VNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA Facultat de Psicologia

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El desajuste en la adolescencia en la era digital: ¿Un factor de riesgo o de protección?

TESIS DOCTORAL

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Adolescent maladjustment in the digital age: a risk or protective factor?

PhD THESIS

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RESUMEN DE LA TESIS

El desajuste en la adolescencia en la era digital: ¿Un factor de riesgo o de protección?

En la actual era digital, no queda claro cuál es el estilo parental óptimo para conseguir un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo, ya que el estilo parental óptimo parece cambiar en distintos contextos. La adolescencia es un período normativo del desarrollo en el que en cierto sentido el hijo empieza a salir del nido familiar para explorar diferentes entornos. Durante esta etapa, el adolescente experimenta cambios biológicos importantes, e intenta buscar su identidad y alcanzar autonomía, separándose y diferenciándose de sus padres, a la vez que se relaciona más con sus iguales, actuando en base a las normas que estos sigan. Los iguales pueden tener un impacto positivo o negativo en el desarrollo del adolescente. La adolescencia es un periodo de cierto grado de vulnerabilidad psicosocial en el que es más probable que se den conductas inadecuadas que no se ajusten a la norma social, es decir, es más probable que haya desajuste, aunque no se de en todos los adolescentes. Esto implica que durante la adolescencia se pueden producir más problemas. La literatura clásica ha debatido acerca de si el desajuste en la adolescencia es distinto respecto a la edad en que se estabiliza y ha postulado muy diferentes relaciones entre el desajuste en la adolescencia y el ajuste a largo plazo, desde aquellos planteamientos que establecen que un desajuste a corto plazo supone un mejor ajuste social, a aquellos que lo han clasificado como irrelevante, además de otros que han considerado la adolescencia un periodo tan crítico que un desajuste es un predictor completo de riesgo. La literatura se ha centrado en analizar las consecuencias que el desajuste en la adolescencia podría tener en la adultez, así como afectar a la eficacia de los estilos parentales. Los padres pueden ser un factor protector o de riesgo del ajuste psicosocial del hijo. Dos aspectos importantes de los padres influyen en el ajuste o el desajuste psicosocial del hijo, el grado de afecto y de imposición que muestran con sus hijos. La literatura clásica defendía el papel fundamental de la imposición parental para conseguir un buen ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo, incluso en hijos que llevan a cabo conductas disruptivas en la adolescencia, es decir, desajustados en la adolescencia. Sin embargo, la imposición también se ha considerado irrelevante para el ajuste del hijo, mientras que en otros casos es perjudicial, e incluso se plantea en estudios recientes que el afecto parental se relaciona con un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo, también considerando a adolescentes desajustados. La presente tesis doctoral se presenta como

compendio de publicaciones y se estructura en tres capítulos: I) introducción, II) trabajos publicados y III) discusión y conclusiones generales, además de un anexo. En el capítulo I se ofrece un resumen global dónde se justifica la unidad temática de los artículos presentados, estableciéndose el marco teórico, el método utilizado, los objetivos planteados, y los principales resultados obtenidos en las publicaciones. Los padres tienen un importante rol en la educación de sus hijos. Desde los inicios de la psicología se ha estudiado la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en diferentes contextos culturales y situaciones. Fruto de estas investigaciones surgió un debate teórico acerca de qué estilo parental es el óptimo. En la presente investigación se analizó la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo utilizando el modelo teórico bidimensional, que plantea que los padres utilizan dos dimensiones teóricamente independientes para socializar a sus hijos (afecto e imposición) y que a partir de la combinación de las dimensiones surgen cuatro estilos parentales (indulgente, autorizativo, autoritario y negligente). Se utilizaron medidas para evaluar la socialización parental desde la perspectiva del hijo porque el hijo presenta menor deseabilidad social que los padres y es una medida más precisa. Se evaluó a 4799 hijos acerca de las conductas y actitudes que llevaban a cabo sus padres cuando estos hijos eran niños y adolescentes (dimensiones y/o estilos parentales) mientras estaba teniendo lugar el proceso de socialización parental y en la adultez (cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado). También se midió el ajuste psicosocial del hijo utilizando criterios de ajuste como la autoestima, cinco dimensiones de autoconcepto (académico, social, emocional, familiar y físico), agresión, sexismo hostil, empatía, competencia social, nerviosismo y valores de conformidad. Los objetivos planteados en la presente investigación fueron, en primer lugar, conocer qué estilo o dimensión parental es más efectiva para conseguir un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo a corto plazo cuando la socialización parental está teniendo lugar (es decir, cuando el hijo es adolescente) y también a largo plazo cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado (es decir, cuando el hijo es adulto), y, en segundo lugar, analizar si las relaciones encontradas entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo se mantienen en diferentes contextos y situaciones tales como la edad de los hijos, el contexto cultural en el que se lleva a cabo la socialización parental o características del hijo como la tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia. Con este fin, se llevaron a cabo diferentes estudios que han sido publicados. El primer estudio analizó la relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial de hijos españoles en la adolescencia, la juventud adulta, la mediana edad y la adultez tardía utilizando los

siguientes criterios de ajuste: autoestima, autoconcepto emocional, empatía, agresión y sexismo hostil. El segundo estudio analizó la relación y el poder predictor de las dimensiones parentales sobre el ajuste psicosocial de hijos españoles adolescentes y jóvenes adultos utilizando los siguientes criterios de ajuste: autoconcepto emocional, autoestima, competencia social y conformidad. El tercer estudio analizó la relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial de hijos chinos y examinó si dicha relación se mantiene cuando el hijo tiene tendencia antisocial en la adolescencia. Los resultados de los tres estudios destacaron que el afecto parental fue beneficioso para el ajuste psicosocial de hijo y la imposición fue perjudicial o no guardó relación con el ajuste del hijo. Estos resultados se mantuvieron en diferentes situaciones tales como el contexto cultural en el que se lleva a cabo la socialización parental o la tendencia antisocial del hijo durante la adolescencia. En el capítulo II se presenta la versión íntegra publicada de cada uno de los artículos que conforman el compendio de publicaciones, dónde aparece el nombre y la filiación de todos los coautores, así como la referencia completa de dicha publicación. En el capítulo III se presenta la discusión de los resultados y las conclusiones generales. Los resultados obtenidos suponen una evidencia nueva y crucial puesto que contradicen la literatura clásica que defendía los beneficios de la imposición para garantizar el cumplimiento de las normas sociales y el comportamiento adecuado al contexto cultural en el que se vive. La cultura china ha sufrido muchos cambios sociales en los últimos años que han hecho que las generaciones actuales tengan una cultura más horizontal, al igual que lo es la cultura de algunos países latinoamericanos y europeos como España. En las culturas horizontales, las relaciones entre padres e hijos son más igualitarias, y, por ello, las actitudes y conductas relacionadas con la imposición parental se consideran una privación de la libertad de los hijos y se relacionan con desajuste, mientras que el afecto (acompañado o no de imposición) se relaciona con un buen ajuste del hijo. Finalmente, se presenta un anexo en el que se muestran otras publicaciones de la doctoranda relacionadas con la temática de la tesis.

THESIS ABSTRACT

Adolescent maladjustment in the digital age: a risk or protective factor?

In the current digital era, it remains unclear what the optimal parenting style is for achieving good psychosocial adjustment in children, as the ideal parental style seems to vary across different contexts. Adolescence is a normative developmental period during which, in a certain sense, the child begins to leave the family nest to explore different environments. During this stage, the adolescent experiences significant biological changes, seeks to establish their identity, and strives for autonomy—separating from and differentiating themselves from their parents—while increasing interactions with peers, acting according to the norms followed by these peers. Peers can have either a positive or negative impact on the adolescent's development. Adolescence is a period of some psychosocial vulnerability where inappropriate behaviors that do not conform to social norms are more likely to occur—that is, there is a higher likelihood of mismatch or maladjustment, although not in all adolescents. This implies that problems may arise more frequently during adolescence. Classical literature has debated whether the mismatch during adolescence differs from other ages in terms of its relation to long-term adjustment, proposing very different relationships: some argue that short-term maladjustment can lead to better social adjustment later, while others have classified it as irrelevant, and still others view adolescence as a critical period where any maladjustment is a full predictor of risk. Research has focused on analyzing the potential consequences of adolescent maladjustment in adulthood, as well as on how it affects the efficacy of different parental styles. Parents can act as protective factors or risk factors for their child's psychosocial adjustment. Two key aspects influencing a child's psychosocial well-being are the degree of warmth and the level of strictness they show toward their children. Classical literature emphasized the fundamental role of parental strictness in achieving optimal psychosocial adjustment—even in children who exhibit disruptive behaviors during adolescence, meaning, maladjusted adolescents. However, strictness has also been considered irrelevant for a child's adjustment, and in some cases, even harmful. Recent studies suggest that parental warmth is related to optimal psychosocial adjustment, even among maladjusted adolescents. This doctoral thesis is a compilation of publications structured in three chapters: I) introduction, II) published papers, and III) discussion and

general conclusions, plus an appendix. In Chapter I, a comprehensive overview is provided, justifying the thematic unity of the presented articles. It establishes the theoretical framework, the methods used, the objectives set, and the main results obtained in the publications. The role of parents in education is significant. Since the origins of psychology, the relationship between parental socialization and children's psychosocial adjustment across different cultural contexts and situations has been studied. From these investigations, a theoretical debate arose regarding the most effective parenting style. This research analyzed the relationship between parental socialization and children's psychosocial adjustment using the bidimensional model, which posits that parents utilize two theoretically independent dimensions, warmth and strictness, to raise their children. The combination of these dimensions results in four parenting styles: indulgent, permissive, authoritarian, and neglectful. Measures were employed to assess parental socialization from the child's perspective because children tend to provide responses with less social desirability bias than parents, making this approach more accurate. A total of 4,799 children were evaluated regarding the behaviors and attitudes their parents exhibited during childhood and adolescence (parental dimensions and/or styles), while the socialization process was ongoing, as well as in adulthood (when socialization had concluded). Psychosocial adjustment was also measured based on criteria such as self-esteem, five dimensions of self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical), aggression, hostile sexism, empathy, social competence, nervousness, and conformity values. The primary objectives of this research were, first, to determine which parental style or dimension is most effective in achieving optimal psychosocial adjustment in the short term—while socialization is taking place (adolescence)—and in the long term, after socialization has ended (adulthood); and second, to analyze whether the relationships between parental socialization and the child's psychosocial adjustment held across different contexts and situations, such as the child's age, cultural setting, or individual characteristics like antisocial tendencies during adolescence. To this end, several studies were conducted, all of which have been published. The first study examined the relationship between parental styles and the psychosocial adjustment of Spanish children during adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, and late adulthood, using criteria such as self-esteem, emotional self-concept, empathy, aggression, and hostile sexism. The second studied the relationship and predictive power of parental dimensions over the psychosocial adjustment of Spanish adolescents and young adults, focusing on criteria like emotional self-concept, self-esteem, social competence, and

conformity. The third analyzed the relationship between parental styles and psychosocial adjustment in Chinese children and examined whether the relationship persisted when the child exhibited antisocial tendencies during adolescence. The results across the three studies highlighted that parental warmth was beneficial for the child's psychosocial adjustment, while strictness was either harmful or not significantly related to the child's adjustment. These findings remained consistent across different situations, such as the cultural context in which socialization occurred and whether the child had antisocial tendencies during adolescence. Chapter II presents the fully published versions of each article included in this collection, providing the names and affiliations of all co-authors, as well as the complete references. In Chapter III, the results are discussed, and general conclusions are drawn. The findings provide new and crucial evidence because they contradict classical literature that supported the benefits of strictness to ensure compliance with social norms and appropriate behavior within the cultural context. Recent social changes in Chinese culture, as well as in some Latin American and European countries like Spain, have led to more horizontal and egalitarian family relationships. In such cultures, parent-child relationships are more equal, and attitudes or behaviors related to parental strictness are perceived as a deprivation of children’s freedom, which is associated with maladjustment. Conversely, warmth—whether accompanied by strictness or not—is linked with better adjustment in children. Finally, an appendix presents additional publications from the doctoral candidate related to the topic of the thesis, further expanding on the themes discussed.

RESUM DE LA TESI

El desajust a l'adolescència a l'era digital: ¿ Un factor de risc o de protecció?

En l'actual era digital, encara no queda clar quin és l'estil parental òptim per a aconseguir un bon ajustament psicosocial del fill, ja que aquest estil parental sembla canviar en diferents contextos. L'adolescència és un període normatiu del desenvolupament en el qual, en certa manera, el fill comença a eixir del niu familiar per a explorar diferents ambients. Durant aquesta etapa, l'adolescent experimenta canvis biològics importants, i intenta cercar la seua identitat i aconseguir autonomia, separant-se i diferenciant-se dels pares, mentre que es relaciona més amb els seus iguals, actuant segons les normes que ells segueixen. Els iguals poden tenir un impacte positiu o negatiu en el desenvolupament de l'adolescent. L'adolescència és un període de cert grau de vulnerabilitat psicosocial en el qual és més probable que donen conductes inadequades que no s'ajusten a la norma social, és a dir, és més probable que hi haja desajust, encara que no en tots els adolescents. Això implica que durant l'adolescència poden produir-se més problemes. La literatura clàssica ha debatut sobre si el desajust en l'adolescència és diferent respecte a l'edat en què s'estabilitza, i ha postulat molt diferents relacions entre el desajust en l'adolescència i l'ajust a llarg termini, des de aquells plantejaments que estableixen que un desajust a curt termini suposa un millor ajust social, fins a aquells que el consideren irrellevant, així com altres que han considerat l'adolescència com un període tan crític que un desajust és un predictor complet de risc. La literatura s'ha centrat a analitzar les conseqüències que el desajust en l'adolescència podria tenir en l'etapa d'adultesa, així com afectar l'eficàcia dels estils parentals. Els pares poden ser un factor protector o de risc per a l'ajust psicosocial del fill. Dos aspectes importants dels pares que influeixen en l'ajust o el desajust psicosocial del fill són el grau d'afecte i d'imposició que mostren cap a ells. La literatura clàssica defensava la importància fonamental de la imposició parental per a aconseguir un bon ajustament psicosocial òptim del fill, fins i tot en els fills que duen a terme conductes disruptives en l'adolescència, és a dir, desajustats en aquesta etapa. No obstant això, la imposició també s'ha considerat irrellevant per a l'ajust del fill, i en altres casos es considera perjudicial, i fins i tot en estudis recents es planteja que l'afecte parental s'associa a un ajust psicosocial òptim del fill, fins i tot quan són adolescents desajustats. La present tesi doctoral es presenta com un compendi de

publicacions i s'estructura en tres capítols: I) introducció, II) treballs publicats i III) discussió i conclusions generals, a més d'un annex. En el capítol I s'ofereix un resum global on es justifica la unitat temàtica dels articles presentats, establint el marc teòric, el mètode utilitzat, els objectius plantejats, i els principals resultats obtinguts en les publicacions. Els pares tenen un paper molt important en l'educació dels seus fills. Des dels inicis de la psicologia s'ha estudiat la relació entre la socialització parental i l'ajust psicosocial del fill en diferents contextos culturals i situacions. Fruit d'aquestes investigacions va sorgir un debat teòric sobre quin estil parental és l'òptim. En la present investigació es va analitzar la relació entre la socialització parental i l'ajust psicosocial del fill usant el model teòric bidimensional, que planteja que els pares utilitzen dues dimensions teòricament independents per a socialitzar els fills (afecte i imposició) a partir de les quals s'obtenen quatre estils parentals: indulgent, autoritari, autorizatiu i negligent. Es van utilitzar mesures per a avaluar la socialització parental des de la perspectiva del fill, ja que aquest acostuma a tenir menys desirabilitat social que els pares i, per tant, és una mesura més precisa. Es van avaluar 4.799 fills quant a les conductes i actituds que els seus pares tenien quan ells eren menuts i adolescents (dimensions i/o estils parentals), mentre que tenia lloc el procés de socialització parental i també en l'etapa d'adultesa (quan la socialització parental ja havia finalitzat). També es va mesurar l'ajust psicosocial del fill utilitzant criteris com l'autoestima, cinc dimensions del autoconeixement (acadèmic, social, emocional, familiar i físic), agressió, sexisme hostil, empatia, competència social, nerviosisme i valors de conformitat. Els objectius de la present investigació van ser, en primer lloc, conèixer quin estil o dimensió parental és més efectiu per a aconseguir un ajust psicosocial òptim del fill a curt termini, quan la socialització parental està en curs (és a dir, quan l'adolescent és en aquesta etapa), i també a llarg termini, quan la socialització ja ha acabat (és a dir, quan el fill és adult). En segon lloc, s'analitzà si les relacions trobades entre la socialització parental i l'ajust psicosocial del fill es mantenen en diferents contextos i situacions, com ara l'edat dels fills, el context cultural en què es duu a terme la socialització parental o característiques del fill com la tendència antisocial durant l'adolescència. Per això, es van realitzar diferents estudis que han sigut publicats. El primer estudi va analitzar la relació entre els estils parentals i l'ajust psicosocial dels fills espanyols en l'adolescència, joventut, mitjana edat i edat avançada, utilitzant com a criteris d'ajust van considerar-se l'autoestima, l'autoconeixement emocional, l'empatia, l'agressió i el sexisme hostil. El segon estudi va analitzar la relació i la capacitat predictor de les dimensions parentals sobre l'ajust psicosocial dels fills

espanyols adolescents i joves adults, valorant, entre altres factors, l'autoconeixement emocional, l'autoestima, la competència social i la conformitat. El tercer estudi va explorar la relació entre els estils parentals i l'ajust psicosocial de fills xinesos, i va explorar si aquesta relació es manté quan el fill manifesta tendències antisocials durant l'adolescència. Els resultats dels tres estudis van destacar que l'afecte parental era beneficiós per a l'ajust psicosocial del fill, mentre que la imposició era perjudicial o no tenia relació significativa amb l'ajust. Aquests resultats es van mantenir en diferents situacions, com ara el context cultural en què es duia a terme la socialització parental o la tendència antisocial del fill durant l'adolescència. En el capítol II, es presenta la versió completa publicada de cadascun dels articles que conformen aquest compendi, amb els noms i les filiacions de tots els coautors, així com les referències completes de cada publicació. En el capítol III, es discuteixen els resultats i s'aporten conclusions generals. Els resultats obtinguts suposen una evidència important i innovadora, ja que contradiuen la literatura clàssica que defensava els beneficis de la imposició per a garantir el compliment de les normes socials i un comportament adequat segons el context cultural en què s'actua. Les transformacions socials recents a la cultura xinesa, així com en alguns països llatinoamericans i europeus com Espanya, han provocat que les generacions actuals tinguen una cultura més horitzontal, on les relacions entre pares i fills són més igualitàries. Per això, les actituds i conductes vinculades a la imposició parental es consideren una privació de llibertat, i es relacionen amb un desajust. En canvi, l'afecte, ja siga acompanyat o no d'imposició, s'associa amb un bon ajustament del fill. Finalment, en l'annex es mostren altres publicacions de la doctoranda relacionades amb la temàtica de la tesi.

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PREFACIO

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Alcaide, M., Garcia, O. F., Queiroz, P., & Garcia, F. (2023). Adjustment and maladjustment to later life: Evidence about early experiences in the family. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1059458. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1059458 (Impact factor 2023 = **2.6**; 56/219; **Q2**, Psychology, Multidisciplinary; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **24**).

Alcaide, M., Garcia, O. F., Gomez-Ortiz, O., & Garcia, F. (2025). Raising to conformity without strictness: is it achievable?. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *16*, 1568132. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1568132 (Impact factor 2024 = **2.9**; 45/221; **Q1**, Psychology, Multidisciplinary; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **2**).

Alcaide, M., Garcia, O. F., Chen, F., & Garcia, F. (2025). Raising Generation Z children in China: Parenting styles and psychosocial adjustment. *Psychosocial Intervention*, *34*(2) 103-115. https://doi.org/10.5093/pi2025a9 (Impact factor 2024 = **4.4**; 22/221; **Q1**, Psychology, Multidisciplinary; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **1**).

