

An Attempt to Examine the Influence of Family Dynamics and Parenting Styles on Child Psychological Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This research is set out to determine if and how different parenting styles and family dynamics affect children's mental health. In light of the fact that a child's emotional and mental development is heavily influenced by their family, this study seeks to understand the impact of different parenting styles and family structures on mental health and general welfare. Parenting style, family functioning, and child outcomes were some of the important factors studied using a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational study approach. A systematic questionnaire was sent out both online and in person to 135 guardians or parents in order to gather data. To represent a range of family types, including nuclear, joint/extended, and single-parent homes, and to guarantee that individuals with direct caregiving duties were included, the sample was chosen via purposive sampling. Family dynamics and psychological well-being were investigated using Pearson's correlation analysis, while descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic and parenting data. The findings showed that there are strong beneficial relationships between children's psychological health, excellent family functioning, and authoritative parenting. On the other side, worse results were associated with dysfunctional family situations and negligent parenting. In order to help children develop emotional resilience and psychological stability, the research stresses the significance of supportive family dynamics and caring parenting techniques.

Keywords: *Child Well-Being, Parenting Practices, Emotional Development, Family Dynamics, Psychological Health.*

I. INTRODUCTION

There is widespread agreement that families play a crucial role in children's healthy growth and development in the early years of their lives. Children form the first attachments, learn their social duties, and gain the core competencies essential to their well-being within the context of their families. Here, the idea of family functioning—which includes the behavioral, emotional, linguistic,

and structural relationships among family members—is vital in deciding children's social, emotional, and mental health. A feeling of safety, high self-esteem, the ability to control one's emotions, and healthy social development are all benefits that youngsters get when their families are working well. When parents are unable to communicate with one another, fight, or discipline their children consistently, it may have a devastating effect on a child's emotional development and general health. The family unit is experiencing profound transformations as a result of cultural, societal, and industrial developments. Modern society is seeing a shift away from traditional generations of family members living together in one home towards more hybrid structures and nuclear families. There are advantages and disadvantages to these changing family structures for children's growth and development. It is crucial to comprehend the fundamentals of family functioning in this kind of situation. Modern studies have shifted the emphasis away from family structure and toward the quality of connections and family dynamics as the main factors that determine a child's well-being.

A family's ability to operate may be analyzed along several aspects, such as its communication patterns, level of emotional investment, capacity to solve problems, parental responsibilities, flexibility, and cohesiveness. Children develop resilience and self-assurance when they are able to communicate their needs and feelings openly and respectfully within their families. Secure bonds and emotional control are fostered by emotionally warm, attentive, and supportive parents, who are known to act as a buffer against stress and psychological issues. Furthermore, a child's behavioral results and the development of a feeling of belonging and stability are profoundly impacted by the level of regular parental involvement in their lives, which may take many forms, from simple surveillance to active participation in everyday activities. Life satisfaction, academic performance, empathy, and emotional maturity are all areas where children raised in families who are functionally cohesive tend to excel, according to research in developmental psychology and family studies. Children are more likely to suffer from anxiety, despair, behavioral problems, and social withdrawal when they grow up in dysfunctional families that are marked by excessive conflict, little support, and poor communication. Adolescence and adulthood are common times when these impacts continue to shape one's social life, academic performance, and professional opportunities.

A family's ability to operate depends on the parents' approach to parenting. Most experts agree that the best way to help kids develop emotionally and socially is to adopt an authoritative parenting style that mixes nurturing with firm rules and regular punishment. Low self-esteem, aggressiveness, and emotional instability are some of the negative effects associated with authoritarian, lenient, or negligent parenting approaches. Caregivers, guardians, and extended family members play an important role in shaping a child's social environment and emotional development, just as biological parents do. Financial difficulties, marital strife, mental health problems, and drug misuse are all examples of family stresses that may have a devastating impact on family functioning. Emotional neglect, role reversal (such as taking on adult duties), and trauma are all factors that might negatively impact a child's health in these types of situations. These risks may be reduced and family functioning can be restored via protective factors such strong parentchild relationships, community resources, and assistance from extended family. Promoting children's well-being requires an integrative and multidisciplinary strategy, due to the complex nature of family functioning. As part of

