining the emotional health of their children by helping them avoid all problems and reduce the stress they experience in everyday life.

The results of the first question in the questionnaire that the researcher distributed were that there were 52.4% of people whose parents often made decisions for their children without involving the child themselves, and 47.6% of people who answered that their parents rarely or never made decisions without involving them. This study proves that more parents often make decisions themselves than those who involve a child.

Parents certainly do not act carelessly when they treat their children. They have their own way to ensure that their children develop according to their expectations. Childhood is an important period where success in carrying out subsequent developmental tasks, such as the ability to adjust, is based on the behavior of parents towards their children. The behavior of parents towards their children is very important for their future development.

Apakah kebiasaan orang tua anda yang terlalu protektif menyulitkan anda untuk membuat keputusan sendiri?

21 jawaban

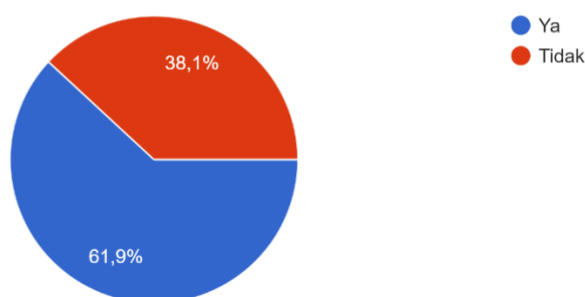


Figure 2. Results of the second question

In the second question in this study, the results showed that overprotective parental habits can make it difficult for a child to make their own decisions. There were 61.9% of people who answered yes and only 38.1% of people who answered no. The ability to make their own decisions is very important for a child because everyone will face problems in their life, both personal and social. If this ability is not developed, children may not be able to find solutions and make their own decisions about their own problems, which means they become irresponsible people for their own problems.

Apakah kebiasaan orang tua anda yang terlalu melindungi membuat anda kurang percaya diri saat menghadapi masalah atau tantangan?

21 jawaban

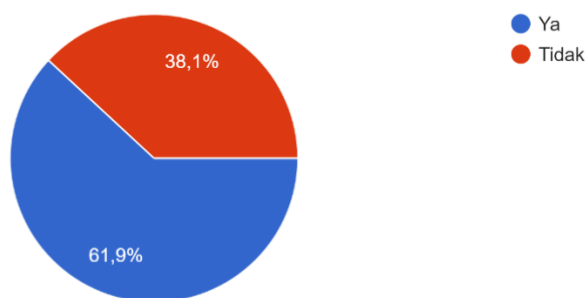


Figure 3. Results of the third question

In the third question, 61.9% of people stated that the habit of parents who are too protective makes a child less confident in facing a challenge and problem faced. Children who have arrogant parents do not have confidence and independence because they always control everything. Children's confidence should be highly valued because it can help them stay calm in facing any situation or problem, develop skills, be able to interact with others, and be able to reduce their own anxiety.

### 3.1. Factors Influencing Overprotective Parenting Patterns

Parenting style is the way parents treat, educate, guide, and discipline their children from when they are still children until they are adults. Factors such as culture, religion, customs, and beliefs influence this parenting style. The following factors can influence overprotective parenting:

1. Parental Education: Parents' knowledge and understanding of child development can influence how prepared they are to parent their children. Parents who know and understand child development tend to be wiser.
2. Parental Ideology: The ideologies and beliefs held by parents are also very important. Parents who are overprotective of their children may tend to over-parent them.
3. Parental Personality: The parenting style of parents, both their own and the child's caregivers also affects the way they raise their children. Parents who tend to worry or have a tendency to protect their children too much, they will have an overprotective parenting style.
4. Local Culture: Local traditions, customs, and culture also influence parenting styles. Some cultures may be more inclined to use highly protective parenting styles towards children.
5. Parental Responsiveness to Child's Needs: Parents who are sensitive to their child's emotional and physical needs tend to provide more balanced care. However, over-responsiveness can lead to overprotective care.

### 3.2. The Impact of Overprotective Parenting on Children's Mental Health

Overprotective parenting can be harmful to a child's mental health. First, this parenting style can hinder a child's growth in self-confidence and independence. When children are overprotected, they may not have the opportunity to learn to solve problems or make decisions on their own. As a result, they may not be confident in facing new situations or solving problems independently.

Second, overprotective parenting can lead to higher levels of anxiety and a child's inability to cope with fears. When children are protected from frightening or challenging experiences, they may not have the opportunity to learn to cope with fears or develop coping strategies, which can ultimately lead to higher levels of anxiety and a child's inability to cope with difficult situations.

Third, children's social relationships can be affected by overprotective parenting. Overprotected children may have difficulty interacting with their peers and building healthy relationships. This can lead to loneliness or social isolation, which can ultimately lead to depression or social anxiety in children.

And finally, overprotective parents will make children lie easily. Children need freedom to grow, but overprotective parents tend to limit their freedom. Children may look for ways to escape the restrictions made by their parents if they feel too restricted. In the end, they may be tempted to lie often.

Saat berpergian, apakah pernah anda berbohong kepada orang tua anda karena terlalu dikekang?