La presente tesis doctoral está estructurada en tres capítulos y un anexo, siguiendo la normativa de la Universidad de Valencia. En el **capítulo I** se ofrece un resumen global donde se justifica la unidad temática de los artículos presentados, el marco teórico, el método utilizado, los objetivos planteados, y los principales resultados obtenidos en las publicaciones. En el **capítulo II** se presentan los tres estudios publicados que conforman el compendio de publicaciones. En el **capítulo III** se exponen la discusión de los resultados y las conclusiones. Por último, el anexo incluye otras publicaciones realizadas durante el periodo de formación predoctoral relacionadas con la investigación de la presente tesis doctoral.

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CAPÍTULO I: INTRODUCCIÓN

Los padres tienen la principal responsabilidad de socializar a sus hijos ya que el hijo es inmaduro y dependiente de sus padres en sus primeros años de vida y carece de las habilidades, valores y normas necesarias para estar ajustado psicosocialmente en la sociedad. Por ello, los padres tienen la función de transmitirle a los hijos las habilidades, valores y normas necesarias para que se convierta en un adulto maduro e independiente ajustado a las normas de la sociedad en la que vive, proceso llamado socialización parental (Maccoby, 1992; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022). Este proceso se produce fundamentalmente durante la infancia y hasta el final de la adolescencia, pero sus consecuencias se extienden hasta la vida adulta (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a). La literatura se centra en analizar la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo y también está analizando qué variables pueden estar modulando dicha relación (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Steinberg et al., 2006).

En la era digital, la relación entre socialización y ajuste del hijo contempla tres posibilidades, según los datos de la literatura, considerando el entorno cultural donde la socialización se desarrolla (Garcia et al., 2019, 2022). Desde el primer estadio se destacó la importancia de la imposición parental sin afecto (estilo parental autoritario) para garantizar la autodisciplina y el ajuste del hijo en contextos culturales como las minorías étnicas estadounidenses que viven en comunidades peligrosas. Dado que en estas comunidades es probable que haya índices relativamente altos de delincuencia y peligrosidad, las consecuencias de no seguir las normas paternas pueden causar daños graves en el desarrollo psicosocial del hijo (Clark et al., 2015; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996). Además, el aspecto académico es muy importante en las sociedades chinas. Por tanto, esto es congruente con los resultados de estudios con muestras chinoamericanas, que demostraron que los hijos de padres autoritarios obtenían los mejores resultados académicos (Chao, 1994, 2001). En estas culturas colectivistas verticales, el rigor y el control (es decir, la imposición) representan un componente importante de la responsabilidad parental, mientras que la falta de disciplina se consideraría ausencia de amor y cuidado (Dwairy & Achoui, 2006). Desde el segundo estadio, se considera que la combinación de afecto e imposición parental (estilo parental autorizativo) se asocia con un ajuste psicosocial óptimo en el hijo, en especial en familias europeo-americanas de clase media, ya que el afecto podría contribuir a la formación de buenas autopercepciones y a un adecuado manejo emocional (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991),

mientras que la imposición parece ser especialmente beneficiosa para ayudar a establecer pautas y límites adecuados para controlar el comportamiento de los hijos y prevenir problemas externalizantes (Baumrind, 1971; Patterson & Stouthamerloeber, 1984; Steinberg, 2001). La literatura empírica más reciente destaca un tercer estadio. Desde el tercer estadio se considera que el afecto sin imposición (estilo parental indulgente) se relaciona con un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo, en especial en países europeos y latinoamericanos. La cultura de estos países es colectivista y horizontal, es decir, se da prioridad a los objetivos del grupo de pertenencia (ej., familia) en detrimento de los propios, y las relaciones entre padres e hijos son más igualitarias, respectivamente. En este contexto cultural de relaciones más igualitarias entre padres e hijos, el afecto se relaciona con el ajuste psicosocial del hijo, tanto en sus autopercepciones y regulación emocional como en la obediencia a las normas sociales (Alcaide et al., 2025b; Garcia & Serra, 2019), mientras que la imposición podría ser perjudicial porque es percibida por los hijos como una privación de su libertad (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2021). En función del contexto cultural en el que se desarrolla la socialización parental, los hijos parecen percibir las actitudes y conductas de sus padres hacia ellos de una forma u otra y esto parece tener consecuencias en el ajuste psicosocial del hijo (Martinez et al., 2021; Triandis, 2001). Por tanto, el contexto cultural en el que se lleva a cabo la socialización parental podría modular la relación entre las actitudes y conductas de los padres hacia el hijo y el ajuste psicosocial de este último. También hay otras variables que podrían estar modulando dicha relación como, por ejemplo, el desajuste psicosocial del hijo (ej., la tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia), el sexo o la edad del hijo.

El desajuste psicosocial en la adolescencia se refiere a que el comportamiento y las actitudes del individuo no sean acordes con las normas y los valores sociales propios de la cultura en la que vive, lo que le dificulta ser un individuo competente en la sociedad (Alcaide et al., 2025b; Maccoby, 1992). Además, el ajuste psicosocial también incluye la parte personal, es decir, que el sujeto tenga unas autopercepciones adecuadas de sí mismo, un sentimiento de valía personal que no esté ni infravalorado ni sobrevalorado (Chen et al., 2024). De este modo, un adolescente desajustado tendría unas autopercepciones pobres de sí mismo, además de llevar a cabo comportamientos que no concuerden con las normas y los valores sociales del contexto cultural en el que vive (Lamborn et al., 1991; Villarejo et al., 2024). Hay claras diferencias entre adolescentes con un buen ajuste y otros con serios problemas de desajuste, la clave es que estos hijos adolescentes ajustados actúen de acuerdo a las normas sociales, no sólo cuando están siendo supervisados por

sus padres, sino también en el grupo de iguales, cuando están sin supervisión y la norma de grupo puede ser contraria a los estándares sociales, de manera que hayan internalizado la norma social y sean capaces de regular su propio comportamiento teniendo en cuenta a los demás (Alcaide et al., 2025b; Maccoby, 1992).

Existe un debate teórico acerca de si esas conductas desajustadas durante la adolescencia pueden favorecer el desarrollo y ser beneficiosas para el ajuste psicosocial del individuo en la vida adulta (Arnett, 1999; Moffitt, 1993, 2018), o por el contrario pueden dar lugar a conductas desajustadas psicosocialmente a largo plazo y convertirse en un factor de riesgo para el desarrollo en la vida adulta (Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg, 2001). Un importante aspecto que la literatura ha debatido es el siguiente: ¿el ser un adolescente con conductas desajustadas va a ser un factor de riesgo para el ajuste en la adultez? o, por el contrario, ¿las conductas desajustadas socialmente en la adolescencia podrían relacionarse con buen ajuste en la adultez debido a que es necesaria cierta rebeldía en la adolescencia para desarrollar la autonomía propia de la adultez? Una pregunta importante de investigación es qué ocurre cuando existen conductas desajustadas socialmente en el hijo adolescente: ¿la relación entre características de los padres y el ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo será la misma independientemente del grado de desajuste psicosocial del hijo durante la adolescencia?, o dicho de otra manera, ¿serán también eficaces las características de los padres que se relacionan con un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo cuando las conductas desviadas son mucho menores o inexistentes? Especialmente en la adolescencia, los padres cobran un papel importante debido a la vulnerabilidad psicosocial que caracteriza a este periodo. En este periodo de vulnerabilidad, los hijos necesitan el apoyo de sus padres para superar con éxito esa etapa de la vida y convertirse en adultos ajustado socialmente y con buenas autopercepciones. Además, el contexto cultural en el que tiene lugar la socialización parental puede influir en las características de los padres que se consideran óptimas para garantizar el ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo.

La literatura también ha examinado la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste del hijo mientras está teniendo lugar la socialización parental (es decir, si el hijo es adolescente), aunque menos cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado (es decir, si el hijo es adulto), centrándose en identificar si dicha relación es la misma cuando el hijo es adolescente que cuando es adulto (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Garcia et al., 2024). Otra cuestión también analizada en la literatura es si el estilo parental óptimo es el mismo independientemente del sexo de hijo o no (Casas et al., 2006). Asimismo, literatura sobre

socialización parental se ha centrado en examinar si el estilo parental óptimo es el mismo en función de diferentes contextos como, por ejemplo, la cultura, o determinadas características del hijo tales como su tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia, el sexo, o la edad, entre otras (Casas et al., 2006; Hudson & Rapee, 2001; Palacios et al., 2022). Cabe plantearnos si la relación entre socialización parental y ajuste psicosocial del hijo cambiaría si contemplamos a la vez las diferentes variables previamente nombradas (cultura, sexo, edad y tendencia antisocial del hijo durante la adolescencia), respecto de considerarlas por separado. Por ejemplo, ¿el estilo parental óptimo para el ajuste psicosocial de las hijas en la adolescencia será el mismo que en la juventud adulta para los hijos varones? O también, ¿el estilo parental óptimo será el mismo para adolescentes sin tendencia antisocial que para adultos que sí tuvieron tendencia antisocial en la adolescencia? ¿Y esta relación será la misma para hijos que para hijas? ¿Podrá la cultura influir en estas relaciones?

Por todo ello, en primer lugar, se examina la vulnerabilidad psicosocial presente en la adolescencia y el debate teórico acerca de si las conductas desajustadas psicosocialmente se relacionan con ajuste o con desajuste psicosocial en la adultez. En segundo lugar, se aborda la importante función de los padres en el período de vulnerabilidad psicosocial del adolescente para favorecer el ajuste del hijo, destacando que los padres tienen un papel clave en la forma en que sus hijos interiorizan las normas sociales y presentan un desarrollo psicosocial adecuado. En tercer lugar, se exponen los principales modelos teóricos sobre socialización parental, los cuales dan lugar a gran cantidad de investigaciones que abordan la relación entre las características de los padres y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo, mostrando qué características deben tener los padres en diferentes contextos culturales para conseguir un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo.

Vulnerabilidad psicosocial en la adolescencia: Impacto en el ajuste en la vida adulta

En la adolescencia se producen cambios normativos, como cambios biológicos y de maduración que no necesariamente van acompañados de madurez social, además de una disminución en la supervisión por parte de los padres en comparación con la infancia, y un desarrollo de relaciones con iguales más intensas y con menor presencia de adultos (Buchanan et al., 2023; Moffitt, 1993; Steinberg, 2001). Los iguales son buenos y necesarios para el desarrollo ya que ayudan a la búsqueda de autonomía e identidad personal (Alcaide et al., 2025b), además de influir en el logro académico (Reyes et al.,

2025) y el comportamiento prosocial (Mounts & Steinberg, 1995; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997). No obstante, en ocasiones, la norma del grupo puede ser desviada, lo que puede conllevar que se produzcan conductas desviadas en el grupo de iguales (Mendez et al., 2021; Urberg et al., 1997). En este sentido, cobra especial importancia el autoconcepto social, que es la percepción que tiene el individuo de su capacidad para relacionarse con los demás y hacer amigos. Si un adolescente tiene un autoconcepto social bajo, es más probable que se integre en un grupo de iguales que establezca normas contrarias a los estándares sociales, como la aceptación del consumo de alcohol como forma de socializar. Por el contrario, un buen autoconcepto social puede actuar como un factor protector frente al desajuste psicosocial, especialmente en relación con el consumo de drogas (Fuentes et al., 2020).

Todo ello hace que la adolescencia se haya identificado como un periodo en el que es más probable que se produzca cierto grado de vulnerabilidad psicosocial en comparación con la niñez y la vida adulta (Bottesi, 2023; Riquelme et al., 2018; Rivera-Romero et al., 2024). La adolescencia representa una etapa de transición hacia la vida adulta, en la que el adolescente debe tomar decisiones importantes relacionadas con sus estudios, su trayectoria profesional y sus relaciones románticas, al tiempo que va adquiriendo mayor autonomía respecto a la autoridad parental, aunque sin perder la relación que mantiene con sus padres. Durante la adolescencia, la influencia de los iguales se vuelve aún más significativa que en la niñez media, pudiendo tener impactos tanto positivos como negativos; por otro lado, la influencia de los padres en la conducta del adolescente, aunque sigue siendo significativa y muy relevante como factor protector o de riesgo, suele ser menor que en la niñez media, lo cual se explica en parte por el cambio en la dinámica de la relación, que pasa de ser relativamente asimétrica a volverse cada vez más equilibrada y simétrica. En este período de vulnerabilidad, se pueden incrementar los comportamientos antisociales y el desajuste psicosocial; puede haber mayor conflicto con los padres, alteraciones del estado de ánimo, problemas internalizantes como ansiedad, inseguridad o depresión; y una mayor implicación en conductas de riesgo o rebeldía (Cava et al., 2020), como la imprudencia, la impulsividad y la grosería (Arnett, 1999; Buchanan et al., 1990). La agresividad (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), e incluso en casos más graves la tendencia antisocial (Garcia et al., 2021), son otros de los indicadores de un serio desajuste psicosocial.

Existe un debate teórico acerca de si la tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia se relaciona con un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo en la adultez (Arnett,

1999; Moffitt, 1993, 2018), o, por el contrario, es perjudicial para el ajuste del hijo en la edad adulta (Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg, 2001). Este debate se remonta al inicio de la psicología y proviene principalmente de las teorías psicoanalíticas y otros planteamientos teóricos (Arnett, 1999; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Por ejemplo, Anna Freud (Freud, 1958) señala que los adolescentes tienen la necesidad de separarse emocionalmente de sus padres, lo cual genera conflicto con los padres, y que, si no se da ese conflicto, los hijos se convertirán en adultos desajustados. En esta línea, otros autores también hablan de la necesidad del adolescente de separarse de sus padres (Erikson, 1968a; Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Durante la adolescencia se produce una disminución drástica del autoconcepto y de la autopercepción de autonomía (Moffitt, 1993), además de la necesidad de separarse de los padres (Simmons & Blyth, 1987), lo que genera un gran malestar en el adolescente, el cual puede mostrar conductas agresivas o disruptivas para gestionar dicho malestar (Moffitt, 1993; Simmons & Blyth, 1987) y para formar una identidad propia al sentirse libres de la dependencia de sus padres (Erikson, 1968a). Peter Blos (Blos, 1967) postula la existencia de una segunda fase de individuación en la adolescencia según la cual los adolescentes deben liberarse de la normativa moral transmitida por sus padres y desarrollar así su propia identidad, lo que los puede llevar a presentar conflicto con sus padres, manifestándose en problemas emocionales y de conducta(Arnett, 1999). En este sentido, Anna Freud consideraba sospechosos a aquellos adolescentes que no experimentaban problemas ni conflictos con sus padres en su búsqueda de identidad, que eran “buenos chicos” como lo habían sido en la infancia, y lo atribuía a una construcción de defensas excesivas sobre sus pulsiones. En palabras de la propia autora, “Ser normal durante la adolescencia es, en sí mismo, anormal”. (Freud, 1958), p. 267). Por tanto, estas conductas agresivas o disruptivas de los adolescentes serían normativas y ajustadas y tendrían lugar de manera limitada en la adolescencia, como plantea por ejemplo la teoría de la tormenta y el estrés (Arnett, 1999; Moffitt, 1993). En este sentido, otros autores han planteado la posibilidad de que, para alcanzar una alta autoestima a largo plazo, a veces las personas deben sufrir golpes a corto plazo en su autoestima, lo que implica exponerse a una ansiedad limitada para evitar enfrentarse a inseguridades existenciales más debilitantes (Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

Posteriormente, estas ideas fueron cuestionadas por una serie de estudios empíricos, principalmente realizados con muestras comunitarias y no clínicas, a diferencia de los trabajos que respaldaban la idea de la adolescencia como un periodo de

crisis; estos estudios cuestionaban la idea de que el conflicto en la adolescencia fuera normativo y deseable (Josselson et al., 1977; Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg, 2001). Además, planteaban que las conductas disruptivas de los adolescentes pueden llevarse a cabo a lo largo de la vida de forma consistente e inflexible en diferentes situaciones. En general, existe una gran cantidad de literatura que muestra evidencia a favor de la relación entre los comportamientos antisociales del adolescente y muchos problemas de ajuste personal y social, problemas internalizantes y externalizantes (Card et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2008; Teng et al., 2015). La tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia se ha relacionado con un bajo comportamiento prosocial, baja aceptación de los compañeros (Card et al., 2008), baja autoestima (Donnellan et al., 2005; Teng et al., 2015), un alto grado de autoestima negativa, autoadecuación negativa, irresponsividad emocional, inestabilidad emocional, visión negativa de mundo (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), rechazo de los compañeros (Morrow et al., 2008) y problemas de salud mental como la depresión (Messer & Gross, 1994; Morrow et al., 2008) o el narcisismo (Bushman et al., 2009; Du et al., 2022; Kjaervik & Bushman, 2021), el consumo de drogas y los problemas relacionados con ellas (Moore et al., 2008) y el consumo de alcohol (Chermack & Giancola, 1997). La tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia también fue un factor predictivo de resultados educativos negativos, como la no titulación y el abandono escolar (Risi et al., 2003). Además, aumenta la probabilidad de que los alumnos sean expulsados de la escuela (Risi et al., 2003). Algunos estudios con muestras comunitarias sugirieron que el conflicto que se produce en la adolescencia no es normativo y podría estar relacionado con los patrones de relación entre padres e hijos (Josselson et al., 1977; Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg, 2001).

La función protectora o de riesgo de los padres en el período de vulnerabilidad psicosocial del adolescente

La adolescencia es un periodo de preparación para la vida adulta antes de que el hijo se convierta en un adulto competente y ajustado a las normas sociales de la cultura en la que vive (Erikson, 1968b; Viejo & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). Los padres no pueden realizar en todo momento una monitorización y vigilancia constante de su hijo para que éste cumpla las normas, sino que el hijo debe conseguir la internalización de la norma y actuar en base a ella tanto si sus padres están presentes como si no lo están, de manera que el hijo sea capaz de rechazar los estándares del grupo de iguales que no se ajustan a las normas sociales (Alcaide et al., 2025b; Maccoby, 1992). No se trata de una tarea fácil

para el adolescente, y, si tenemos en cuenta que la adolescencia es un periodo de vulnerabilidad psicosocial, queda clara la importante función que tienen los padres en el ajuste psicosocial del hijo.

En la adolescencia puede existir cierto conflicto entre padres e hijos debido a que el adolescente realiza una búsqueda de su propia identidad (Buchanan et al., 2023) y, para ello, siente la necesidad de separarse emocionalmente de los padres (Erikson, 1968a; Freud, 1958). Es importante que los padres alienten y permitan que sus hijos adolescentes desarrollen sus propias opiniones y creencias, y que tomen sus propias decisiones, es decir, favorecer su la autonomía psicológica, alejándose del extremo opuesto, el control psicológico, que es experimentado por los hijos como intrusivo, sobreprotector y, a veces, pasivo-agresivo (Steinberg et al., 1992; Steinberg, 2001). La adolescencia es un periodo asociado a un relativo grado de vulnerabilidad, al menos en comparación con la infancia y la adultez, y por ello cobran especial importancia las actitudes y conductas de los padres durante ese período vulnerable para que el hijo tenga un buen ajuste psicosocial en la adolescencia, pero también en la edad adulta (Baumrind, 1991b; Garcia et al., 2024), dicho en otras palabras, que esté bien socializado. La socialización es un conjunto de procesos por medio de los cuales los individuos adquieren habilidades, hábitos, conductas y normas propias del contexto cultural y social en que viven (Maccoby, 1992). La socialización también se ha definido como el proceso por el que los individuos, en su interacción con otros, desarrollan las formas de pensar, sentir y actuar que son de vital importancia para su participación eficaz en la sociedad (Garcia et al., 2022; Vander Zanden, 1986).