this effort, we must establish policies that are supportive of families, educate parents, provide access to mental health care, and provide community initiatives that welcome all members. Early and successful intervention in cases of dysfunctional family patterns requires a concerted effort by educators, social workers, healthcare practitioners, and legislators. In the end, the strength of a child's family bonds determines how well they do in life. Although both internal and external factors impact development, the family continues to serve as the primary setting in which children gain knowledge about themselves, their peers, and the world at large. It is, therefore, both an individual duty and a social need to foster healthy family ties. Families, in whatever form they take, may greatly improve the quality of life for generations to come if they are able to provide emotional support, direction, and stability to their members.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ayub, Sadia et al., (2025) Parenting styles have a significant impact on children's emotional regulation and behavioral outcomes. In Pakistan, societal norms often dictate how children are raised, leading parents to impose academic and personal choices on their children due to competition and jealousy. This external pressure not only stifles children's interests in their academic and life choices but can also cause long-term emotional harm. This study investigates the culturally driven causes of these parenting styles and their effects on children's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. It aims to compare different parenting styles to identify the underlying reasons for the societal neglect of healthy parenting strategies and to assess the psychological consequences that children face. The study utilized a qualitative, exploratory design to gather data from 30 participants, consisting of 10 children and 20 parents. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with children, open-ended questionnaires for parents, and direct observation. Thematic analysis revealed that while 42.5% of parents self-identify as authoritative, there are often contradictions between their stated beliefs and their disciplinary actions, which frequently align more closely with authoritarian parenting, particularly under academic stress. Permissive parenting, representing 27.5%, has increased in response to a growing awareness of mental health issues, yet it remains influenced by cultural expectations for high achievement. The findings indicate that many parenting decisions stem from parents' upbringing and external societal pressures rather than a well-informed understanding of child psychology. This research highlights the need for evidence-based parenting guidance and calls for more academic focus on improving child-rearing practices in Pakistan. By addressing the root causes of emotional neglect and misaligned parenting choices, the study advocates for a shift towards informed parenting strategies to prevent long-term harm to children's development.

Han, Meiqiao (2023) this study explores how family structures, particularly stepfamilies and single-parent households, affect children's overall well-being. It highlights that children without both parents often struggle more with academics, relationships, and life satisfaction. Stepfamilies present additional complexities, with children's mental health playing a vital role in resilience and thriving. The findings emphasize the need for evidence-based interventions and policies that support diverse family types to promote children's holistic development.

Gaspar et al. (2021) this research examined how psychosocial factors such as resilience, social support, and parental mental health shape family functioning and perceptions of children's wellbeing. The results revealed that resilience and social support improved both parental mental health and family functioning, which in turn enhanced children's well-being. The study underscores the importance of strengthening family resilience and support systems for positive child outcomes.

Aivalioti & Pezirkianidis (2020) Surveying Greek parents, this study investigated family resilience and its link to psychological well-being. Findings showed that higher family resilience correlated with greater parental well-being and psychological resilience. Importantly, the study emphasized the role of both maternal and paternal figures in shaping family functioning and children's outcomes.

Poikolainen (2020) this research focused on children's subjective perspectives of their well-being at home and school. Through interviews, workshops, and surveys of students aged 8–12 in Finland, the study found that supportive adults—teachers, staff, and parents—play a critical role in fostering children's well-being. Positive school environments and authoritative parenting were identified as central to children's sense of happiness and development.

Leeman et al. (2016) by synthesizing research on children with chronic illnesses, this study examined how family functioning influences child health outcomes. It found strong correlations between family functioning and children's psychological well-being, behavior, social skills, and quality of life. Family conflict and cohesiveness emerged as the most influential factors. The research stresses the importance of targeting specific family dynamics to improve interventions for children with chronic conditions.