2 jawaban

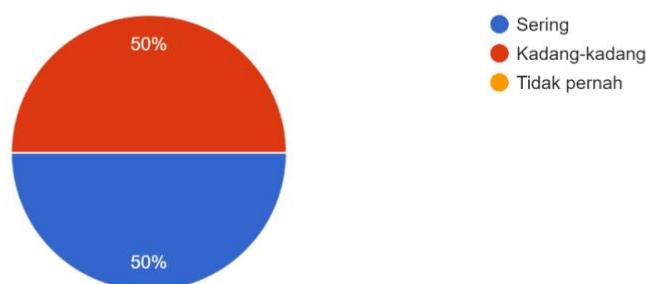


Figure 4. Results of the fourth question

From the research results it is proven that the attitude of parents who are too protective makes a child often lie. As the picture above 50% of people answered that they often lie when traveling, and the other 50% answered that they only sometimes lie to their parents when traveling.

### 3.3. Implications in Modern Context

In today's increasingly complex and diverse society, it is important to understand the implications of overprotective parenting. First, it is important for parents and mental health professionals to raise awareness about this parenting style and its impact on children's mental health. By understanding the risks associated with overprotective parenting, parents can take steps to reduce overprotection and provide their children with the opportunity to grow and develop independently.

Second, there needs to be an effort to provide parents with support and resources to help them develop healthy parenting styles and support their children's mental health development. This could include parent training, group support, or online resources that offer information and advice on how to support children's well-being and independence.

### 3.4. Discussion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the consequences of overprotective parenting on children's mental health, decision-making abilities, and social development. The results confirm that overprotective parenting limits children's independence, fosters social isolation, and increases mental health challenges such as anxiety and low self-esteem. These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as those by Moreira et al. (2019), which revealed that overprotective parenting correlates with poor social skills and low autonomy in children. The data from this study reveal that 52.4% of respondents reported their parents often made decisions without involving them. This lack of agency in decision-making aligns with previous findings by Santos et al. (2020); & Wolf (2020), who emphasized that children raised in overcontrolled environments struggle to develop problem-solving skills. This study further highlights that 61.9% of respondents agreed that overprotective habits hinder children's ability to make decisions. This supports Baumrind's theory of authoritative parenting, which emphasizes the importance of balancing parental guidance with children's independence to promote self-reliance and competence (Matejevic et al., 2014).

Another critical finding is that 61.9% of respondents indicated that overprotective parenting diminished their confidence when facing challenges. This aligns with research by Maulyda et al. (2024), which found that children raised by overprotective parents are more likely to develop social anxiety and fear of failure due to a lack of exposure to challenges. The inability to develop self-efficacy can have long-term implications on a child's ability to cope with adversities in adulthood, as noted by Bandura's social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of mastery experiences in building confidence (Slavin, 2018). The study also revealed that overprotective parenting can foster dishonesty in children, as 50% of respondents admitted to lying to their parents about traveling. This finding aligns with research by Lukose & Azeez (2015), which found that overly restrictive parenting often drives children to hide their behaviors or lie to gain autonomy. This underscores the need for balanced parenting styles that allow children to exercise their independence within reasonable boundaries.

From a social perspective, the study identified that overprotective parenting often leads to social isolation and difficulty in building peer relationships. This supports prior research by Deb & McGirr (2015), which highlighted that children raised in overly controlled environments are less likely to develop healthy social connections and may struggle with loneliness. Overprotected children are often not equipped to navigate complex social interactions, leading to long-term difficulties in forming meaningful relationships. The implications of this study extend to practical applications for parents, educators, and mental health professionals. Efforts should focus on providing parents with education on the importance of fostering independence in children. For example, training programs that teach authoritative parenting strategies could help parents strike a balance between providing guidance and allowing autonomy. This aligns with the findings of Paksi & Harmianto (2022), who emphasized the importance of autonomy-supportive parenting in promoting children's psychological well-being.

Comparatively, this study's findings align with global research trends but also highlight contextual differences. For instance, the influence of local culture and traditions on parenting, as noted in this study, echoes the findings of Makki et al. (2023); & Wahyudi & Haryati (2023), who argued that cultural norms heavily shape parental behavior. In collectivist cultures like Indonesia, overprotective parenting may stem from societal expectations to shield children from failure. However, this contrasts with findings in individualistic societies, where independence is often prioritized over parental control. Hence, this study reinforces the negative impacts of overprotective parenting and highlights the need for a paradigm shift toward balanced parenting styles. Future research should explore intervention strategies tailored to cultural contexts to help parents adopt practices that support children's independence and mental health. By fostering greater awareness

and understanding, stakeholders can mitigate the adverse effects of overprotective parenting and promote healthier developmental outcomes for children.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Overprotective parenting can have a negative impact on a child's mental health. This parenting style can lead to low self-esteem, social isolation, and low self-esteem because it limits a child's experience in dealing with problems and challenges. They are also more susceptible to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Parents must find the right balance between protecting their children and giving them enough freedom to thrive. Children can build strong mental health and cope better with challenges if they receive the right support and build independence.

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