En el proceso de socialización intervienen los agentes de socialización, que se ocupan de transmitir los valores, normas y aprendizajes relacionados con la cultura y la sociedad. Existen muchos agentes de socialización, tales como la familia, la escuela, los iguales y los medios de comunicación (Garcia et al., 2022; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Los padres tienen un papel muy importante en la socialización de los hijos, son los principales responsables en este proceso (Baumrind, 1978a; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022). Los padres son uno de los primeros agentes de socialización y, en los primeros años de vida de hijo, son muy importantes principalmente debido a la gran plasticidad en el desarrollo que caracteriza a los primeros momentos del desarrollo (Alcaide et al., 2025b; Maccoby, 1992), período de la socialización en el que se desarrollan habilidades sociales duraderas, atributos de personalidad, y valores sociales. La plasticidad en el

desarrollo durante los primeros años de vida y el tiempo que pasan los padres con sus hijos en este período les permite transmitirles normas y valores de la sociedad en la que viven. Además, tienen una influencia considerable en el desarrollo de los hijos en aspectos como la autorregulación de las emociones, el pensamiento y la conducta, las actitudes, valores y normas de la cultura en la que viven, además de la conformidad y colaboración voluntaria y adecuada con las figuras de autoridad (Garcia et al., 2022).

Los padres pueden ser factores protectores o de riesgo en el ajuste del hijo a corto plazo (en la infancia y en menor grado, pero también en la adolescencia), pero también a largo plazo (en la adultez), aunque esto último ha sido menos estudiado. En este sentido, cobra especial importancia el concepto de socialización parental. La socialización parental se refiere al proceso por el cual el adulto (padres) puede transmitir al joven (hijo) los hábitos y valores de la cultura de origen para que el hijo adopte un adecuado funcionamiento sin conductas desviadas dentro de los grupos sociales de la cultura a la que pertenece (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby, 1992). Aunque la relación entre padres e hijos perdure hasta el final de la vida, el proceso de socialización parental llega hasta el final de la adolescencia, pero tiene un impacto a largo plazo en la adultez, como afirman muchos estudios (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Garcia et al., 2024, 2020; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a; Koutra et al., 2022; Simsek et al., 2021).

Una socialización adecuada se traduce en que el hijo presente una serie de características. Para que los niños se conviertan en adultos competentes psicosocialmente en el contexto cultural en el que viven deben adquirir hábitos, habilidades, valores y motivos que les permita (a) evitar comportamientos desviados, es decir, evitar comportamientos que perturben o supongan una carga indebida para el funcionamiento de otras personas en la jerarquía de grupos sociales; (b) contribuir, mediante el trabajo, al sustento económico propio y de la familia; (c) crear y mantener relaciones estrechas con los demás; y (d) poder socializar hijos a su vez (Maccoby, 1992). El hijo con una adecuada socialización se caracterizaría por ser socializado, cooperativo, amistoso, leal, emocionalmente estable y alegre... honesto, directo y fiable... buen ciudadano y buen estudiante (Symonds, 1939), para Baumrind, instrumentalmente competentes (Baumrind, 1970; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Los objetivos de socialización incluyen tanto la adquisición por parte del niño de habilidades y comportamientos específicos (por ejemplo, modales adecuados, habilidades sociales y capacidad académica) como el

desarrollo por parte del niño de cualidades más globales (por ejemplo, curiosidad, pensamiento crítico, independencia, espiritualidad y capacidad de experimentar alegría o amor) (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Los padres desempeñan un papel clave en la forma en que sus hijos interiorizan las normas sociales y presentan un desarrollo psicosocial adecuado (Garcia et al., 2024, 2021; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Sin embargo, los padres también pueden fallar en el proceso de socialización parental y los hijos podrían manifestar una falta de competencia instrumental (Baumrind, 1978b; Darling & Steinberg, 1993) e inadaptación social (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1989). Los problemas de ajuste psicosocial en el hijo pueden identificarse cuando éste es niño, pero especialmente cuando se convierte en adolescente. Los adolescentes cuyos padres no se relacionan de manera adecuada con sus hijos ni les transmiten de manera correcta las normas sociales son más propensos a mostrar problemas de conducta, mala conducta escolar, menor desarrollo psicosocial, consumo de drogas (Lamborn et al., 1991), hostilidad, mayor nerviosismo, menor competencia social, menor empatía (Garcia & Serra, 2019), mayor agresión, menor autoconcepto (Alcaide et al., 2023; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), menor orientación al trabajo (Steinberg et al., 1989), o incluso delincuencia (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). Existen diferencias en el grado en que los hijos interiorizan los valores y se comportan de forma socialmente deseable en función del tipo de socialización parental.

Muchas investigaciones se han centrado en conocer cómo la relación entre padres e hijos durante el proceso de socialización parental puede relacionarse con el desarrollo del hijo mientras el hijo es un adolescente, pero también cuando es un adulto (Baumrind, 1991a; Chen et al., 2024; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lukavska et al., 2020; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). En general, estos estudios se han focalizado en conocer qué dimensiones o estilos parentales son más adecuados para conseguir un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo y cuales son perjudiciales.

A principios del siglo XX, Watson advertía de que el uso de afecto conllevaba consecuencias negativas para el desarrollo del hijo y recomendaba utilizar la imposición de normas y hábitos para fomentar la autodisciplina del hijo (Watson, 1928). Posteriormente, Steinberg planteó que la combinación de afecto e imposición parental permitían que el hijo alcanzara el ajuste psicosocial óptimo (Steinberg, 2001). La evidencia empírica más reciente cuestiona los beneficios de la imposición parental para el ajuste del hijo y muestra que el afecto sin ir acompañado de imposición permite un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo.

Para analizar cómo los padres pueden influir en que los hijos alcancen un ajuste psicosocial óptimo y estén bien adaptados en la sociedad en la que viven, los estudios han utilizado prácticas (específicas) y dimensiones o estilos (globales) (Garcia et al., 2024; Lamborn et al., 1991; Martinez et al., 2012). Las prácticas parentales se refieren a las conductas de los padres hacia los hijos mientras que los estilos y dimensiones se refieren a las actitudes de los padres hacia los hijos (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Las prácticas parentales son conductas específicas que los padres llevan a cabo de manera contingente a la conducta del hijo en función de si esta conducta del hijo se ajusta o no a las normas sociales del contexto cultural en el que vive. Un ejemplo de práctica sería el castigo. Las prácticas parentales no tienen lugar de manera aislada, sino que se integran en el clima emocional de la relación entre padres e hijos, que es un nivel más general y se refiere al estilo parental. El estilo parental es la organización de patrones más persistentes de conductas específicas (prácticas parentales) que los padres utilizan para socializar a sus hijos. Darling y Steinberg (1993, p. 493) definieron el estilo parental como "una constelación de actitudes hacia el niño que se le comunican y que, en conjunto, crean un clima emocional en el que se expresan los comportamientos de los padres. Estos comportamientos incluyen tanto los comportamientos específicos, dirigidos a un objetivo, a través de los cuales los padres desempeñan sus obligaciones parentales (que se denominarán prácticas parentales) como los comportamientos parentales no dirigidos a un objetivo, como los gestos, los cambios en el tono de voz o la expresión espontánea de emociones" (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Los modelos teóricos de socialización parental que más repercusión han tenido en la literatura utilizan estilos parentales y se detallan en el siguiente apartado.

Modelos teóricos de socialización parental

Existen diferentes modelos teóricos de socialización parental; sin embargo, el estudio de la socialización parental se ha llevado a cabo durante décadas a través del modelo teórico bidimensional, en el que se analizan las prácticas parentales con relación a dos ejes o dimensiones, afecto e imposición, que reciben distintas denominaciones según los autores, aunque comparten un significado común (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). El modelo teórico bidimensional plantea dos dimensiones parentales principales y ortogonales: afecto e imposición (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). El afecto parental alude al grado en que los padres muestran al hijo su amor, aprobación, aceptación, afecto, le proporcionan apoyo, y utilizan el

diálogo y el razonamiento con su hijo para establecer normas y límites. Para referirse a este concepto, la literatura ha utilizado otras etiquetas como por ejemplo aceptación-implicación (Lamborn et al., 1991), amor (Schaefer, 1959) o responsividad/ receptividad (Baumrind, 1991a). Ejemplos de prácticas parentales altas en afecto son el diálogo, el uso del cariño o la concesión de autonomía al hijo (Garcia et al., 2015), mientras que un ejemplo de práctica parental baja en afecto es la indiferencia (Garcia et al., 2022). La imposición parental alude al grado en que los padres moldean el comportamiento de sus hijos utilizando la disciplina, controlando y supervisando su comportamiento, estableciendo e imponiendo normas para la conducta de los hijos y manteniendo una posición de autoridad con rigidez. Para referirse a este concepto, la literatura ha utilizado otras etiquetas como por ejemplo hostilidad (Baldwin, 1955), exigencia (Baumrind, 1991a), inflexibilidad (Sears et al., 1957), control firme (Steinberg, 2005), restricción (Becker & Krug, 1964) o rigor/supervisión (Lamborn et al., 1991). Ejemplos de prácticas parentales basadas en el control son la coerción verbal y la coerción física (Garcia et al., 2022). Posteriormente, se estudió el estilo parental sobre las dos dimensiones, lo que dio lugar a dos modelos teóricos: el modelo tripartito (Y) de Baumrind (Baumrind, 1966) y el modelo de cuatro estilos parentales (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). La mayoría de las investigaciones acerca de la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo se han centrado en estos dos modelos teóricos: el modelo Y de Baumrind (Baumrind, 1966) y el modelo bidimensional (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). A continuación, se explican en detalle ambos modelos.

Baumrind especificó una amplia función parental -control (es decir, la imposición parental)- y añadió la articulación dentro de ese único dominio. Este modelo establecía tres estilos parentales: autorizativo, autoritario y permisivo; que correspondían a tres modos de control parental, el control autorizativo, el control autoritario y la falta de control (es decir, el control permisivo) (Baumrind, 1966). Los padres autorizativos utilizaban con sus hijos el control y el afecto mientras que los padres autoritarios utilizaban sólo el control. Los padres permisivos no utilizaban el control, pero no se especifica si utilizaban afecto o no. El estilo parental autorizativo (afecto e imposición) es el que se asocia con un mejor ajuste psicosocial de los hijos (Baumrind, 1966).

Lewis realizó una crítica al modelo de estilos parentales propuesto por Baumrind, especialmente en relación con los beneficios atribuidos al uso del control autorizativo (Lewis, 1981). Lewis planteó que existía un conflicto entre los resultados de Baumrind y los resultados de las investigaciones basados en la teoría de la atribución. La teoría de la

atribución defiende que el control externo firme se asocia negativamente con la internalización de las normas. Por tanto, no era posible que el control que ejercen los padres autorizativos sobre los hijos facilite que el hijo internalice las normas. Por ello, Lewis plantea que lo que en realidad facilita la internalización de normas y a su vez el ajuste psicosocial del hijo de padres autorizativos no sería el control o imposición parental, sino la comunicación bidireccional y abierta entre padres e hijos (es decir, el afecto parental).

Baumrind respondió a la crítica de Lewis argumentando que las dos dimensiones parentales (afecto e imposición) son independientes y que deben aparecen simultáneamente para conseguir un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo (Baumrind, 1983). Además, destaca que el control o imposición que utilizan los padres autorizativos y autoritarios es diferente. El control autorizativo es conductual mientras que el control autoritario es psicológico. El control conductual junto con el afecto (estilo autorizativo) se relacionan con el ajuste psicosocial del hijo.

Como observaron otros autores (Lamborn et al., 1991), "la mayoría de los debates y pruebas empíricas del modelo de Baumrind ignoran las variaciones de afecto entre las familias caracterizadas por bajos niveles de control o imposición, agrupando a estas familias en una única categoría denominada "permisiva" (p. 1050). En cambio, el modelo de cuatro estilos parentales sí lo hace. Las nuevas aportaciones del modelo de cuatro estilos (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) lo convirtieron en uno de los modelos teóricos más utilizados en investigación para el estudio de la socialización parental. Este modelo plantea que, de la combinación de las dos dimensiones parentales (afecto e imposición), surgen cuatro estilos parentales: autoritario (bajo afecto y alta imposición), autorizativo (alto afecto y alta imposición), indulgente (alto afecto y baja imposición) y negligente (bajo afecto y baja imposición)(Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2022; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Este modelo de dos dimensiones y cuatro tipologías de estilos parentales supuso un avance importante con respecto al modelo tripartito inicial de Baumrind, en el sentido de que dividía la categoría "permisiva" original en dos, diferenciando teóricamente entre negligente e indulgente según el grado de receptividad (afecto), del mismo modo que se distingue entre autoritario y autorizativo según el grado de exigencia (imposición) (Garcia & Gracia, 2009). A partir de este modelo, se definen cuatro estilos parentales considerando las dos dimensiones: autoritario, autorizativo, indulgente y negligente, que han sido ampliamente utilizados en la literatura sobre socialización parental para analizar

qué estilo es óptimo para el ajuste psicosocial del hijo (Garcia et al., 2022; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Martínez et al., 2019).

Los padres autoritarios pretenden moldear, controlar y evaluar el proceder y las actitudes del hijo conforme a una norma de conducta establecida aplicada de manera absoluta por medio del control psicológico (alta imposición) (Barber, 1996; Schaefer, 1959). Consideran la obediencia como una virtud y utilizan medidas punitivas para restringir la autonomía del hijo cuando las acciones o creencias de éste entran en conflicto con la idea que tienen los padres de lo que es una conducta apropiada. Además, limitan el diálogo con el hijo ya que creen que este debe aceptar lo que sus padres consideran adecuado y bueno para él (bajo afecto) (Baumrind, 1971).

Los padres autorizativos tienen en común con los autoritarios que ejercen un control firme en los puntos de discrepancia que tienen con el hijo, utilizan el poder para conseguir sus metas y no basan sus decisiones en el consenso familiar o en las pretensiones individuales del hijo (alta imposición). Sin embargo, los padres autorizativos se diferencian de los padres autoritarios en que utilizan el control conductual (Barber, 1996; Schaefer, 1959), tienen en cuenta la voluntad del hijo, ponen en práctica el razonamiento para explicarle en qué se basa su política, reconocen los intereses individuales del hijo y piden sus réplicas cuando no comprende la norma que pretenden transmitirle, poniendo en valor sus cualidades (alto afecto).

Los padres indulgentes tienen muestras de cariño con sus hijos, manifiestan aprobación, aceptación y apoyo hacia ellos, se implican en los asuntos del hijo y utilizan el diálogo y el razonamiento para establecer normas y límites (alto afecto), y no utilizan el control conductual o psicológico para castigar e imponer las normas (baja imposición) (Lamborn et al., 1991). Este estilo parental se basa en la confianza entre padres e hijos y la democracia a la hora de establecer normas y límites.

Los padres negligentes no imponen su autoridad y control para que los hijos se ajusten a las normas (baja imposición), pero tampoco muestran cariño, aceptación, proximidad emocional, implicación en los problemas del hijo, ni comunicación o diálogo con este (bajo afecto) (Steinberg et al., 1994). Por tanto, estos padres ignoran sus responsabilidades de cuidado de los hijos (Lamborn et al., 1991).

Relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo

El modelo teórico bidimensional ha dado lugar a muchas investigaciones y planteamientos acerca de qué estilo parental se asocia con un mejor ajuste del hijo. Los estudios clásicos sobre la socialización parental de los hijos realizados en contextos anglosajones con muestras europeo-americanas (en su mayoría, familias blancas de clase media) afirman que la combinación de afecto e imposición parental (es decir, el estilo parental autorizativo) está relacionado con el mejor ajuste psicosocial del hijo en términos de ajuste escolar (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994), buenas autopercepciones (Pinquart & Gerke, 2019; Steinberg et al., 1994), mayor internalización de normas (Steinberg et al., 1994), además de bajos niveles de problemas de conducta (Lamborn et al., 1991), y tiene un efecto protector contra el consumo problemático de drogas (Baumrind, 1991a).

No siempre en todos los contextos culturales el estilo parental autorizativo se asocia con el mejor ajuste de hijo. Incluso la literatura más antigua sobre la socialización parental apoya la idea de que el estilo parental que es normativo en una cultura puede no serlo en otra (Garcia et al., 2019). Algunos autores sugieren que, en función del contexto cultural en el que tiene lugar la socialización parental, los hijos perciben las actitudes y comportamientos de sus padres hacia ellos de una forma u otra (Martinez et al., 2021; Triandis, 2001). Enmarcados en el modelo de ajuste persona-entorno, según las ideas de la ecología del desarrollo humano (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), las personas encajan mejor en entornos en los que sus actitudes, valores y experiencias son comunes. También se ha recurrido a los conceptos de culturas verticales frente a las horizontales y a las culturas colectivistas frente a las individualistas para explicar las diferencias en la socialización parental óptima entre distintos contextos culturales (Garcia et al., 2019; Shavitt et al., 2011; Triandis, 2001).

Estudios realizados en grupos étnicos minoritarios de Estados Unidos, como los chinoamericanos (Chao, 2001) o los afroamericanos (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996), y las sociedades árabes (Dwairy & Achoui, 2006) defienden que la imposición parental sin afecto parental (es decir, el estilo parental autoritario) está relacionado con el mejor ajuste del hijo. Dado que las familias de minorías étnicas de bajo nivel socioeconómico tienen más probabilidades de vivir en comunidades peligrosas donde la delincuencia es más elevada, las implicaciones de desobedecer las normas paternas pueden tener

consecuencias graves y perjudiciales para uno mismo y para los demás (Clark et al., 2015; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996) y el estilo parental autoritario puede no ser tan perjudicial en este entorno, e incluso puede tener algunos beneficios. En estas culturas colectivistas verticales, el rigor y el control (es decir, la imposición) representan un componente importante de la responsabilidad parental. En estos contextos, el componente de imposición parental podría ser percibido por los hijos como cuidado, afecto, amor, respeto y responsabilidad de los padres, lo que facilita la adaptación del hijo a contextos difíciles (Brody & Flor, 1998; Garcia & Gracia, 2010; Garcia et al., 2021; Randolph, 1995). La disciplina autoritaria estricta se considera lo mejor para los hijos, mientras que la falta de disciplina se considera ausencia de supervisión y cuidado (Dwairy & Achoui, 2006).

Por otro lado, la evidencia empírica más reciente sobre la socialización parental, muestra que en países europeos y latinoamericanos el estilo parental indulgente (es decir, el afecto parental sin imposición) se asocia con un buen ajuste del hijo a corto plazo, es decir mientras la socialización está en proceso como en la adolescencia (Fuentes et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2021; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; Reyes et al., 2023) y a largo plazo cuando el hijo es un adulto (Garcia et al., 2024; Martin-Blesa et al., 2024) en diferentes criterios de ajuste como satisfacción con la vida (Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a), madurez psicosocial (Garcia & Serra, 2019), autoconcepto (Fuentes et al., 2022; Garcia & Serra, 2019; Reyes et al., 2023; Villarejo et al., 2024), empatía (Fuentes et al., 2022), o rendimiento académico (Parmar & Nathans, 2022). En estos países el estilo parental indulgente también se asocia con niveles bajos de desajuste en el hijo como en nerviosismo (Herraiz-Serrrano et al., 2015), inestabilidad emocional (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022b), y menores problemas externalizantes como conducta escolar disruptiva, delincuencia, consumo de drogas (Villarejo et al., 2024), agresión, hostilidad (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Martin-Blesa et al., 2024), y menores niveles de victimización y agresión en acoso escolar y ciberacoso (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2019).

Las culturas latinoamericanas o algunas europeas son colectivistas, es decir, conceptualizan el yo como parte de un grupo mayor (la familia) y dan más prioridad a los objetivos de su grupo en detrimento de los suyos propios. Además, son horizontales, por lo que la relación entre padres e hijos es más igualitaria. Subrayan las relaciones igualitarias, y la implicación en la educación de los hijos. Los hijos podrían percibir la imposición parental (p. ej., supervisión del comportamiento o imposición de normas) como una privación de su libertad y el afecto de los padres se relaciona con un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo (Alcaide et al., 2025a, 2025b; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2021).