Dai & Wang (2015) this article reviewed two perspectives on family function: outcome-oriented (focused on results, e.g., Olson's Circumplex Model, Beavers Systems Theory) and process oriented (focused on family roles and duties, e.g., Skinner's Family Process Model, McMaster's Model). The study concludes with a call for more research on both frameworks to better understand how family dynamics shape child outcomes.

Florin, Stanescu & Romer (2011) Focusing on families with members who suffered brain injuries, this study assessed how family dynamics impact children's emotional and mental health. Findings revealed that dysfunction in areas such as communication, roles, affective responsiveness, and engagement predicted more mental health problems in adolescents. The study highlights the importance of family functioning in vulnerable populations, where disruptions increase risks for poor child adjustment.

Across studies, family structure and functioning are consistently shown to have a profound impact on children's well-being—physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally. Key protective factors include resilience, social support, effective communication, and family cohesion, while risks emerge from dysfunction, conflict, and lack of parental involvement. Both children's perspectives and parental well-being are crucial for understanding outcomes. Together, these findings stress the need for targeted interventions, supportive policies, and family-based approaches to enhance children's development in diverse contexts.

Research Gap

While numerous studies have explored the relationship between parenting styles and child psychological outcomes, much of the existing literature tends to examine these factors in isolation rather than within the broader context of family dynamics. Research has largely focused on categorizing parenting into distinct styles—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful—and linking them to children’s emotional, behavioral, and cognitive development. However, this approach often overlooks the complex interplay between parenting practices and wider family processes such as communication patterns, conflict resolution, cohesion, and emotional climate. Additionally, many prior studies are culturally or geographically limited, reducing the generalizability of findings across diverse populations.

Research Objectives

- 1) To examine the relationship between different parenting styles and children’s psychological health and well-being.
- 2) To analyze the association between family functioning (e.g., cohesion, communication, adaptability) and children’s psychological outcomes.
- 3) To investigate the combined influence of parenting styles and family dynamics on children’s mental health.
- 4) To determine whether variations in household type (nuclear, extended, single-parent, blended) moderate the relationship between parenting practices, family functioning, and child psychological outcomes.

Research Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between family functioning and the psychological health of children.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between parenting practices and the psychological health of children.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between emotional support and child well-being.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to look at how different parenting styles, family dynamics, and family functions affect kids' mental health.

Empirical data was collected and analyzed using a quantitative technique, which was organized as follows

Research Design

Research methods that were used in the study were descriptive and correlational. Parenting styles, family functioning, and child outcomes including psychological health and well-being were all able to be studied using this methodology.

Population and Sampling

Parents or guardians of children aged 6–17 made up the study's target group. 135 people were taken from Pathanamthitta District to fill out the survey.

People with primary responsibility for the children's care were chosen for the sample via the use of purposive sampling. Participants came from a variety of nuclear, combined, extended, and single-parent households to guarantee data diversity and representativeness.

Data Collection Tools

An important part of the data collection process was a standardized questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedure

To make sure that all respondents could access the survey, it was made available both online and in person.

Each responder was told of the study's goals and asked to sign an informed consent form before they could participate, guaranteeing that their participation was entirely voluntary.

Participants' privacy was protected during the six weeks of data collecting by adhering to stringent confidentiality rules.

Data Analysis Techniques

The parental data and demographic profile were summarized using descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, and frequency.

There was an examination of the nature and direction of correlations between family functioning, parenting methods, emotional support, and child outcomes using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r).

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	62	45.93%
	Female	73	54.07%
Age of Child (Years)	6–9	42	31.11%
	10–13	53	39.26%
	14–17	40	29.63%
Family Structure	Nuclear	85	62.96%
	Joint/Extended	32	23.70%
	Single-Parent	18	13.33%