La presente tesis doctoral

A través de tres estudios, en la presente tesis doctoral se analizan los factores protectores y de riesgo para el ajuste psicosocial de adolescentes y adultos, principalmente españoles, pero también pertenecientes a sociedades no occidentales, en concreto, a la cultura china actual. Estos factores protectores o de riesgo se relacionan con la socialización parental (estilos y dimensiones parentales), pero también con la edad y sexo de los hijos, e incluso, como se analiza específicamente en uno de los estudios, con las tendencias antisociales durante la adolescencia. Los tres estudios examinan la socialización parental óptima, así como sus posibles variaciones por sexo y edad. Por otro lado, en uno de los estudios también se analiza si una problemática especialmente grave que puede presentarse en la adolescencia —la tendencia antisocial— es beneficiosa e importante para que el hijo forme una identidad propia, sintiéndose libre de la dependencia de sus padres y convirtiéndose en un adulto competente psicosocialmente (Erikson, 1968a; Moffitt, 1993), o, por el contrario, si se relaciona con un desajuste psicosocial a largo plazo en la adultez (Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg, 2001). Además, se analiza si la tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia puede afectar a la socialización parental óptima.

Tradicionalmente, la literatura sobre socialización parental se ha centrado en estudiar qué dimensiones o estilos parentales se relacionan con determinados patrones de ajuste psicosocial del hijo (Chao, 2001; Lamborn et al., 1991; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023). De este modo, se puede conocer qué estilos o dimensiones parentales se relacionan con un ajuste psicosocial óptimo de hijo, y cuales, con el desajuste del hijo en diferentes áreas como la social o la personal. También la literatura sobre socialización parental se ha focalizado en estudiar qué dimensiones parentales, estilos o también prácticas se relacionan con un ajuste psicosocial óptimo de hijo. Las prácticas son conductas específicas que llevan a cabo los padres con sus hijos mientras que las dimensiones y los estilos constituyen un clima emocional global en el que se integran las prácticas e implican una tendencia de comportamiento de los padres. Por esa razón, en la presente tesis se utilizan dimensiones y estilos para evaluar la socialización parental en vez de utilizar prácticas parentales, utilizando como marco teórico el modelo bidimensional de cuatro estilos parentales (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Baumrind destacó la importancia de estudiar la relación entre las dimensiones y/o estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en un ambiente familiar normativo

(Baumrind, 1993). También planteó que el ajuste psicosocial de un individuo no sólo es explicado por la socialización parental, sino también por otros factores genéticos, sociales o culturales. No obstante, Baumrind defiende que la contribución de los padres permite explicar de manera consistente (aunque su tamaño del efecto pueda ser pequeño) diferencias en una amplia variedad de criterios de ajuste. Baumrind estudió el impacto de la socialización parental en aspectos sociales como la empatía, o la internalización de valores (Baumrind, 1993).

Entre los objetivos de la socialización parental se encuentran tener una buena competencia social y evitar comportamientos desviados que perturben a uno mismo o a los demás (Maccoby, 1992). Para ello, es necesario que los hijos tengan conformidad con las normas sociales propias de su cultura, que no las cumplan sólo porque se lo piden sus padres, sino porque han internalizado la norma, lo que les permite estar ajustados psicosocialmente. En esta línea, cuando se habla de ajuste psicosocial nos referimos a que el comportamiento y las actitudes del hijo sean acordes con las normas y los valores sociales propios de la cultura en la que viven, lo que le permite ser un adulto competente en la sociedad en la que vive. Además, el ajuste psicosocial también incluye la parte personal, es decir, que el sujeto tenga unas autopercepciones adecuadas de sí mismo, un sentimiento de valía personal que no esté ni infravalorado ni sobrevalorado.

El ajuste psicosocial del hijo en la presente tesis se ha evaluado con diferentes criterios que se pueden medir a lo largo del ciclo vital para conocer el grado de ajuste y desajuste psicosocial del hijo en la adolescencia (cuando está teniendo lugar la socialización parental) y en la adultez (cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado), teniendo en cuenta los objetivos de la socialización adecuada, que se agrupan en diferentes áreas: autopercepciones, hostilidad/agresión (agresión y sexismo hostil), competencia socioemocional (nerviosismo, competencia social y empatía) y valores de conformidad. Estos criterios de ajuste se pueden evaluar en diferentes etapas del ciclo vital, desde la adolescencia hasta el final de la adultez.

Unos indicadores del ajuste psicosocial son las autopercepciones. Las autopercepciones se examinaron de manera global por medio de la autoestima y de manera más específica con las cinco dimensiones del autoconcepto (académico, social, emocional, familiar y físico). La autoestima se refiere al sentimiento de autovalía y autoaceptación (Rosenberg, 1965). El autoconcepto es el componente evaluativo de las autopercepciones, la construcción que hace el individuo de su valía personal en diferentes dimensiones interrelacionadas de sí mismo (Fuentes et al., 2022). Las autopercepciones

se relacionan positivamente con la aceptación social y la competencia escolar (Hotulainen & Lappalainen, 2011).

En la presente tesis doctoral también se evaluó un indicador importante del desajuste psicosocial, la agresión. La agresión es cualquier comportamiento dirigido hacia otro individuo con la intención próxima (inmediata) de causar daño (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). En las últimas décadas, la agresión ha ido en aumento (Marciano et al., 2020; Smeets et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2024) y se ha convertido en una amenaza para la salud pública (World Health Organization, 2015). Existe una gran cantidad de literatura que defiende la relación entre la agresión y muchos problemas de ajuste personal y social, problemas internalizantes y externalizantes (Card et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2008; Teng et al., 2015). La agresión se relaciona con un bajo comportamiento prosocial, baja aceptación de los compañeros (Card et al., 2008), baja autoestima (Donnellan et al., 2005; Teng et al., 2015), y se relaciona positivamente con el rechazo de los compañeros (Morrow et al., 2008) y problemas de salud mental como la depresión (Messer & Gross, 1994; Morrow et al., 2008) o el narcisismo (Bushman et al., 2009; Du et al., 2022; Kjaervik & Bushman, 2021), el consumo de drogas y los problemas relacionados con ellas (Moore et al., 2008) y el consumo de alcohol (Chermack & Giancola, 1997). La agresividad también fue un factor predictivo de resultados educativos negativos, como la no titulación y el abandono escolar (Risi et al., 2003). La agresión persistente, a su vez, aumenta la probabilidad de que los alumnos sean expulsados de la escuela (Risi et al., 2003).

También la competencia socioemocional es otro componente relevante del ajuste psicosocial. La competencia socioemocional es la capacidad de un individuo para identificar y gestionar sus emociones, comprender y empatizar con los demás, establecer relaciones armoniosas mediante la adopción de perspectivas y tomar decisiones responsables para resolver problemas de forma eficaz mediante la cooperación con los demás (Greenberg et al., 2003). El aprendizaje de la competencia socioemocional es muy significativo en la adolescencia porque es un periodo crítico en el que se forman los hábitos emocionales (Kang et al., 2022). La competencia afectivo-social desempeña un papel importante en la prevención de la agresión y la depresión (Kang et al., 2022) y está positivamente relacionada con el rendimiento académico (Elias & Haynes, 2008).

Otro indicador importante del ajuste del hijo son los valores. La interiorización de los valores sociales se relaciona positivamente con los comportamientos prosociales y es un factor protector frente a los comportamientos agresivos (Grusec & Hastings, 2007;

Martinez et al., 2020). Los valores de conformidad se refieren a la contención de acciones, tendencias e impulsos susceptibles de perturbar o dañar a otros y de violar las expectativas o normas sociales (Schwartz, 2006, 2007, 2010). La conformidad incluye valores como el respeto, la autodisciplina, la cortesía y honrar a los padres y a los adultos mayores (Katz-Gerro et al., 2017). La conformidad con las normas sociales, en general, se asocia a un buen ajuste (Christensen et al., 2004; Cialdini et al., 1990; Oarga et al., 2015), por ejemplo, podría dar lugar a la aprobación social, que es una recompensa social externa, que se relaciona positivamente con la felicidad (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Stavrova et al., 2013b) y la ayuda a los demás (Oarga et al., 2015). La conformidad con las normas sociales podría conducir a obtener la aprobación social de los demás, preservar un autoconcepto positivo y un elevado bienestar subjetivo (Cialdini et al., 1990), además de una mayor experimentación de emociones positivas (Christensen et al., 2004). En cambio, la no conformidad con las normas sociales está relacionada con un menor nivel de bienestar (Stavrova et al., 2013a; Stutzer & Lalive, 2004) y una reducción de la autoestima (Pool et al., 1998) y produce una sensación similar a la disonancia cognitiva, incomodidad y malestar (Matz & Wood, 2005) (Matz y Wood, 2005). Por lo tanto, la conformidad con las normas sociales tiene una relación positiva con la percepción de la propia autoestima y con una buena adaptación social (Christensen et al., 2004; Cialdini et al., 1990; Oarga et al., 2015).

A lo largo de la literatura, la mayoría de estudios se han centrado en analizar el impacto de la socialización parental en el ajuste psicosocial del hijo mientras está teniendo lugar la socialización parental, es decir, durante la infancia y la adolescencia (Lamborn et al., 1991; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). No obstante, se ha analizado mucho menos el impacto de la socialización parental a largo plazo, es decir, cuando el hijo es adulto.

El proceso de socialización parental suele considerarse que finaliza cuando el hijo alcanza la edad adulta—en buena parte de las sociedades, alrededor de los 18 años-, lo que supone cambios importantes en sus obligaciones y en sus relaciones con sus profesores y sus padres (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Steinberg, 2024; Zarit et al., 2005). Cuando el hijo es un adulto, el proceso de socialización parental ya ha finalizado y la relación entre padres e hijos es más mucho más simétrica en parte porque ambos —padres e hijos— comparten el mismo estatus adulto. Sin embargo, existen casos de padres no normativos que continúan realizando las tareas propias de la socialización parental incluso cuando sus hijos son adultos. Por ejemplo, se ha estudiado la parentalidad helicóptero en la juventud adulta, caracterizada por la sobrevigilancia y el control de la

conducta del hijo, lo cual se relaciona negativamente con el ajuste del hijo. Estos intentos de los padres de controlar la conducta del hijo durante la juventud adulta (una vez ya ha finalizado el proceso de socialización parental) se relacionan con depresión y con pobres autopercepciones del hijo (Schiffrin et al., 2014). Los jóvenes adultos deben enfrentarse a nuevos retos como por ejemplo decidir a qué se quieren dedicar profesionalmente, iniciar los estudios universitarios, empezar una relación de pareja o formar una familia y, por tanto, podría ser especialmente perjudicial que el proceso de socialización parental se extienda más allá de la adolescencia y los padres sigan teniendo con sus hijos las mismas conductas y actitudes que tenían cuando eran adolescentes, lo que se consideraría una socialización parental no normativa.

No obstante, la relación entre padres e hijos durante los años de socialización parental normativo (durante la infancia y la adolescencia) podría tener repercusiones a largo plazo en el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en muchas áreas de su vida (Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023). La evidencia empírica acerca de la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial de hijos adultos parece indicar que existen muchos aspectos diferentes que influyen en el ajuste, pero las diferencias en el ajuste psicosocial de los hijos adultos presentan un patrón consistente relacionado con la socialización parental (Alcaide et al., 2025b; Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Garcia et al., 2024).

Los tres estudios de la tesis por compendio de publicaciones tienen en común que estudian la socialización parental y su relación con el ajuste psicosocial del hijo a corto plazo, cuando la socialización parental está teniendo lugar como en la adolescencia, y también a largo plazo, cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado y el hijo es un adulto. Además, se examina si la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo sigue el mismo patrón en la adolescencia que en la adultez. En todos los estudios se utiliza como marco de referencia el modelo teórico bidimensional de cuatro estilos parentales, ampliamente utilizado en la literatura. A su vez, cada estudio se focaliza en unos determinados aspectos.

El Estudio 1 analizó el impacto de la socialización parental en hijos españoles adolescentes, jóvenes adultos, adultos de mediana edad y adultos mayores, es decir, estudió el impacto de la socialización parental a corto plazo (adolescencia) pero también a largo plazo abarcando prácticamente todas las etapas del ciclo vital. Para ello, se basó en los estilos parentales (indulgente, autorizativo, autoritario y negligente) y examinó qué estilo parental es óptimo para el ajuste del hijo. Los criterios de ajuste psicosocial del hijo

fueron autoestima, autoconcepto emocional, empatía, agresión y sexismo hostil. Además, se estudió el curso con la edad de cada uno de los criterios de ajuste y se examinó si las diferencias por edad y sexo en los criterios de ajuste podían interaccionar con los estilos parentales óptimos, es decir, si el estilo parental óptimo podía ser distinto en función de la edad o el sexo del hijo.

El Estudio 2 evaluó la relación entre las dos dimensiones parentales (afecto e imposición) y criterios de ajuste psicosocial en hijos adolescentes y jóvenes adultos españoles. Los criterios de ajuste utilizados fueron autoestima, autoconcepto emocional, competencia social y conformidad. Se evaluó el poder predictor de las dos dimensiones parentales, la edad y el sexo en los criterios de ajuste psicosocial del hijo. También se evaluó la relación entre los criterios de ajuste entre sí tanto en la adolescencia como en la juventud adulta y si los criterios que estaban relacionados positivamente están predichos en la misma dirección por las mismas dimensiones parentales. Además, se evaluó el tamaño del efecto de la relación entre las dimensiones parentales y los criterios de ajuste psicosocial del hijo, además del tamaño del efecto de la correlación de los criterios de ajuste entre sí y también del poder predictor de las dimensiones parentales, la edad y el sexo sobre los criterios de ajuste.

El Estudio 3 analizó la relación entre los estilos parentales (indulgente, autorizativo, autoritario y negligente) y el ajuste psicosocial de hijos adolescentes y jóvenes adultos pertenecientes a la cultura china actual para determinar qué estilo parental es óptimo para conseguir un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo. El ajuste psicosocial del hijo se midió con los siguientes criterios: agresión, cinco indicadores de autoconcepto (académico, social, emocional, familiar y físico) y competencia socioemocional (nerviosismo y competencia social). Se estudió si existían diferencias en el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en función de la edad (adolescencia o juventud adulta), del sexo y de si el hijo presentaba una tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia. También se analizó si la relación entre estilos parentales y ajuste de hijo podía cambiar en función de la edad, el sexo o la tendencia antisocial del hijo durante la adolescencia.

Metodología

Participantes y procedimiento

En los tres estudios que conforman la presente tesis doctoral por compendio de publicaciones hubo un total de 4799 participantes, 3382 de ellos españoles y 1417 chinos. Todos los participantes fueron hijos, algunos adolescentes y otros adultos. Hubo 1931

hijos adolescentes, de ellos 1250 fueron españoles mientras que 681 fueron chinos. Hubo 2868 hijos adultos de diferentes edades, 2132 españoles y 736 chinos. De los hijos adultos, 1964 fueron jóvenes adultos, de los cuales 1228 eran españoles y 376 eran chinos. Hubo 504 adultos de mediana edad y 400 adultos mayores, todos españoles.

La participación de los adolescentes requirió el consentimiento de sus padres. Para los adolescentes, se seleccionaron aleatoriamente algunos institutos y se contactó con el director de dichos centros. Si alguno rechazaba participar en el estudio, se seleccionaba aleatoriamente otro de la lista completa hasta completar el tamaño muestral requerido (Chen et al., 2024; Riquelme et al., 2018). La muestra de jóvenes adultos fue recogida en universidades (Candel, 2022; Koutra et al., 2022; Manzeske & Stright, 2009). La muestra de adultos de mediana edad se recogió en barrios en los que residían los participantes (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Garcia et al., 2011). Para los adultos mayores, se seleccionaron aleatoriamente algunos centros de adultos mayores y se contactó con el director de dichos centros, de manera que, si el director del centro declinaba participar, se seleccionaba aleatoriamente otro centro de adultos mayores de la lista completa hasta adquirir el tamaño muestral requerido (Garcia et al., 2018; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022b). Además, se garantizó que las diferentes muestras mantengan los errores de tipo I y de tipo II controlados y para ello, se realizan cálculos específicos de la potencia, a priori y de sensibilidad (Erdfelder et al., 1996; Faul et al., 2009; Garcia et al., 2008).

Los participantes en los tres estudios fueron hijos adolescentes e hijos adultos a los que se evaluó tanto su socialización parental como su ajuste psicosocial. Se seleccionó a los hijos en lugar de a los padres porque los hijos tienen menor deseabilidad y son informantes más precisos (Barry et al., 2008). Todos los participantes respondieron una encuesta online de respuestas obligatorias cuyas variables evaluadas eran la socialización parental y los criterios de ajuste y/o desajuste pertinentes en cada estudio. Se analizaron los cuestionarios incluidos en la encuesta en línea en busca de patrones de respuesta sospechosos, como la aparición de incoherencias inverosímiles entre las respuestas en ítems redactados en positivo y en negativo (Garcia et al., 2011; Tomás & Oliver, 2004).

Medidas

La socialización parental se midió en base a las dos dimensiones parentales (afecto e imposición), cuya combinación da lugar a cuatro estilos parentales (autorizativo, autoritario, indulgente y negligente). Para ello, se utilizaron dos escalas del cuestionario PARQ/C (Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire) (Rohner et al., 1978;

Rohner, 1990): la escala Warmth Affection Scale de 20 ítems y la escala Parental Control Scale de 13 ítems. El afecto se midió con la escala Warmth Affection Scale (Rohner et al., 1978), que evalúa la percepción de los hijos acerca del grado en que sus padres son afectuosos y se implican en los asuntos del hijo. La imposición se midió con la escala Parental Control Scale (Rohner et al., 1978), que evalúa la percepción de los hijos acerca del grado en que sus padres utilizan la imposición de normas en lugar del diálogo y el razonamiento, y ejercen control y supervisión de la conducta de su hijo. Las dos escalas son de tipo Likert de 4 puntos y van de 1 "Casi nunca es cierto" a 4 "Casi siempre es cierto". Las dos escalas proporcionan una medida fiable y válida para evaluar la socialización parental cuando el hijo es adolescente y cuando el hijo es adulto, de manera que, cuando el hijo es adulto, se utilizan los mismos ítems en redactados en tiempo pasado, al igual que ocurre en otros estudios de socialización parental (Ali et al., 2015; Khaleque & Rohner, 2002; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023).

Los cuatro estilos parentales se definieron mediante el procedimiento de división por la mediana en las dos dimensiones parentales (es decir, afecto e imposición), según el sexo y la edad de los participantes (Alcaide et al., 2023; Calafat et al., 2014; Chao, 2001). En las familias autorizativas, las puntuaciones fueron superiores a la mediana en ambas dimensiones parentales, mientras que, en las familias negligentes, las puntuaciones fueron inferiores a la mediana en ambas dimensiones parentales. En las familias indulgentes, las puntuaciones fueron superiores a la mediana en afecto parental, pero inferiores a ella en imposición parental, mientras que, en las familias autoritarias, las puntuaciones fueron inferiores a la mediana en afecto parental, pero superiores a ella en imposición parental.

El ajuste psicosocial del hijo se midió con diferentes criterios indicadores tanto de competencia (altas puntuaciones indicaron un ajuste correcto y buen funcionamiento del hijo) como de desajuste y problemas (altas puntuaciones indican mayor desadaptación). A continuación, se revisan las medidas utilizadas para medir el ajuste psicosocial.