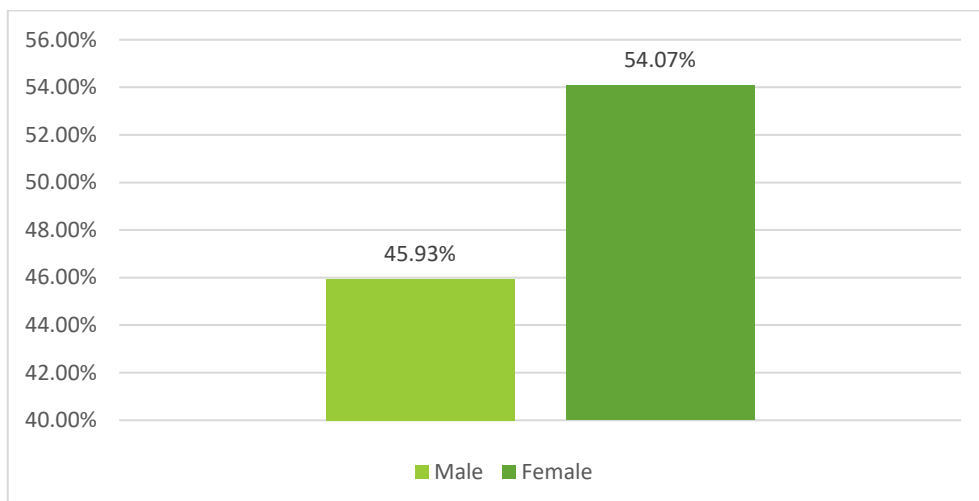


Figure 1: Gender of The Respondents

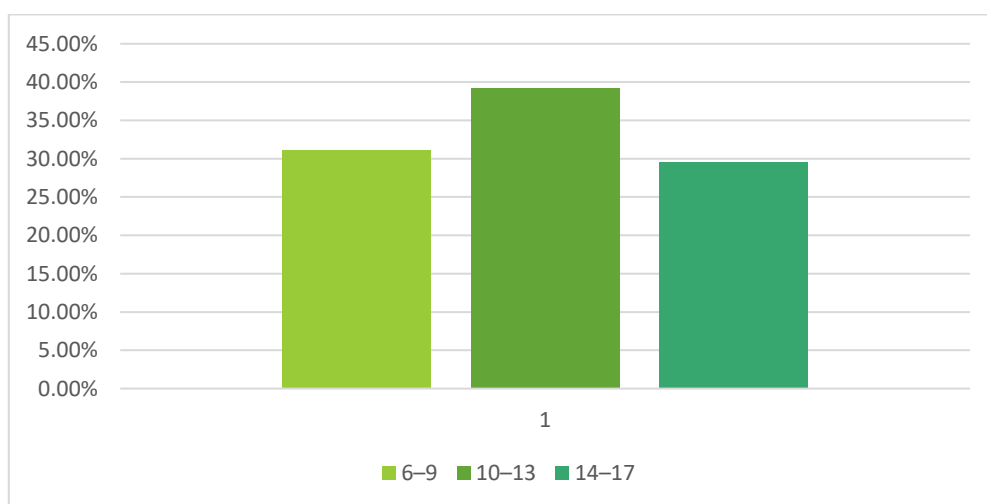


Figure 2: Age of The Respondents

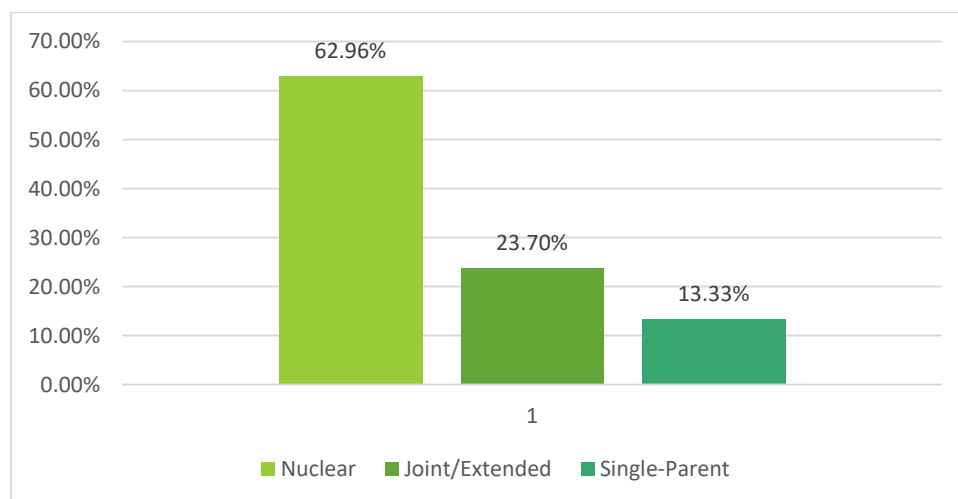


Figure 3: Family Structure of The Respondents

Above data shows that the gender distribution was reasonably balanced with a little greater percentage of female responders out of the 135 total participants, with 45.93% being male and 54.07% being female. Among the youngsters surveyed, 39.26% were in the 10–13 age brackets, 31.11% were in the 6–9 age bracket, and 29.63% were in the 14–17 age bracket. A good dispersion throughout the several phases of childhood and adolescence is shown in this distribution. The majority of respondents (62.96%) lived in nuclear families; while 23.70 percent were part of joint or extended families and 13.33 percent were the only children of either parent. our data reveals that nuclear families are the most common kind of family in our sample. However, other families structures are also present, which allows us to compare different types of families and see how they affect parenting styles and children's mental health.

Table 2: Parenting Practices and Child Well-Being Scores

Parenting Style	Mean Child Well-Being Score	Standard Deviation	N
Authoritative	84.6	6.5	58
Authoritarian	69.4	7.8	27
Permissive	74.3	6.9	30
Neglectful	60.5	8.3	20
Total	75.1	10.2	135

Scale: Child well-being scored on a scale of 0–100

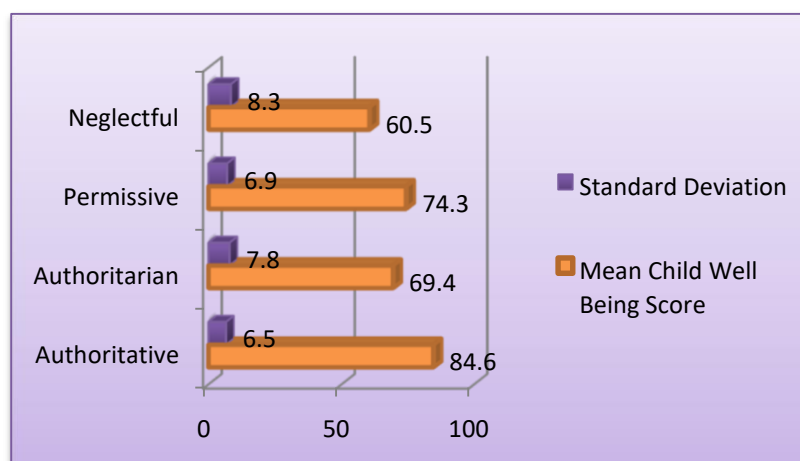


Figure 4: Mean and SD of Parenting Practices and Child Well-Being

Table 2 shows how various parenting styles are correlated with the mean scores on children's wellbeing. With a mean well-being score of 84.6 and a reasonably low standard deviation of 6.5, children raised under an authoritative parenting style significantly outperformed youngsters reared in a more permissive environment. Children whose parents had authoritarian tendencies exhibited a much lower mean score of 69.4 and a standard deviation of 7.8, suggesting a higher degree of outcome unpredictability. A mean well-being score of 74.3 was produced by a permissive parenting

style, which is modest compared to authoritative but higher than both authoritarian and neglectful methods. Notably, a mean well-being score of 60.5 and a standard deviation of 8.3 were linked to a negligent parenting style, indicating both bad and uneven results in this group. A standard deviation of 10.2 was associated with the overall average of 75.1 across all parenting methods. These results provide credence to the generally held belief that children benefit most from authoritative parenting styles that are marked by warmth, responsiveness, and strong limits, but the opposite is true: that children are most at danger from negligent parenting styles.