La autoestima se midió con los 10 ítems del Cuestionario de Autoestima de Rosenberg (Rosenberg, 1965) para evaluar este constructo de manera global. Este instrumento evalúa los sentimientos de autovalía y autoaceptación. Utiliza una escala de tipo Likert de 4 puntos de anclaje, siendo 1 "Completamente en desacuerdo" y 4 "Completamente de acuerdo". El autoconcepto se midió con las cinco dimensiones de la

Escala Multidimensional de Autoconcepto AF5 (Autoconcepto Forma 5), midiéndose las autopercepciones de manera específica, estudiando sus distintas dimensiones: autoconcepto académico/profesional, social, emocional, familiar y físico (Chen et al., 2020; Garcia & Musitu, 1999). Cada dimensión consta de seis ítems. La dimensión académica evalúa la percepción del desempeño como estudiante o trabajador. La dimensión social evalúa la percepción del desempeño en las relaciones interpersonales. La dimensión emocional evalúa la percepción del estado emocional y el desempeño en respuesta a situaciones específicas de la vida diaria. La dimensión familiar evalúa la percepción de la contribución, la integración y la participación en la familia. La dimensión física evalúa la percepción de la apariencia y la condición física. Esta escala ha sido validada en diversas culturas como España (Murgui et al., 2012), China (Chen et al., 2020), Brasil (Garcia et al., 2018), México (Ertema et al., 2025) y Estados Unidos (Garcia et al., 2013). Su escala de respuesta va de 1 "Muy poco de acuerdo" a 99 "Muy de acuerdo".

La agresión se midió con los seis ítems de la Escala de Hostilidad/Agresión del Cuestionario de Evaluación de la Personalidad (PAQ; (Rohner, 1978). Esta escala evalúa los actos destinados a dañar algo o a alguien (a otra persona o a uno mismo), que pueden manifestarse como comportamientos verbales (p. ej., discusiones, humillaciones, insultos) o físicos (p. ej., golpes, patadas, arañazos). Esta escala tiene buenas propiedades psicométricas y es ampliamente utilizada en estudios sobre socialización parental para medir la agresión del hijo durante la adolescencia y en la juventud adulta en diferentes países (Ali et al., 2015; Khaleque & Ali, 2017), incluido China (Li, 2014). Su escala de respuesta es de tipo Likert de 4 puntos desde 1 "Casi nunca es cierto" hasta 4 "Casi siempre es cierto". El sexismo hostil se midió con los 11 ítems de la escala de sexismo hostil del Inventario de Sexismo Ambivalente (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) y evalúa el grado de prejuicio contra las mujeres, considerándolas inferiores a los hombres. Su escala de respuesta es de tipo Likert de 6 puntos, que va desde 1 "Totalmente en desacuerdo" hasta 6 "Totalmente de acuerdo".

La empatía, la competencia social y el nerviosismo se midieron con las escalas de empatía, competencia social y nerviosismo del Cuestionario de Madurez Psicosocial (CRPM3; (Greenberger et al., 1975; Zacares & Serra, 1996). La escala de empatía consta de cinco ítems que evalúan el grado en que una persona puede comprender el punto de vista del otro (percibir sus sentimientos y emociones) y generar una respuesta emocional

congruente con su estado emocional y necesidades. La escala de competencia social consta de ocho ítems que evalúan el desarrollo de relaciones interpersonales exitosas con pares y adultos. La escala de nerviosismo evalúa la estabilidad emocional relacionada con la ansiedad y la tensión y la dificultad para regular adecuadamente las emociones en situaciones difíciles. El Cuestionario de Madurez Psicosocial tiene buenas propiedades psicométricas (Garcia et al., 2021; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022b; Villarejo et al., 2024) y se utiliza ampliamente en la literatura sobre socialización parental para evaluar las competencias emocionales y sociales de los hijos en sociedades occidentales (Garcia et al., 2024; Palacios et al., 2022) y asiáticas (Mantzicopoulos & Oh-Hwang, 1998; Xia, 2025). La escala de respuesta de este cuestionario es de tipo Likert de 5 puntos y va desde 1 "Totalmente en desacuerdo" hasta 5 "Totalmente de acuerdo".

La conformidad se evaluó mediante los cuatro ítems de conformidad del Inventario de Valores de Schwartz (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987), que evalúan el grado en que las personas frenan sus impulsos incontrolables e inhiben acciones que podrían perjudicar los intereses de los demás. La escala de respuesta consiste en una escala tipo Likert que va de 1 "Nada importante en mi vida" a 99 "Esencial en mi vida". El Inventario de Valores de Schwartz es ampliamente utilizado en investigación transcultural sobre valores sociales y presenta buenas propiedades psicométricas (Schwartz, 2006, 2007, 2010).

Análisis de datos

Se realizaron análisis multivariados en los que las variables dependientes fueron los criterios de ajuste psicosocial del hijo y las variables independientes, los estilos parentales y características del hijo tales como su tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia, el sexo o la edad. También se utilizaron análisis univariados para analizar las fuentes de variación que alcanzaron significación estadística en los análisis multivariantes. Además, se aplicaron pruebas post hoc de Bonferroni a esas fuentes univariantes de significación, manteniendo el alfa por estudio en el 5% (Alcaide et al., 2023; Palacios et al., 2022).

Por otro lado, se realizaron análisis de correlación entre las dimensiones parentales y los criterios de ajuste del hijo tanto para hijos adolescentes como para hijos adultos, además de análisis de regresión en los que las variables dependientes fueron los criterios de ajuste y las variables predictoras, las dimensiones parentales, el sexo y la edad

del hijo (Garcia et al., 2024; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023). También se realizaron análisis del tamaño del efecto de la relación entre socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo (Alcaide et al., 2025b).

Objetivos

En primer lugar, se analizó la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial de hijo utilizando el modelo teórico bidimensional, que plantea que los padres utilizan dos dimensiones teóricamente independientes para socializar a sus hijos (afecto e imposición) y que a partir de la combinación de las dimensiones surgen cuatro estilos parentales (indulgente, autorizativo, autoritario y negligente). En este sentido, se pretende conocer qué estilo o dimensión parental es más efectiva para conseguir un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo a corto plazo, cuando la socialización parental está teniendo lugar (es decir, cuando el hijo es adolescente) y también a largo plazo cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado (es decir, cuando el hijo es adulto). En segundo lugar, se examina si las relaciones encontradas entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo se mantienen en diferentes contextos y situaciones tales como la edad de los hijos, el contexto cultural en el que se lleva a cabo la socialización parental o características del hijo como la tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia.

Resultados

En general, los resultados de los estudios que forman parte de la presente tesis doctoral destacaron la relación entre el afecto parental y el ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo en la adolescencia y la adultez, en diferentes situaciones como el contexto cultural en el que se desarrolla la socialización parental y tanto cuando el hijo presenta tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia como cuando no la presenta. Por el contrario, la imposición parental fue, en general, identificada como innecesaria o incluso perjudicial. Estos resultados se encontraron tanto en las dos principales dimensiones (Estudio 2) como en los estilos parentales (Estudio 1 y Estudio 3). Los estilos parentales basados en el afecto se relacionaron con puntuaciones más óptimas en términos de ajuste psicosocial del hijo en comparación con los estilos caracterizados por la falta de afecto; sin embargo, de las dos tipologías parentales caracterizadas por el uso del afecto, el estilo indulgente (que incluye además baja imposición) tendió, en general, a relacionarse con resultados más favorables que el estilo autorizativo (que incluye alta imposición).

A continuación, se detallan los principales resultados de las publicaciones.

El Estudio 1 analizó la relación entre los estilos parentales con el ajuste y desajuste psicosocial de hijos españoles mientras la socialización parental está teniendo lugar (adolescencia) pero también a largo plazo cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado y el hijo es adulto (juventud adulta, mediana edad y adultez tardía). También se analizaron las diferencias en edad y sexo de los diferentes criterios de ajuste de hijo. El ajuste psicosocial del hijo se midió con criterios de ajuste que reflejaban las autopercepciones (autoestima, autoconcepto emocional) y el componente prosocial del ajuste (empatía), y criterios de desajuste (agresión y sexismo hostil). En general, los adolescentes presentaron menores niveles de ajuste psicosocial (autoestima y empatía) y un mayor desajuste psicosocial (agresión) que los adultos, resultados congruentes con la idea de que los adolescentes presentan mayor vulnerabilidad psicosocial que los adultos.

En lo referente a la relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo, los resultados del Estudio 1 mostraron que los niveles más bajos de autoestima se relacionaron con el estilo parental autoritario (imposición sin afecto). En autoconcepto emocional, el estilo parental indulgente (afecto sin imposición) se relacionó con los niveles más altos. En sexismo hostil, el estilo parental indulgente (afecto sin imposición) se relacionó con los niveles más bajos. En empatía y agresión, se detectaron diferencias en el estilo parental óptimo en función de la edad del hijo (adolescente, joven adulto, adulto de mediana edad y adulto mayor). En empatía se observó que los hijos de padres indulgentes y autorizativos (altos en afecto) puntuaron alto y que los hijos de padres autoritarios y negligentes (bajos en afecto) puntuaron bajo. En la adolescencia, la mayor empatía correspondió a hijos de padres indulgentes (afecto sin imposición) mientras que en la adultez la mayor empatía correspondió a hijos de padres indulgentes y autorizativos por igual. Además, la empatía disminuyó con la edad en hijos de padres no caracterizados por afecto (estilos parentales autoritario y negligente). En cambio, en familias indulgentes y autorizativas, los hijos adultos mayores obtuvieron puntuaciones similares a los adultos jóvenes. En agresión se observó una tendencia decreciente con la edad en hijos de padres autorizativos, indulgentes y autoritarias. Los hijos de padres autorizativos y sobre todo indulgentes (altos en afecto), obtuvieron niveles bajos de agresión mientras que los hijos de padres autoritarios y negligentes (bajos en afecto) obtuvieron niveles altos de agresión. En la adolescencia las puntuaciones más altas correspondieron con el estilo parental autoritario, en la mediana edad eran prácticamente iguales y en el final de la vida el negligente se asocia con mayor agresión.

Los resultados del Estudio 1 mostraron que, en relación con el objetivo de identificar qué estilos parentales se relacionan con determinados patrones de ajuste y desajuste psicosocial del hijo, los estilos parentales basados en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se relacionaron con las puntuaciones más altas en ajuste y bajas en desajuste, sobre todo el estilo parental indulgente. Además, los estilos parentales no caracterizados por afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con los niveles más bajos de ajuste y altos en desajuste. Respecto al objetivo de identificar si el patrón de relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste del hijo se mantiene en la adultez, se extrajeron conclusiones. Aunque hubo algunas diferencias en la relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en diferentes edades, no cambió el patrón general de que el afecto parental se asoció con el mejor ajuste y que los bajos niveles de afecto podrían ser perjudiciales para el hijo. También se confirmó que los adolescentes tenían mayor desajuste psicosocial que los adultos, en concordancia con la idea de que los adolescentes tenían mayor vulnerabilidad psicosocial que los adultos. A pesar de esto, el ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo se relacionó positivamente con el afecto parental en hijos adolescentes y en hijos adultos.

El Estudio 2 analizó la relación entre las dimensiones parentales (afecto e imposición) y el ajuste psicosocial de hijos españoles adolescentes y jóvenes adultos. Además, también se analizó el tamaño del efecto de dicha relación. Otro aspecto evaluado fue la magnitud del peso de la edad y del sexo en cada criterio de ajuste del hijo. Los criterios de ajuste psicosocial utilizados en este estudio fueron autoestima, autoconcepto emocional, competencia social y conformidad. La conformidad con las normas sociales es importante porque, una vez finaliza la socialización parental, el hijo debe haber adquirido conformidad con las normas sociales, lo que hace que tenga un mayor ajuste psicosocial. El Estudio 2 también mostró que la conformidad se relacionó positivamente con la competencia social en la adolescencia y en la juventud adulta.

Respecto a la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo, el Estudio 2 mostró los siguientes resultados. El afecto de los padres se relacionó positivamente con la competencia social y la conformidad en hijos adolescentes, mientras que, en hijos jóvenes adultos, el afecto de los padres se relacionó positivamente con competencia social y conformidad de los hijos (como en la adolescencia) y también con la autoestima. La imposición de los padres no presentó una relación estadísticamente significativa con el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en la adolescencia ni en la juventud adulta, a excepción de una relación estadísticamente significativa negativa con la conformidad

en la adolescencia y con el autoconcepto emocional en la juventud adulta. Atendiendo al poder predictor de las dimensiones parentales, la edad y el sexo sobre los criterios de ajuste, se obtuvo los siguientes resultados. En autoestima, los tres predictores estadísticamente significativos fueron el afecto, la edad y el sexo, todos con el mismo peso. En autoestima, el afecto de los padres fue un predictor estadísticamente significativo y positivo mientras que la imposición no predijo significativamente la autoestima. En cuanto a la edad, los jóvenes adultos tuvieron mayor autoestima que los adolescentes. En cuanto al sexo, los hombres tuvieron más autoestima que las mujeres. En autoconcepto emocional, tanto las dimensiones parentales como la edad y el sexo fueron predictores estadísticamente significativos. El afecto fue un predictor positivo del autoconcepto emocional de los hijos mientras que la imposición fue un predictor negativo. Los jóvenes adultos presentaron un mayor autoconcepto emocional que los adolescentes y los hombres, un mayor autoconcepto emocional que las mujeres. El sexo tuvo el mayor poder predictor sobre el autoconcepto emocional. En competencia social, el afecto fue un predictor estadísticamente significativo y positivo, además de tener el mayor poder predictor, mientras que la imposición no predijo significativamente la competencia social. La edad tampoco fue un predictor significativo mientras que el sexo sí lo fue, pero con un peso menor que el del afecto. En conformidad, el afecto y la edad fueron predictores estadísticamente significativos y positivos, siendo el afecto el predictor con mayor intensidad, mientras que la imposición no predijo significativamente la conformidad.

Los resultados del Estudio 2 mostraron que, en relación con el objetivo de identificar qué dimensiones parentales se relacionan con determinados patrones de ajuste psicosocial del hijo, el afecto parental se relacionó positivamente con el ajuste del hijo en todos los criterios analizados (autoestima, autoconcepto emocional, competencia social y conformidad) mientras que la imposición no guardó relación con el ajuste del hijo (autoestima, competencia social y conformidad) o se relacionó negativamente (autoconcepto emocional). Respecto al objetivo de identificar si el patrón de relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste del hijo se mantiene en la adultez, se extraen conclusiones. Se encontró un patrón general común en diferentes edades que indicó que el afecto parental se relacionó positivamente con criterios de ajuste mientras que la imposición no guardó relación con el ajuste del hijo o se relacionó negativamente. Además, los adolescentes obtuvieron puntuaciones más bajas que los jóvenes adultos en criterios de ajuste psicosocial como autoconcepto emocional, autoestima y conformidad,

resultados congruentes con la idea de que los adolescentes tienen mayor vulnerabilidad psicosocial que los adultos.

El Estudio 3 analizó la relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial de hijos adolescentes y jóvenes adultos, ambos de la generación Z en la cultura china actual. El ajuste psicosocial del hijo se midió con agresión, cinco dimensiones de autoconcepto y competencia socioemocional (medida con nerviosismo y competencia social). También se examinó si la relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo era la misma o cambiaba en función de determinadas características del hijo como la edad (adolescentes o jóvenes adultos), el sexo o si presentaron tendencia antisocial en la adolescencia. Los hijos con tendencia antisocial en la adolescencia presentaron mayor desajuste en términos de agresión y nerviosismo y menor ajuste en términos de menores niveles de autoconcepto académico, social, emocional y familiar. La tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia no cambió la relación entre estilos parentales y ajuste psicosocial del hijo. En cuanto a la relación entre estilos parentales y ajuste psicosocial del hijo, se obtuvieron los siguientes resultados. En autoconcepto social y autoconcepto físico, los estilos parentales caracterizados por afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se relacionaron con las puntuaciones más altas, ambos por igual, mientras que los estilos parentales sin afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con el menor autoconcepto, ambos por igual. En nerviosismo, las puntuaciones más altas se relacionaron con los estilos parentales sin afecto mientras que los estilos basados en afecto se relacionaron con los niveles más bajos de nerviosismo. En competencia social, las puntuaciones más altas se relacionaron con los estilos parentales basados en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo), seguidos por el estilo parental autoritario (imposición sin afecto) y la menor competencia social se relacionó con el estilo parental negligente (ni afecto ni imposición).

Los resultados del Estudio 3 mostraron un efecto de interacción estadísticamente significativo ($p < 0,05$) en la relación estilos parentales y la agresión del hijo en función de la edad y el sexo del hijo. No obstante, a pesar de esas diferencias, los estilos parentales basados en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se relacionaron con las puntuaciones más bajas en agresión mientras que los estilos no caracterizados por afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con los niveles más altos, a excepción del caso de las mujeres jóvenes adultas, ya que se encontraron mayores niveles en agresión en hijas de padres autorizativos que en hijas de padres negligentes. Los resultados también mostraron algunas diferencias en la relación entre estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial óptimo

del hijo en algunas dimensiones de autoconcepto (autoconcepto académico, emocional y familiar) en función de la edad del hijo. A pesar de estas diferencias, se mantuvo un patrón común: los niveles mayores de autoconcepto se relacionaron con los estilos parentales basados en afecto (autorizativo e indulgente), mientras que los menores niveles de autoconcepto se relacionaron con los estilos no basados en afecto (autoritario y negligente).

Los resultados del Estudio 3 mostraron que, en relación al objetivo de identificar la relación entre estilos parentales y ajuste psicosocial del hijo, los estilos parentales basados en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se relacionaron con el ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo. En relación al objetivo de comprobar si la relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste del hijo se mantenía igual en la adolescencia que en la juventud adulta, a pesar de algunas diferencias, se mantuvo el patrón de relación, el afecto se relacionó positivamente con el ajuste psicosocial del hijo. No obstante, en agresividad hubo diferencias en el estilo protector en función de sexo y edad, con un resultado especialmente relevante: mientras que en adolescentes varones el estilo protector fue el estilo autorizativo, el patrón contrario se encontró en mujeres adolescentes, quienes presentaron la menor agresión si eran de familias indulgentes. Además, la tendencia antisocial del hijo durante la adolescencia se relacionó con altos niveles de desajuste y bajos niveles de ajuste. También, la tendencia antisocial del hijo durante la adolescencia no cambió la relación entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo.

En su conjunto, los tres estudios que conforman el compendio de publicaciones de la presente tesis mostraron resultados similares y congruentes entre sí. La relación entre los estilos parentales o las dimensiones parentales y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo siguió un patrón común: el afecto fue beneficioso mientras que la imposición fue innecesaria e incluso perjudicial. Los resultados mostraron que los adolescentes tenían un peor ajuste y un mayor desajuste psicosocial que los adultos al menos en el contexto español, en concordancia con la idea de que los adolescentes tienen mayor vulnerabilidad psicosocial que los adultos. Además, la tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia se relacionó con mayor desajuste y menor desajuste psicosocial. Las diferencias en el contexto cultural o la tendencia antisocial en la adolescencia no modificaron este patrón general de relación. Los criterios de ajuste psicosocial del hijo que se evaluaron fueron: autopercepciones (autoestima, cinco dimensiones de autoconcepto), hostilidad/agresión (agresión, sexismo hostil), y competencia socioemocional (empatía, nerviosismo y competencia social) y conformidad.

Respecto a las autopercepciones, desde la perspectiva global unidimensional, el afecto parental se relacionó con una buena autoestima del hijo mientras que la ausencia de afecto sería perjudicial. Los resultados acerca de las autopercepciones desde una perspectiva multidimensional (autoconcepto) fueron congruentes con esta idea. Los estilos parentales basados en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se asociaron con los niveles más altos de autoconcepto mientras que estilos no basados en afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con niveles bajos. En el caso del autoconcepto emocional y familiar, incluso de los estilos no basados en afecto, el autoritario (alta imposición) se relacionó con niveles más bajos de autoconcepto que el negligente (baja imposición). Esto mostró que el afecto parental fue beneficioso para las autopercepciones del hijo y que la imposición fue innecesaria o incluso perjudicial. Además, en autoconcepto emocional, el estilo parental indulgente (afecto sin imposición) se relacionó con mejores puntuaciones del autoconcepto emocional del hijo que el estilo parental autorizativo (afecto con imposición) en la cultura actual española y también en la cultura china. Además, las autopercepciones fueron más pobres en la adolescencia que en la adultez, resultado congruente con que la adolescencia es un periodo de vulnerabilidad psicosocial en el que los padres tienen un rol muy importante pudiendo ser factores protectores o de riesgo para el ajuste psicosocial del hijo.

En agresión, los estilos parentales basados en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se asociaron con los niveles más bajos de agresión mientras que los estilos parentales no basados en afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con la mayor agresión. Dentro de los estilos basados en afecto, el indulgente (sin imposición) se asoció con menores niveles de agresión que el estilo autorizativo (con imposición) en la cultura reciente española pero también en la cultura china a excepción de los hombres adolescentes. Además, en sexismo hostil, el estilo parental indulgente (afecto sin imposición) se relacionó con las puntuaciones más bajas.

Respecto a la competencia socioemocional, se obtuvieron los siguientes resultados acerca de la empatía, el nerviosismo y la competencia social. En empatía, los estilos basados en el afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se relacionaron con las puntuaciones más altas mientras que los estilos no basados en afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con las puntuaciones más bajas. En la adolescencia el estilo parental indulgente se relacionó con los niveles más altos de empatía. Desde la juventud adulta se produjo un decremento en empatía hasta la adultez tardía pero ese decremento sólo se produjo en hijos de padres autoritarios y negligentes (no caracterizados por

afecto). De este modo, los hijos adultos de padres indulgentes y autorizativos mantuvieron niveles elevados de empatía. En nerviosismo, los estilos parentales basados en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se relacionaron con los niveles de nerviosismo más bajo en el hijo mientras que los estilos parentales no basados en afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con las puntuaciones más altas. En competencia social, el afecto parental se relacionó con las puntuaciones más altas (estilos indulgente y autorizativo) mientras que los estilos bajos en afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con las puntuaciones más bajas. Por otro lado, en términos de valores sociales, respecto a los valores de conformidad, el afecto parental fue un predictor fuerte mientras que la imposición parental no predijo significativamente la conformidad.

CAPÍTULO II. TRABAJOS PUBLICADOS

Estudio 1: Adjustment and maladjustment to later life: evidence about early experiences in the family

Primer artículo

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Abstract

Introduction: Previous parenting studies with European-American families have identified optimal parenting as being based on warmth combined with strictness (i.e., authoritative parenting). The present study analyzes, in adolescents and adults, their adjustment and maladjustment related to age and their early experiences in the family.

Methods: The sample consisted of 2,158 Spanish people (58.29% women): 624 adolescents, 630 young adults, 504 middle-aged adults, and 400 older adults. The families were classified into one of the four parental typologies (authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) based on their scores in the two main dimensions (warmth and strictness). Child functioning was measured as components of adjustment (self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (aggression and hostile sexism).

Results: Overall, only adolescents and adult children raised in indulgent families reported the highest self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy, and the lowest aggression and hostile sexism. Authoritative parenting (warmth with strictness) was related to a lower emotional self-concept and greater aggression and hostile sexism than indulgent parenting (warmth without strictness). The worst scores corresponded to authoritarian and neglectful parenting.

Discussion: The present findings provide new evidence about early experiences in the family, even after parental socialization has ended. Interestingly, contrary to the main

findings from classic studies with European-American families, only high parental warmth combined with low parental strictness (i.e., indulgent parenting) is always positive for greater adjustment and less maladjustment in all age groups.

KEYWORDS
parenting styles, warmth, strictness, life cycle, later life

1. Introduction

At any moment in life, the different components of adjustment and maladjustment can be related to age (Baltes, 1987). An old question is how these personal differences are affected by early experiences in the family, e.g., old psychoanalytic paradigm (Maccoby, 1992; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019). From a cross-sectional 21st-century perspective where individuals of all ages live side by side, the present study analyzes participants' adjustment and maladjustment related to their age and their early experiences in the family, taking into account the parenting style.

1.1. Age-related differences in adjustment and maladjustment

From a developmental perspective, adjustment and maladjustment can vary depending on the phase of the life span (Mcadams et al., 1993; Liu et al., 2019; Buchinger et al., 2021). Later life is characterized by a loss of primary control capacity and decreasing opportunities associated with reductions in personal and social resources (Baltes, 1987), such as increases in health problems (e.g., cognitive decline) and fewer social roles (e.g., retirement). By contrast, adulthood is usually related to several developmental tasks that contribute to successful development from young adulthood (e.g., university studies) to midlife (e.g., progression of career), when middle-adults achieve high levels of achievement, mastery, and control over the self and the environment (Liu et al., 2019; Buchinger et al., 2021).

Consequently, there is an age-related decline in the self in old age (Orth et al., 2010, 2018). Overall, older adults have a poorer sense of their own worth (i.e., self-esteem) in comparison with middle-life (the peak levels) and young adulthood. Even in later life, scores on self-esteem might be similar to those of adolescence (Robins and Trzesniewski, 2005; Liu et al., 2019), and so older adults might be vulnerable to problems such as depressive symptoms and low self-rated health, less ego integrity, and

more despair and death anxiety (Bergman and Bodner, 2020). Nevertheless, despite the pattern of greater losses than gains, adaptive changes appear in older life; specifically, emotion regulation seems to be relatively spared (Carstensen and Mikels, 2005). Based on a multidimensional approach to the self (i.e., self-concept), there might be an age-related decline in the emotional component of the self (self-concept), as has been described in self-esteem (Liu et al., 2019), but it can also be preserved due to relatively good emotion regulation in later life (Carstensen and Mikels, 2005). However, this point has not been exhaustively tested. Additionally, empathy (i.e., concern for the other) is an important component of adjustment throughout life, and it is positively related to prosocial behaviors and is a protective factor against deviance (Eisenberg and Strayer, 1987). Empathy seems to decrease with age, particularly related to understanding more complex emotions and mental states (Henry et al., 2013). However, there is limited evidence, and it is mostly based on comparisons of young and older adults (e.g., Bailey et al., 2008; Henry et al., 2013).

By contrast, aggression and prejudice are commonly identified as important components of maladjustment and poor functioning (Donnellan et al., 2005; Gracia et al., 2008). Aggressors are more likely to show antisocial behavior, conduct problems, lack of self-control and empathy, and an increased risk of internalizing problems, such as anxiety and depression (Donnellan et al., 2005). Overall, aggression is related to greater maladjustment in later life, but also in (Liu et al., 2013) and adolescence (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). Additionally, higher scores on prejudice are also related to more aggression and (Genthner and Taylor, 1973; Gonsalkorale et al., 2009), and it seems to be greater in later life (Hammond et al., 2018). Particularly, prejudice against women (e.g., hostile sexism) has been studied less in later life (Hammond et al., 2018), given that most of the studies have been limited to more classic forms such as racial prejudice (e.g., Gonsalkorale et al., 2009).

Although previous studies have examined some variations in their functioning in older adults, adjustment and maladjustment in later life, compared to adulthood and adolescence, are not clearly identified. They could reflect age-related declines in some domains (e.g., self-esteem, Liu et al., 2019), whereas others seem to be preserved (e.g., emotion regulation, Carstensen and Mikels, 2005). Determining age-related differences in different dimensions of adjustment and maladjustment is important for identifying moments of vulnerability or strength throughout the life cycle. For example, adolescents and older adults tend to report lower self-esteem than middle-aged adults, making them

more likely to have certain problems and difficulties. Much of the research has been limited to comparing a few groups (e.g., young adults and older adults), or it has considered only a few similar variables (e.g., empathy, Bailey et al., 2008), but not broad and different dimensions of adjustment and maladjustment at the same time.

1.2. Early experiences in the family and their relationship with adjustment and maladjustment

The pattern of adjustment and maladjustment during later life and adulthood could be especially related to early experiences (e.g., peers and family), as many developmental scholars have proposed (Freud, 1933; Baumrind, 1978; Maccoby, 1992; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Early experiences in the family during parental socialization are crucial for children and adolescents when they are being raised by their parents, but they could also have a long-term impact beyond adolescence. Parents help the child to become an adult, but there is a time when parental socialization is over and the child reaches adulthood (Stafford et al., 2015, 2016). At any time in life, there are differences between individuals with higher well-being and less maladjustment and those with poor adjustment and greater problems. These differences are already described in childhood (Eisenberg et al., 1998; Ridao et al., 2021; Hung, 2022), but they become greater in adolescence, for example, between adolescents with high and low academic engagement (Veiga et al., 2021), empathy (Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019), and self-concept (Veiga et al., 2015), perhaps partly because adolescents spend more time with their peers without adult supervision and are more susceptible to group standards. The same is true of differences in adjustment and maladjustment among adults (Scales et al., 2016; Orth et al., 2018). The family influences the development of children (Gomez-Ortiz and Sanchez-Sanchez, 2022; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022), and, particularly, the so-called parental socialization can be consistently related to differences in child adjustment and maladjustment during childhood (Baumrind, 1967; Baumrind, 1971) and adolescence (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1992; Garcia and Gracia, 2009). Additionally, less is known about whether differences in adjustment and maladjustment during adulthood can be consistently related to parental socialization.

Many classic and current studies on parental socialization are based on the model with two independent dimensions (i.e., orthogonal) whose combination gives rise

to four parenting styles (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Martínez et al., 2017; Garcia et al., 2019). The warmth dimension (also called responsiveness, security, care, love, or acceptance/involvement) refers to the degree to which parents show acceptance, emotional closeness, and communication with their children (Lamborn et al., 1991; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Martínez et al., 2021). The strictness dimension (also known as demandingness, severity, or supervision) refers to the degree of imposition and rigidity with which parents act to establish rules, imposing their authority (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Martinez et al., 2019; Garcia et al., 2020a,b). Four parenting styles emerge from the combination of the two orthogonal dimensions: authoritative (high warmth and high strictness), indulgent (high warmth and low strictness), authoritarian (low warmth and high strictness), and neglectful (low warmth and low strictness).

Parents transmit social norms and values to make their children autonomous, mature, and independent individuals (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). Parental socialization takes place in very different social, cultural, and ethnic contexts (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Chao, 2001; Dwairy et al., 2006; Fuentes et al., 2022). For example, poor neighborhoods tend to have fewer opportunities, higher unemployment, worse schools, and greater crime rates than middle-class (Steinberg et al., 2006; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022). However, parental socialization can be consistently related to differences in adjustment, so it is possible to identify parenting styles that are positive for children's well-being and parenting styles that are related to detrimental consequences (Lamborn et al., 1991; Fuentes et al., 2022). In parental socialization research, for each specific context, families can be characterized in terms of high or low levels of warmth and strictness. For example, authoritarian families are less warm and stricter than other families, but the characterization of each family based on warmth and strictness is sample specific, depending on the ethnicity, e.g., European- (Baumrind, 1967) and African-American (Baumrind, 1972), or country, e.g., Sweden, United Kingdom, Portugal or Slovenia (Calafat et al., 2014). The key issue is that there may be variations in the optimal parenting style depending on the culture (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018), and the authoritative style (i.e., strictness combined with warmth) may not be universally beneficial in all cultural contexts (Palacios et al., 2022).

Authoritative parenting (i.e., warmth and strictness) has been related to optimal levels of psychosocial adjustment mostly in studies in the Anglo-Saxon context with European-American families (Baumrind, 1967; Baumrind, 1971; Maccoby and Martin,

1983; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg, 2001). Benefits of authoritative parenting have been found for different criteria, such as self-esteem, mental health (Maccoby and Martin, 1983), psychosocial development, school performance, internalized distress, and behavioral problems (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). However, authoritative parenting is not always associated with the optimal adjustment of children and adolescents across all cultural contexts (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Chao, 2001; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Garcia et al., 2019).

Some studies conducted in ethnic minorities in the United States, such as African-American (Baumrind, 1972) and Chinese-American (Chao, 2001), as well as in Arab societies (Dwairy and Achoui, 2006), report that the authoritarian parenting style (i.e., strictness without warmth) is related to some benefits in psychosocial adjustment, for example, greater assertiveness and independence in African Americans (Baumrind, 1972) and an absence of mental health problems in Arab adolescents (Dwairy and Achoui, 2006).

Furthermore, a body of recent research, mostly from studies conducted in Europe and Latin America, points to the benefits of indulgent parenting in raising children (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020). Indulgent parenting (i.e., warmth without strictness) is associated with equal or better psychosocial adjustment than authoritative parenting (i.e., warmth and strictness), whereas the authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles (i.e., without warmth) are associated with worse levels of adjustment (Villarejo et al., 2020; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2021). Children from indulgent families present better adjustment than children from authoritative families on criteria such as self-esteem and environmental values (Queiroz et al., 2020), alcohol use and abuse, and motivations for drinking and non-drinking (Garcia et al., 2020b), as well as a wide spectrum of behavioral problems (Fuentes et al., 2015a).

Additionally, it is commonly conjectured that early experiences in the family (e.g., parental socialization) could be related to adjustment and maladjustment in adulthood and later life. However, little is known about the relationship between parental socialization and adult adjustment and maladjustment, given that the empirical evidence is mostly limited to examining parenting and its consequences in children and adolescents (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Lamborn et al., 1991; Riquelme et al., 2018; Queiroz et al., 2020). A few studies have tested the long-term socialization impact of parenting beyond adolescence, but most of them have been limited to samples of young

adults (Garcia et al., 2021), used different outcomes in the comparisons across adulthood (Stafford et al., 2016), included adult children but not adolescents at the same time (Stafford et al., 2015; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022) or compared adolescents with only one group of adults (Garcia O. F. et al., 2018), examined specific adult ages (e.g., 43 years) but not age groups (e.g., middle-aged adults; Stafford et al., 2016), or used isolated parenting practices instead of parenting styles (Ali et al., 2015).

1.3. The present study

The present study examined age-related differences in adjustment (self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (aggression and hostile sexism) from adolescence to later life in a European country (i.e., Spain). Based on previous studies, older adults were expected to score negatively on self-esteem, empathy, and hostile sexism, but more positively on outcomes associated with good emotion regulation in old age (lower aggression and higher emotional self-concept). It is of interest to ask whether, despite the expected pattern of age-related differences, variations in adjustment and maladjustment among the four age groups (adolescence, young and middle adulthood, and later life) might also be consistently associated with early experiences in the family (authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful). Based on some recent studies, we hypothesized that indulgent parenting would be related to equal and even more positive scores than authoritative parenting in terms of greater adjustment (higher self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and less maladjustment (lower aggression and hostile sexism), whereas the most negative scores would be associated with parenting characterized by lack of warmth (authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles).

2. Methods

2.1. Sample and procedure

The sample consisted of 2,158 Spanish participants, 1,258 females (58.30%) and 900 males (41.70%), who were adolescents and adult children (M = 35,74, DT = 20,26) from four age groups: adolescents (n = 624, 362 females, 58%), aged 12–18 years (M = 16.69, SD = 1.60); young adults (n = 630, 376 females, 59.7%), aged 19–35 years (M = 23.60, SD = 3.73); middle-aged adults (n = 504, 312 females, 61.9%), aged 36–59 years (M = 48.41, SD = 6.37); and older adults (n = 400, 208 females, 52%), aged 60 years or

older (M = 68.61, SD = 7.47). Following the *a priori* power analysis (Faul et al., 2009), minimum sample of 1,724 participants was required to detect with a statistical power of 0.95 (by fixing the conventional values of Type I and Type II statistical inference errors: $\alpha = 0.05$; $1 - \beta = 0.95$) and the low effect size generally identified in parenting styles, $f = 0.10$ (Cohen, 1977; Lamborn et al., 1991; Garcia et al., 2008; Faul et al., 2009). For instance, a small effect size ($f = 0.17$) was estimated from ANOVAs from a classic parenting study based on univariate F-tests of the four parenting styles and a large number of dependent variables (Lamborn et al., 1991). However, the effect size of parenting styles depends on the criterion measured (e.g., greater relationship with family self-concept than with general self-esteem). In this study, we expect the effect size to be small because the constructs used as criteria are especially broad. It is therefore important to ensure that the sample has sufficient power to detect these possible small sizes (see Lamborn et al., 1991, p. 1063). A sensitivity power analysis with the study sample (N = 2,158, $\alpha = \beta = 0.05$) showed that main effects between the four parenting styles can detect statistically significant differences with a very small effect size (f = 0.089; Faul et al., 2009; Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Calafat et al., 2014; Fuentes et al., 2015b). G-power 3.1 was used to calculate the statistical power (Faul et al., 2009).

Adolescents were recruited from the complete list of high schools. The heads of all the high schools invited to participate were contacted. If a high school declined to be part of the study, an alternative school from the complete list was chosen until completing the sample size (Garcia O. F. et al., 2018; Martínez et al., 2019). Parental consent was mandatory for adolescent participation. Young adults were recruited in undergraduate education courses (Manzeske and Stright, 2009; Garcia et al., 2021). Middle-aged adults were recruited from city council neighborhoods (Garcia et al., 2011). Older adults were recruited from the complete list of senior citizen centers. If a senior citizen center refused to be part of the study, an alternative center from the complete list was chosen until completing the sample size required (Garcia O. F. et al., 2018). Data were gathered by using an online survey with obligatory responses. To ensure data protection measures, identifiers and survey data were stored in separate archives, passwords to directories were protected, and sensitive files were encoded. The questionnaires were studied for doubtful response patterns, such as describing implausible inconsistencies between negatively and positively formulated responses (Tomás and Oliver, 2004; Garcia et al., 2011). Subjects who participated in the following study met the following requirements: (1) They were Spanish, as were their

parents and grandparents; (2) Participation was voluntary; (3) Informed consent was required; and (4) Anonymity of responses was guaranteed.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Parental socialization

The warmth dimension was measured with the 20 items on the Warmth/Affection Scale (Rohner et al., 1978), which assesses the degree to which children perceive their parents to be affectionate, responsive, and involved in the child's affairs. This scale provides a reliable measure of adolescents' perceptions of their parents' behaviors. A sample item is "Make me feel wanted and needed." The adult version includes the same statements in past tense, offering a reliable measure for adult children (Ali et al., 2015). A sample item is "Made me feel what I did was important." The alpha value was 0.946. The strictness dimension was measured with the 13 items on the Parental Control Scale (Rohner et al., 1978). It evaluates the degree to which children perceive that their parents control and monitor them in an imposing, firm, and demanding manner. A sample item is "Insist that I do exactly as I am told." The adult version has the same statements in past tense, offering a reliable measure for adult children (Ali et al., 2015). A sample item is "Insisted that I do exactly as I was told." The alpha value was 0.903. Both scales are 4-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 *Almost never is/was true* to 4 *Almost always is/was true*. High scores on both scales indicate a higher degree of warmth and strictness. Overall, parenting studies with adults use the same measure to capture parental socialization as the one used for adolescents, but the items are written in the past tense (Buri, 1991; Khaleque and Rohner, 2002a). The Warmth/Affection Scale and the Parental Control Scale offer reliable and valid measures to capture parental socialization in children, but also in adults once parental socialization has ended (Khaleque and Rohner, 2002a,b; Rohner and Khaleque, 2003). Additionally, the factor structures for both scales have been confirmed with CFA analysis, as well as their invariance by age (Garcia O. F. et al., 2018).

The four parenting styles were defined using the median split procedure in the two parental dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness), based on the sex and age of the participants (Chao, 2001; Calafat et al., 2014; Queiroz et al., 2020; Garcia et al., 2020a,b). In authoritative families, the scores were above the median in both parental dimensions, whereas in neglectful families, the scores were below the median in both parental dimensions. In indulgent families, the scores were above the median for

parental warmth, but below it for parental strictness, whereas in authoritarian families, the scores were below the median for parental warmth, but above it for parental strictness.