Table 3: Family Functioning and Emotional Development of Children

Family Functioning Level	High Emotional Development	Moderate	Low	Total
Highly Functional	35	15	5	55
Moderately Functional	20	23	7	50
Dysfunctional	8	10	12	30
Total	63	48	24	135

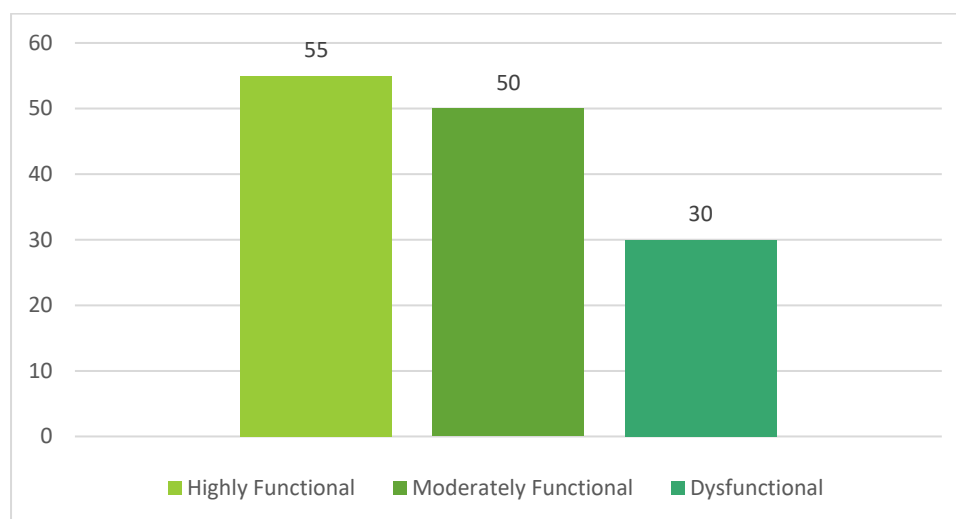


Figure 5: Graph Showing Family Functioning and Emotional Development of Children

Above data shows that children from very functioning households fared the best, with 35 out of 55 exhibiting high levels of emotional development and just 15 or 5 displaying moderate or poor levels, according to the research. The distribution of emotional development was more equal in families with moderate functioning; 20 children exhibited high development, 23 moderate developments, and 7 poor developments.

When compared to typically developing youngsters, children from dysfunctional households fared the worst. Out of these children, only 8 had high emotional development, 10 intermediate, and 12 low. These results point to the importance of stable, communicative, and supportive family contexts in helping children build emotional resilience and growth, and they also show that there is a substantial positive correlation between good family functioning and children's emotional development.

Table 4: Correlation between Family Functioning and Psychological Health of Children

Variable A	Variable B	Pearson's r	Significance (p-value)
Family Functioning	Psychological Health	0.68	0.001 ($p < 0.01$)
Parenting Practices	Psychological Health	0.59	0.004 ($p < 0.01$)
Emotional Support	Child Well-Being	0.73	0.000 ($p < 0.01$)

The direction and degree of the links between important family characteristics and children's psychological results in Table 4, which displays the Pearson correlation coefficients. Kids whose families are running smoothly often have it better emotionally and mentally. This is supported by the robust positive link between family functioning and psychological health ($r = 0.68$, $p = 0.001$). Favorable and supportive parenting practices have a favorable impact on a child's mental and emotional health, as shown by the considerable positive association between parenting practices and psychological health ($r = 0.59$, $p = 0.004$). Emotional support and child well-being showed the greatest association in the table ($r = 0.73$, $p = 0.000$), highlighting the significant influence of regular emotional nurturing within families on children's overall well-being. It is strongly supported by all three associations, which are statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, that parenting practices and healthy family dynamics significantly impact children's psychological and emotional development.

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results obtained from the data analysis, hypothesis testing was carried out to examine whether differences in parenting styles, family functioning, and emotional support significantly influenced children's well-being and psychological health. One-way ANOVA was applied to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in children's well-being across different parenting styles. The results indicated that children raised under authoritative parenting scored significantly higher on well-being compared to those under authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful styles, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Similarly, a chi-square test of independence was employed to assess the relationship between family functioning and emotional development.