The split procedure to assign families to the parenting styles is widely used in the specialized literature on parenting, with cutoff criteria based on the tertile-split (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994; Garcia and Gracia, 2009) or the median-split procedure (Chao, 2001; Calafat et al., 2014; Queiroz et al., 2020). This procedure to categorize families allows us to assess both of the main parenting dimensions with different measures, such as the APM (Authoritative Parenting Measure; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994); WAS Warmth/Affection Scale (Rohner et al., 1978) and PCS Parental Control Scale (Rohner and Khaleque, 2003); the EMBU questionnaire (Arrindell et al., 1999); or the ESPA29 Parental Socialization Scale (Musitu and Garcia, 2001). As this procedure is sample-specific, it allows us to simultaneously divide the two main parenting dimensions into high and low scores, controlling for sociodemographic variables (e.g., sex, age, and country; Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Calafat et al., 2014). Although we can be confident that the parents in our "neglectful" category are indeed relatively more neglectful (i.e., less warm and less strict) than the other parents in the sample, we do not know whether the parents we have labeled "neglectful" would be considered "neglectful" in a different population. Therefore, it is important to consider that assigning parents to one type or another relative to their counterparts is done for heuristic, rather than diagnostic, purposes (see Lamborn et al., 1991, p. 1053).

2.2.2. Emotional self-concept

It was measured with the six items on the emotional scale from the AF5 Self-Concept Form 5 (Garcia F. et al., 2018; Garcia O. F. et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2020). This scale assesses the general self-perception of the emotional state and responses to specific situations in daily life that require a certain degree of commitment and involvement (Fuentes et al., 2020). A sample item is "Many things make me nervous" (reversed item). A high score corresponds to a higher emotional self-concept. Its response scale is from 1 to 99, where 1 is *Very little agreement* and 99 is *Very much in agreement*. The alpha value was 0.762.

2.2.3. Self-esteem

It was measured with the 10 items on the Rosenberg questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965). This instrument evaluates feelings of self-worth and self-acceptance. A sample

item is “I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.” It consists of a 4-point Likert-type response scale, ranging from 1 *Completely disagree* to 4 *Completely agree*. Higher scores represent higher self-esteem. The alpha value was 0.850.

2.2.4. Empathy

It was measured with the five items on the empathy scale of the Psychosocial Maturity Questionnaire (CRPM3; Greenberger et al., 1975; Garcia and Serra, 2019). This scale assesses the degree to which a person can understand the point of view of the other (perceive their feelings and emotions) and elicit an emotional response congruent with the other’s emotional state and needs. A sample item is “I am sensitive to others’ feelings and needs.” It consists of a 5-point Likert-type response scale, where 1 is *Strongly disagree* and 5 is *Strongly agree*. Higher scores correspond to greater empathy. The alpha value was 0.683.

2.2.5. Aggression

It was measured with the six items on the Hostility/Aggression Scale of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ; Rohner, 1978), which assesses personality self-perception and behavioral traits linked to hostile and aggressive tendencies (Rohner, 2014; Ali et al., 2015). The Hostility/Aggression Scale is commonly used in the specialized literature on parenting and child adjustment (Khaleque and Rohner, 2002a; Lila et al., 2007; Ali et al., 2015, 2019). A sample item is “I want to hit something or someone.” It consists of a 4-point Likert-type response scale, where 1 is *Almost never true* and 4 is *Almost always true*. Higher scores on this scale indicate greater aggression. The alpha value was 0.659.

2.2.6. Hostile sexism

It was measured with the 11 items on the hostile sexism scale of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick and Fiske, 1996), which assesses the degree of prejudice against women, considering them inferior to men. A sample item is “Women are too easily offended.” It consists of a 6-point Likert-type response scale, where 1 is *Strongly Disagree* and 6 is *Strongly Agree*. Higher scores indicate greater hostile sexism. The alpha value was 0.931.

2.3. Plan of analysis

The statistical analyses performed were multivariate analyses (MANOVA), univariate analyses (ANOVA), and Bonferroni hypothesis tests. First, a multivariate factorial design MANOVA (4 × 2 × 4) was applied, in which the dependent variables were the indicators of adjustment (i.e., self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (i.e., aggression and hostile sexism), and the independent variables were the parenting styles (authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful), sex (male and female), and age groups (adolescents, aged 12–18 years; young adults, aged 19–35 years; middle-aged adults, aged 40–59 years; and older adults, aged 60 years or more). Second, univariate tests were used to analyze sources of variation that reached statistical significance in the multivariate analyses. Third, *post-hoc* Bonferroni tests were applied to those univariate sources of significance while maintaining the alpha per study at 5%. The IBM SPSS 28.0.1.1 statistical program was used for the MANOVAs, ANOVAs, and differences between pairs of means, with Bonferroni correction for rate of Type I error.

3. Results

3.1. Parenting styles

The participants were distributed by parenting styles (see Table 1). The indulgent parenting (M = 73.60, SD = 4.51) and authoritative parenting (M = 72.52, SD = 4.36) styles had higher scores on warmth, compared to the authoritarian parenting (M = 55.22, SD = 9.98) and neglectful parenting (M = 56.69, SD = 9.62) styles. Additionally, authoritative parenting (M = 39.78, SD = 5.10) and authoritarian parenting (M = 41.65, SD = 5.55) showed higher scores on strictness than indulgent parenting (M = 28.17, SD = 5.41) and neglectful parenting (M = 28.07, SD = 5.77).

3.2. Preliminary multivariate analyses

The results of the multivariate analyses showed statistically significant differences in the main effects of parenting style, $\Lambda = 0.879$, $F(15.0, 5858.3) = 18.64$, $p < 0.001$, sex, $\Lambda = 0.844$, $F(5.0, 2122.0) = 78.44$, $p < 0.001$, and age, $\Lambda = 0.895$, $F(15.0, 5858.3) = 14.84$, $p < 0.001$, and in the interaction effects of parenting style by age, $\Lambda = 0.969$, $F(45.0, 9495.3) = 1.47$ (see Table 2).

3.3. Adjustment and maladjustment throughout life

Statistically significant age differences were found in all the adjustment and maladjustment criteria, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 3). Examining the age profiles in the adjustment indicators (see Figure 1), self-esteem showed an age-related increasing tendency from adolescence (low levels), reaching a peak in middle-adulthood and then subsiding in later life. Middle-aged adults reported higher self-esteem than older adults. Moreover, adolescents reported lower self-esteem than the three adult age groups. Emotional self-concept showed an age-related increasing tendency from low levels in adolescence to high levels in later life. Specifically, scores on emotional self-concept were higher in older and middle-aged adults than in young adults and adolescents. The age profile for empathy showed that scores were low in adolescence, rising to a peak in young adulthood, and then declining in middle life and later life. The lowest empathy corresponded to older adults and adolescents (who did not differ from each other), whereas young adults were the most empathic. Additionally, middle-aged adults had higher scores than older adults.

Examining the age profiles for the maladjustment indicators (see Figure 1), aggression showed a declining tendency from adolescence to later life. The lowest aggression levels corresponded to older adults, who scored lower than young adults and adolescents. By contrast, adolescents scored higher than young, middle-aged, and older adults. Hostile sexism showed an increasing tendency from young adulthood to later life. Older adults scored higher than middle-aged, young adults, and adolescents. Furthermore, young adults (who did not differ from adolescents) scored lower than middle-aged adults.

Additionally, when analyzing sex differences (see Table 4), on the adjustment indicators, males scored higher on self-esteem and emotional self-concept than females, but lower on empathy. On the maladjustment indicators, the lowest aggression corresponded to females, and on hostile sexism, males again scored higher than females.

3.4. The early experiences in the family

The results of the univariate analyses showed statistically significant differences between the parenting styles on all the adjustment and maladjustment criteria, $p < 0.05$ (see Table 5). On the adjustment criteria, in adolescents and adult children, the only parenting style constantly related to the most positive scores was indulgent parenting.

On self-esteem, children from authoritarian families scored lower than their peers from the other households. On emotional self-concept, children with indulgent parents obtained the highest scores, whereas authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful parenting were related to a poor emotional self-concept. On empathy, children raised in authoritative and indulgent families scored higher than their counterparts from authoritarian and neglectful homes, whereas of the parenting styles related to poor empathy (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful), the lowest scores corresponded to neglectful parenting.

A similar pattern was found for the maladjustment criteria in adolescents and adult children. Indulgent parenting was the only parenting style constantly associated with the lowest scores. On aggression, children from indulgent homes obtained the lowest scores, and the highest scores corresponded to their peers from authoritarian and neglectful homes, whereas children from authoritative homes scored in a middle position between the most aggressive (i.e., from authoritarian and neglectful families) and the least aggressive (i.e., from indulgent homes). On hostile sexism, children with indulgent parents obtained the lowest scores, compared to children raised by authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful families.

Statistically significant effects of parenting style and age were found for empathy, $F(9, 2{,}126) = 3.569$, $p < 0.001$, and aggression, $F(9, 2{,}126) = 1.955$, $p = 0.041$. Examining the family profiles for empathy by age (see Figure 2), a common pattern can be observed in adolescents and adult children: indulgent and authoritative parenting were related to high scores (in adolescence the greatest empathy corresponded to the indulgent style), whereas authoritarian and neglectful parenting were associated with low empathy (in middle and later life, the lowest scores corresponded to the neglectful style). Additionally, empathy declined with age, but not in all families. In families characterized by warmth, adult children tended to preserve their empathy: older adults scored similar to young adults from indulgent and authoritative families. By contrast, a decline in empathy was found in families without warmth: older adults reported lower scores than young adults from authoritarian and, remarkably, neglectful homes.

Examining the family profiles for aggression by age (see Figure 2), a decreasing tendency was found over time in children raised by authoritative, indulgent, and authoritarian parents. The neglectful parenting style did not present this decreasing pattern, given that it was related to high and constant levels of aggression from

adolescence to later life. Additionally, authoritative and indulgent parenting were related to low aggression (the lowest scores corresponded to indulgent parenting in adolescence, adulthood, and later life). By contrast, children from authoritarian and neglectful families tended to report high aggression (the highest scores corresponded to authoritarian parenting in adolescence and to neglectful parenting in later life, whereas they were practically identical in young adulthood and middle life).

4. Discussion

This study analyzed age-related differences in adjustment (i.e., self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (i.e., aggression and hostile sexism) across adolescence, adulthood, and later life. Additionally, we tested whether differences in adjustment and maladjustment in adolescence, adulthood, and later life could be related to early experiences in the family (authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful). Different age-related differences in adjustment (i.e., self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (i.e., aggression and hostile sexism) were found. Later life was related to some negative scores (lower self-esteem and empathy and higher hostile sexism), but the opposite pattern for positive scores was found in other dimensions (higher emotional self-concept and lower aggression). Additionally, early experiences in the family were related to adjustment and maladjustment in adolescent and adult children. Overall, only parenting characterized by warmth without strictness (the indulgent style) was constantly related to optimal scores.

Different age-related differences in adjustment and maladjustment to later life were identified. On the adjustment criteria, age profiles in self-esteem showed an increasing tendency from adolescence, reaching a peak in middle-adulthood, and decreasing in later life. Surprisingly, a different pattern was found when the self was examined based on a multidimensional approach (i.e., self-concept). Specifically, for emotional self-concept, there was an age-related increasing tendency throughout life. Older adults had the greatest emotional self-concept (they did not differ from middle-aged adults), scoring higher than young adults and adolescents. Findings from this study agree with age-related differences in global self-perceptions (i.e., self-esteem) described in some previous studies (e.g., Liu et al., 2019), but they also provide new evidence because the present study examined the self from a multidimensional perspective (i.e.,

self-concept). Based on a unidimensional perspective, a dramatic decline in self-worth from middle to later life was previously described. However, at the same time, older adults seem to preserve greater self-perceptions in important domains of the self, such as the emotional domain, perhaps partly because emotion regulation is relatively spared (Carstensen and Mikels, 2005). Finally, on empathy, older adults reported low scores, agreeing with findings from some previous studies limited to comparisons between older and young adults (e.g., Bailey et al., 2008). Findings from the present study offer new and crucial evidence about age-related differences in empathy throughout life. Older adults and adolescents had the lowest empathy (they did not differ from each other), whereas the highest levels were found among young adults. In addition, middle-aged adults reported higher empathy than older adults.

On the maladjustment criteria, age profiles for aggression showed a decreasing tendency from adolescence to later life. The highest aggression corresponded to adolescents, who scored higher than young, middle-aged, and older adults. By contrast, the lowest levels of aggression corresponded to older adults, who reported lower scores than young adults and adolescents. The opposite was true for hostile sexism. The highest hostile sexism corresponded to older adults, who scored higher than young adults, middle-aged adults, and adolescents. By contrast, the lowest levels of hostile sexism were found in young adults, who did not differ from adolescents but scored lower than middle-aged and older adults. Overall, previous studies showed that higher prejudice (e.g., sexism and racism) was related to greater (Genthner and Taylor, 1973; Lisco et al., 2012). However, most of these studies only examined the relationship between prejudice and aggression in a specific age group (i.e., young adults), without considering the age-related differences throughout life, which offers a more general profile and might even disagree with age-related partial correlates (Genthner and Taylor, 1973; Lisco et al., 2012). Interestingly, the main findings from the present study revealed different age-related differences in sexism prejudice and aggression: later life is related to high hostile sexism, but low aggression, whereas adolescence and young adulthood, although related to less hostile sexism, are associated with high aggression.

An important aim of the present study was to analyze age differences in three indicators of adjustment and two indicators of maladjustment. As expected, in later life, older adults had relatively low self-esteem (Orth et al., 2018). However, their capacity for emotional regulation appears to be good, despite declining physical capacities. Thus, both the high emotional self-concept and the low aggression could be explained in part

by the fact that in later life emotional regulation might be high due to accumulated experiences (Carstensen and Mikels, 2005). A more comprehensive and complete understanding of differences across the life span requires a complete portrait with indicators of adjustment and maladjustment. Thus, older adults also showed high scores on hostile sexism and low scores on empathy, although their aggression was also low. The multidimensional study across four age groups has important implications. Although greater vulnerability (i.e., low scores on adjustment or high scores on maladjustment) is associated with more risk and problems, identifying profiles by age in different dimensions can provide a more general view of those protective and risk factors. For example, according to the findings of the present study, in later life, there is low confidence in one's abilities (low self-esteem), which may increase the risk of depression and loneliness (Bergman and Bodner, 2020), although it does not necessarily mean that all areas of the self are affected. For example, appraising oneself as being capable and effective in coping with the situation by controlling one's emotions (high emotional self-concept) is also a protective factor against mental health problems.

Another relevant aim of the study was to test whether, despite age differences in adjustment and maladjustment, early experiences in the family could also be related to consistent variations in adjustment and maladjustment. The main findings showed that early family experiences (authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful) were related to important differences in adjustment and maladjustment. In general, and as expected, only indulgent parenting (warmth but not strictness) was associated with the most positive scores. It should be noted that there are many influences on adjustment and maladjustment, especially from adolescence to later life (Baltes, 1987), and the family has been consistently identified as a protective factor, but also as a risk factor.

The findings from this study suggest that early experiences in the family are crucial in explaining differences in adjustment and maladjustment in adolescents, but also in adult children. Overall, on the adjustment criteria, the only parenting style consistently related to the most positive scores was the indulgent style. Specifically, children from indulgent families scored equally on self-esteem and empathy and better on emotional self-concept than those from authoritative homes. By contrast, parenting without warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful) was related to low scores on emotional self-concept and empathy (children from authoritarian homes reported the lowest scores on self-esteem). Again, a similar pattern was found for maladjustment: Indulgent parenting was the only parenting style constantly associated with the lowest

scores. Specifically, indulgent parenting was associated with lower aggression and less hostile sexism, compared to authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful parenting. Additionally, children from authoritarian and neglectful families were the most aggressive.

The present findings seriously contradict those from classic studies with European-American families. According to these studies, parental warmth combined with parental strictness (i.e., authoritative parenting) is the only style that helps children to achieve the greatest adjustment and the lowest maladjustment (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg et al., 1994). The strictness component is identified as effective and necessary in European-American families to achieve effective socialization based on good internalization of social standards and self-regulation (Baumrind, 1967; Baumrind, 1971; Steinberg, 2001). However, according to the main findings of the present study, parenting based on involvement and warmth might be consistently related to benefits, whereas parental strictness seems to be unnecessary and even harmful. Within parenting characterized by warmth, indulgent parenting (without warmth) obtains scores equal to those of the authoritative style (without warmth) on self-esteem and empathy, and more optimal scores on emotional self-concept, aggression, and hostile sexism. The strictness component, although combined with parental warmth, does not always seem to provide a good social standard because adolescent and adult children raised in authoritative families reported greater hostile sexism, had seriously damaged emotional regulation because they tended to report lower emotional self-concept, and were very aggressive, which implies a serious alteration in personal regulation and lack of self-control, making it difficult to live in society. In contrast, when parents have been loving and involved and have used reasoning and dialog at home, without making use of imposition and severity (i.e., the indulgent families), their adolescent and adult children tend to be more empathetic, more appreciative of themselves and their emotional abilities, and better adjusted because they are less prejudiced and less aggressive. In this regard, the findings from the present study agree with some recent research, mostly conducted in Europe and Latin America, that identifies the benefits of indulgent parenting based on warmth without strictness (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020). Most of these previous studies are limited to samples of adolescents (Queiroz et al., 2020), and so the present study extends the evidence about the benefits of indulgent parenting to adulthood and later life.

Overall, parenting styles and adjustment and maladjustment in adolescent and adult children showed a common pattern, but the parenting profiles by age revealed some nuances in empathy and aggressiveness. Examining the age profile, a decreasing tendency in empathy was found from young adulthood to later life. Older adults scored lower than middle-aged and young adults. Nevertheless, when examining family age profiles, children from families characterized by warmth (i.e., authoritative and indulgent) did not have this decreasing tendency (older adults scored similarly to middle-aged and young adults). Thus, parental warmth could have a buffering effect on the empathy decline from young adulthood to later life, whereas lower scores on empathy in older adults than in young adults were found in families characterized by lack of warmth (remarkably in those from neglectful homes). Additionally, aggression tended to decrease with age. Older adults were less aggressive than young adults and adolescents. However, examining family age profiles of children raised in neglectful families, scores were as high in adolescence as in later life. By contrast, a common pattern across adolescence, adulthood, and later life was found: Indulgent parenting was related to the lowest levels of aggression.

4.1. Limitations

The present study offers new and crucial evidence, but some limitations should be considered. We cannot determine a relationship of causality between the variables because the methodology is not experimental and the design is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. This study has not been designed to be representative of the Spanish population, although other representative Spanish data offer similar results (Alonso-Geta, 2012). The results of this study are from middle-class families, and so future studies should examine parental socialization in families from other environments. Nevertheless, the results of the present study are similar to those obtained in other studies with Spanish families from at-risk neighborhoods (Gracia et al., 2012; Fuentes et al., 2015a). It is important to bear in mind that parenting is measured based on the two main dimensions that make up the four parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful), providing a family categorization that is different from other parenting studies in which parental socialization is captured through a clustering method such as LPA (i.e., latent profile analysis; Power, 2013; Borden et al., 2014; Ayon et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2022). Additionally, adjustment

and maladjustment have been measured with self-report measures, so future studies might also include more tangible measures. Despite the use of self-report measures to capture parenting and adjustment and maladjustment, children seem to offer more reliable and accurate data than other sources (e.g., parents; Gonzales et al., 1996; Barry et al., 2008). Moreover, the sample used in this study includes almost the entire life cycle, which makes it possible to examine differences in adjustment and maladjustment criteria throughout life, as well as the impact of early experiences (i.e., parenting style) in the short and long term.

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Table 1. Distribution of participants according to parenting style, mean scores (*M*), and standard deviations (*SD*) in the main parenting dimensions.

	Total	Indulgent	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Neglectful
Frequency	2158	607	461	632	458
Percentage	100	28.1	21.4	29.3	21.2
Warmth					
Mean	64.40	73.60	72.52	55.22	56.69
SD	11.57	4.51	4.36	9.98	9.62
Strictness					
Mean	34.58	28.17	39.78	41.65	28.07
SD	8.42	5.41	5.10	5.55	5.77

Table 2. Factorial ($4^a \times 2^b \times 4^c$) for adjustment (self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (aggression and hostile sexism) criteria.