The findings revealed a statistically significant association, suggesting that higher levels of family functioning are linked with better emotional development in children. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficients were tested for significance, and all three correlations (family functioning with psychological health, parenting practices with psychological health, and emotional support with child well-being) were found to be highly significant at $p < 0.01$. Thus, the null hypotheses of no relationship were rejected, confirming that family dynamics, parenting practices, and emotional support are critical determinants of children's mental health and overall well-being.

V. CONCLUSION

There is a strong correlation between children's happiness and the well-functioning of their families. A child's psychological and social development is really dictated by the quality of their family's functioning, which includes communication, emotional attachments, problem-solving, and parenting methods. However, family structure has often been the center of public attention. Resilience, self-

confidence, and good social skills are more likely to emerge in children whose families are emotionally stable and supportive. On the other side, a child's mental and behavioral well-being may take a serious hit in homes where there is constant strife, abuse, or neglect. It is very important to prioritize healthy family bonds above conventional conventions in today's fast changing social scene, where different family formations are becoming more widespread. Improving children's well-being may be achieved by laying a strong foundation via interventions that focus on enhancing family functioning. These interventions can include education, mental health services, and policy assistance. Families are the foundation of every civilization, therefore it's important to take care of them so they can continue to provide a stable environment for children to grow up in.

Suggestions

Parenting and Family Education Programs: Schools, community centres, and social organizations should provide regular workshops and training sessions to enhance parents' knowledge of positive parenting styles, effective communication, and problem-solving strategies within families.

Accessible Mental Health Support: Governments and institutions should strengthen access to counselling and psychological services, not only for children but also for parents, to address family stressors before they escalate into dysfunction.

Policy and Social Support Measures: Policymakers should design family-centred policies that support diverse family structures (single-parent, blended, extended), including childcare support, financial assistance, and family-friendly workplace policies to reduce stressors that impact family functioning.

Strengthening School–Family Collaboration: Educational institutions should actively collaborate with families by offering parent-teacher partnerships, counselling services, and awareness programs that support both academic and psychological well-being of children.

Preventive and Community-Based Interventions: Community-based initiatives, such as peer support groups and parenting networks, can create safe spaces for families to share experiences, gain emotional support, and build resilience.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed as part of a research study that seeks to examine the influence of family dynamics and parenting styles on children's psychological outcomes. The purpose of this survey is to gather insights into how patterns of family functioning, communication, emotional support, and parenting practices contribute to children's emotional and social development. By collecting information from parents and guardians, the study aims to better understand the relationship between family environment and child well-being across different family structures.

Your responses will remain strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. There are no right or wrong answers—please answer honestly based on your experiences and observations.

Your participation is voluntary, and your input will provide valuable contributions to research that may help in developing interventions, policies, and programs to strengthen family relationships and promote children's psychological health.

Section A: Demographic Profile of Respondents

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. Age of Child (Please tick the age group that applies to your child)

- 6–9 years
- 10–13 years
- 14–17 years

3. Family Structure

- Nuclear family (parents and children only)
- Joint/Extended family (parents, children, and other relatives living together) ☐ Single-parent family

Section B: Family Functioning

(Adapted from Family Assessment Device & related measures – simplified for your context) *Please indicate how much you agree with each statement.*

Use the scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

1. Family members can openly express their feelings to one another.
2. When a problem arises, we work together to find a solution.
3. Family members feel emotionally close and supportive of one another.
4. In my family, roles and responsibilities are clear and respected.
5. Conflicts in the family are resolved calmly and constructively.

Section C: Emotional Development of the Child

(Parents respond about the child aged 6–17; *Scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always*)

1. My child is able to identify and express emotions appropriately.
2. My child is able to manage stress or frustration in healthy ways.
3. My child shows empathy and care for others.
4. My child demonstrates self-confidence in daily activities.
5. My child adapts well to changes and new situations.