Sources of variation	Λ	*F*	$df_{between}$	df_{error}	*p*
Parenting styles [a]	.879	18.64	15.0	5858.3	<.001
Sex [b]	.844	78.44	5.0	2122.0	<.001
Age [c]	.902	14.84	15.0	5858.3	<.001
Parenting styles × Sex	.995	0.72	15.0	5858.3	.762
Parenting styles × Age	.969	1.47	45.0	9495.3	.022
Sex × Age	.988	1.66	15.0	5858.3	.052
Parenting styles × Sex × Age	.977	1.12	45.0	9495.3	.267

a_1 indulgent, a_2 authoritative, a_3 authoritarian, a_4 neglectful. b_1 female, and b_2 male. c_1 adolescents (12–18 years), c_2 young adults (19–35 years), c_3 middle-aged adults (36–59 years), and c_4 older adults (60 years and older).

Table 3. Means and (standard deviations) for age group, univariate *F*-values, and (*f* Cohen) for adjustment (self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (aggression and hostile sexism) criteria.

	Age					
	Adolescents (12-18 years old)	Young adults (19-35 years old)	Middle-aged adults (36-59 years)	Older adults (> 60 years old)	*F*(3, 2126) (*f*)	*p*
Adjustment						
Self-esteem	2.53^{b}	2.57^{a}	$2.59^{a,1}$	$2.55^{a,2}$	9.23	< 0.001
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.114)	
Emotional self-concept	5.41^{b}	5.52^{b}	5.84^{a}	5.96^{a}	10.07	< 0.001
	(1.69)	(1.78)	(1.78)	(1.69)	(0.119)	
Empathy	3.88^{b}	4.02^{a}	3.95^{1}	$3.83^{b,2}$	10.12	< 0.001
	(0.58)	(0.55)	(0.62)	(0.64)	(0.119)	
Maladjustment						
Aggression	1.92^{a}	$1.83^{b,1}$	1.76^{b}	$1.74^{b,2}$	14.75	< 0.001
	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.49)	(0.144)	
Hostile Sexism	2.24^{b}	$2.10^{b,2}$	$2.36^{b,1}$	2.84^{a}	32.44	< 0.001
	(1.08)	(1.09)	(1.14)	(1.23)	(0.214)	

Bonferroni test $\alpha = 0.05$; a > b; 1 > 2.

Table 4. Means and (standard deviations) for sex, univariate *F*-values, and (*f* Cohen) for adjustment (self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (aggression and hostile sexism) criteria.

	Sex			
	Female	Male	*F*(1, 2126) (*f*)	*p*
Adjustment				
Self-esteem	2.55	2.58	13.43	< 0.001
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.079)	
Emotional self-concept	5.27	6.18	147.02	< 0.001
	(1.72)	(1.66)	(0.263)	
Empathy	4.03	3.77	106.90	< 0.001
	(0.57)	(0.60)	(0.224)	
Maladjustment				
Aggression	1.79	1.87	15.24	< 0.001
	(0.47)	(0.52)	(0.085)	
Hostile Sexism	2.09	2.69	134.12	< 0.001
	(1.04)	(1.22)	(0.251)	

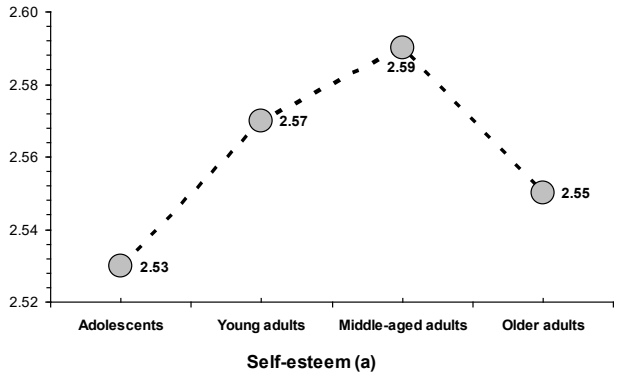
Bonferroni test $\alpha = 0.05$.

Table 5. Means and (standard deviations) of parenting style, univariate *F*-values, and (*f* Cohen) for adjustment (self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and empathy) and maladjustment (aggression and hostile sexism) criteria.

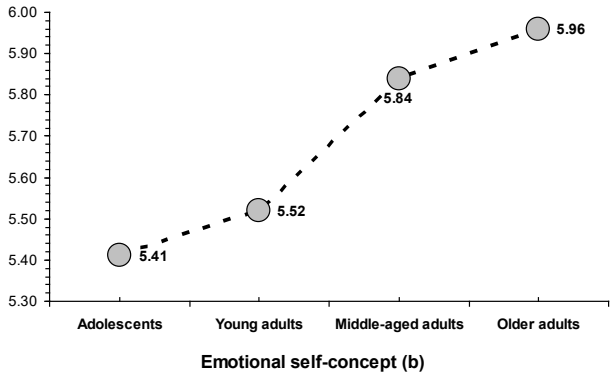
	Parenting style					
	Indulgent	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Neglectful	*F*(3, 2126) (*f*)	*p*
Adjustment						
Self-esteem	2.58[a]	2.58[a]	2.52[b]	2.56[a]	9.50	< 0.001
	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.116)	
Emotional self-concept	5.93[a]	5.59[b]	5.48[b]	5.55[b]	9.10	< 0.001
	(1.78)	(1.80)	(1.70)	(1.70)	(0.113)	
Empathy	4.12[a]	4.05[a]	3.80[b]	3.71[c]	67.41	< 0.001
	(0.49)	(0.51)	(0.61)	(0.65)	(0.308)	
Maladjustment						
Aggression	1.67[c]	1.78[b]	1.92[a]	1.93[a]	36.98	< 0.001
	(0.41)	(0.47)	(0.52)	(0.51)	(0.228)	
Hostile sexism	2.15[b]	2.36[a]	2.46[a]	2.40[a]	9.90	< 0.001
	(1.10)	(1.15)	(1.21)	(1.13)	(0.118)	

Bonferroni test $\alpha = 0.05$; a > b > c.

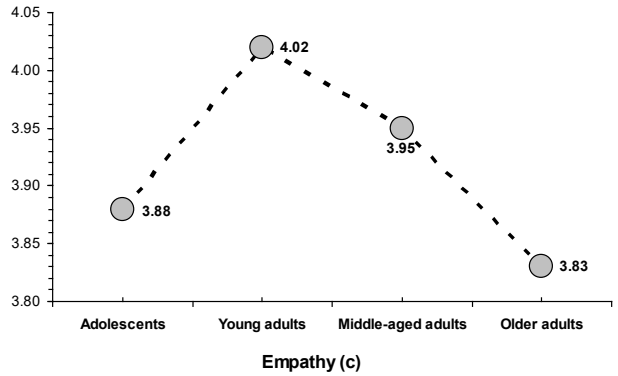
Figure 1. Age profiles in adjustment criteria, self-esteem (a), emotional self-concept (b), and empathy (c), and maladjustment criteria, aggression (d) and hostile sexism (e).



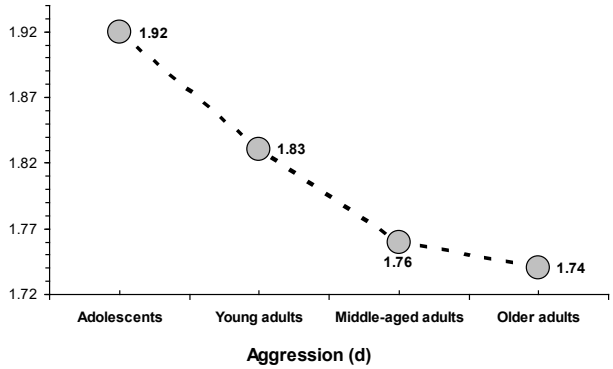
Self-esteem (a)



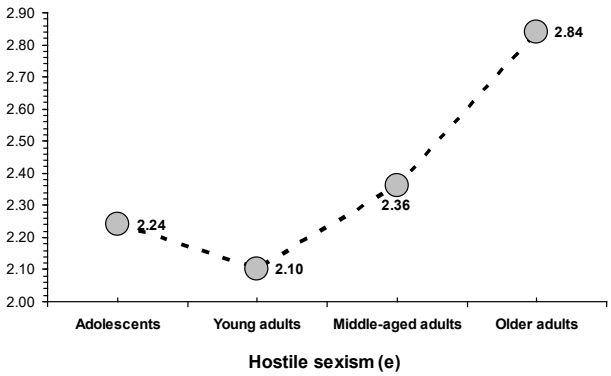
Emotional self-concept (b)



Empathy (c)

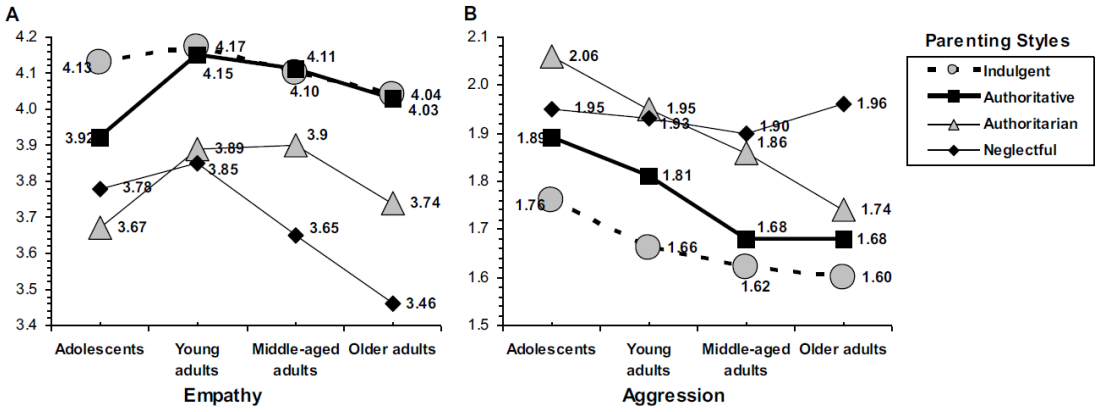


Aggression (d)



Hostile sexism (e)

Figure 2. Interaction of parenting styles by age on the empathy (a), and aggression (b).



Estudio 2: Raising to conformity without strictness: is it achievable?

Segundo artículo

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Abstract

Background: The prevailing belief that parental strictness is optimal for children is not uniformly supported by recent research. Contrary to the traditional notion that strictness is necessary to ensure children's conformity to social norms, contemporary studies question its necessity. This study aims to analyze how two main parenting dimensions, warmth and strictness, are related to the psychosocial adjustment of children.

Method: A sample of 1,224 Spanish adolescents and young adults was examined, divided into two groups: adolescents aged 12–18 years (51.14%) and young adults aged 19–35 years (48.86%). Adolescent participants were recruited from high schools while young adults were recruited from university courses. Children (i.e., adolescent and young adult offspring) responded to an online questionnaire that included all measures: parenting dimensions (warmth and strictness) and children's psychosocial adjustment criteria (emotional self-concept, self-esteem, social competence, and conformity). Power analyses (*a priori* and sensitivity analyses) were applied to ensure sufficient sample sizes to achieve adequate power. Cohen's *d* values from correlation analyses and multiple linear regression analyses were performed. *Beta* confidence intervals were analyzed to relate parenting dimensions, sex and age to self-concept, self-esteem, social competence, and conformity.

Results: The statistical analysis plainly indicated that parental warmth was positively associated with criteria for child psychosocial adjustment, including self-esteem, social competence, and conformity. This relationship was consistent across both adolescents and young adults. Conversely, parental strictness was either negatively related to or not significantly associated with these criteria.

Conclusion: This study clearly suggests that, completely contrary to expectations that strict parenting might be a need component to achieving psychosocial adjustment, parental warmth, rather than strictness, is more effective in promoting children's psychosocial adjustment.

KEYWORDS: parenting dimensions, child adjustment, adolescent children, adult children, conformity values, psychosocial adjustment

1. Introduction

Parenting literature has continuously recognized the importance of socialization for individuals (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Baumrind, 1978; Freud, 1933). During childhood, the primary influence comes from the family environment. As children transition into adolescence, peer influence significantly increases, and in adulthood, relationships with parents shift from being defined by legal requirements (with parents acting as guardians) to becoming more informal (Steinberg, 2001; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby, 1992; Baumrind, 1991a; Lamborn et al., 1991). Rather than being based on parental authority and child obedience, intergenerational relationships during the adult years and even into later life are grounded in parental and filial maturity characterized by aspects such as contact, closeness, and assistance—though they can sometimes be marked by conflict (Padilla-Walker et al., 2014; Padilla-Walker et al., 2012; Aquilino, 2006; Zarit et al., 2005; Belsky et al., 2001). Research has examined the relationship between parental socialization and child functioning, particularly in relation to conformity to social norms and other aspects of adjustment. Overall, the significance of the family has been identified as crucial acting as either a protective or risk factor (Steinberg, 2005; Steinberg and Morris, 2001; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Parental strictness and warmth are conceptualized as key variables that explain the differences observed in terms of conformity and other criteria of psychosocial adjustment (Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Steinberg, 2005; Steinberg et al., 1994; Lamborn et al., 1991). Traditionally, parental strictness was identified as beneficial for preventing maladjustment in children (Clark et al., 2015; Dwairy and Achoui, 2006; Chao, 2001; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Baumrind, 1972). When combined with parental warmth, strictness has been associated with optimal levels of psychosocial adjustment (Lamborn et al., 1991; Eccles et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1989; Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Baumrind, 1978). Nevertheless, recent studies challenge the widely accepted view of the benefits of parental strictness, suggesting that parental warmth alone—without

strictness—may also foster psychosocial adjustment in children and help prevent deviant behavior (Pinquart and Lauk, 2024; Villarejo et al., 2024; Garcia et al., 2020b; Lund and Scheffels, 2019; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Calafat et al., 2014).

Parents try to transmit social norms and values to their children, aiming to prepare them to become competent adults in the society in which they live (Rudy and Grusec, 2001; Bugental and Goodnow, 1998; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby, 1992; Baumrind, 1978). The internalization of social norms is the process by which individuals prioritize conformity to behavioral standards and adjust their actions to align with social standards (Etzioni, 2000; McAdams, 1997). Conformity values, characterized as universal social values, involve restraining actions, tendencies, and impulses that could disrupt or harm others and violate social expectations (Schwartz, 2010; Schwartz, 2007; Schwartz, 2006). Conformity values include respect, self-discipline, politeness, and honoring parents and older adults (Katz-Gerro et al., 2017). By the internalization of social norms, the individuals also become aware of the effects on others when they do not behave in accordance with the norm (Etzioni, 2000; McAdams, 1997). Conformity to social norms can lead to social approval, an external reward that is positively related to happiness (Stavrova et al., 2013; Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004) and behaviors related to helping others (Oarga et al., 2015). Furthermore, conformity to social norms is associated with good adjustment (Oarga et al., 2015; Christensen et al., 2004; Cialdini et al., 1990).

1.1. Evidence based on the two-dimensional parenting framework to assure conformity

The two-dimensional framework identifies two theoretically orthogonal, or unrelated, dimensions: warmth and strictness (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Parental warmth, often referred to as responsiveness (Baumrind, 1982), supportiveness (Garcia and Gracia, 2014), acceptance (Symonds, 1939), or love (Schaefer, 1959), involves showing approval and support to children while using dialog and reasoning to establish rules and limits (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023; Martinez et al., 2017; Baumrind, 1965). In contrast, parental strictness—also known as control (Schaefer, 1959), firm control (Steinberg, 2005), inflexibility (Sears et al., 1957), or hostility (Baldwin, 1955)—refers to the extent to which parents implement discipline, exert control, supervise behavior, enforce rules, and maintain authority over their children (Harma et

al., 2025; Reyes et al., 2023; Baumrind, 1965). Parents can be described in terms of both warmth and strictness. Authoritative parents are characterized as both strict and warm (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby and Martin, 1983). In contrast, authoritarian parents are strict but lack of warmth (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Chao, 2001). Neglectful parents are neither strict nor warm (Lamborn et al., 1991; Maccoby and Martin, 1983), while indulgent parents are not strict, but warm (Palacios et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2021). Furthermore, the two-dimensional framework of theoretical parenting model also helps researchers to define different individual parenting practices based on two main parental axes (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Baumrind, 1965). For example, parenting practices named as psychological control are characterized by strictness and lack of warmth, which are related to authoritarian parents (Barber, 1996; Schaefer, 1959). Parenting practices of behavioral control are characterized by high strictness and high warmth, which are related to authoritative parents (Steinberg, 2005; Silk et al., 2003). A distinctive aspect of behavioral control compared to psychological control has been identified as parenting monitoring explained by children's spontaneous disclosure of information to their parents (authoritative parenting), but not by parents' tracking and scrutiny efforts (authoritarian parenting) (Stattin and Kerr, 2000; Kerr et al., 1999). Parenting practices such as reasoning and dialog to limit the child's incorrect behaviors are positively related to the parental warmth dimension, which is related to authoritative and indulgent parents (Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Grusec and Lytton, 1988).

Research has identified that variations in the degree to which adolescents internalize values and behave in socially desirable ways can be consistently related to parental socialization (Li et al., 2023; Martinez and Garcia, 2007; Knafo, 2003; Grusec and Goodnow, 1994). Research conducted primarily in the United States with European-American families has identified that strictness can help deter the development of deviance, problems, and maladjustment, but only its combination with parental warmth (i.e., authoritative parenting) is associated with the greatest benefits in different components of psychosocial adjustment (Lamborn et al., 1991; Eccles et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1989). The authoritative style has been related to high self-esteem (Barber et al., 1992) and psychosocial maturity, including a strong sense of self-reliance, work orientation, and social competence (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1989). Evidence from studies of European-American families also revealed that adolescents raised by authoritarian parents benefit from strictness—similar to that seen

in authoritative families—and tend to report high obedience and conformity to social standards, with lower rates of school misconduct, drug use, and a positive orientation toward school. It is argued that the low levels of social maladjustment reported by adolescents with authoritative and, to a similar extent, authoritarian parents, may be due to the component of strictness, which acts as a protective factor against externalized problems (Lamborn et al., 1991; Patterson and Stouthamerloeber, 1984). Nevertheless, European-American adolescents with authoritarian parents tend to report more personal problems, such as poor self-conceptions and somatic stress, probably due to the lack of parental warmth that distinguishes authoritarian parenting from authoritative parenting (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991).

1.2. Cultural differences in the optimal parenting

Nevertheless, parenting characterized by strictness and warmth (i.e., authoritative parenting) is not always associated with optimal child adjustment across all cultural contexts (Pinquart and Lauk, 2024; Palacios et al., 2022; Garcia et al., 2019; Chao, 2001; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). According to some cross-cultural research, the use of parental strictness, even without warmth (i.e., authoritarian parenting), is positively associated with child adjustment. For instance, studies conducted the United States with ethnic minority groups, such as Asian-American (Chao, 2001; Chao, 1994) and African-American families (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Baumrind, 1972), as well as evidence from Arab societies (Dwairy and Achoui, 2006; Dwairy et al., 2006), show that strictness without warmth is related to adequate child adjustment in terms of academic achievement (Chao, 2001; Steinberg et al., 1994), social behavior, interpersonal relationships (Dwairy et al., 2006), assertiveness and independence (Baumrind, 1972).

Additionally, recent evidence about parenting in European and Latin American countries has found that parental warmth without strictness is associated with optimal personal and social adjustment in children (Martin-Blesa et al., 2024; Garcia et al., 2020a; Martinez et al., 2020; Calafat et al., 2014; Lila et al., 2007). Adolescents from warm but not strict parents (i.e., the indulgent style) have the same or better adjustment than their peers with parents characterized by warmth accompanied by strictness (i.e., the authoritative style) in different indicators of psychosocial adjustment. The indulgent style has been related to low levels of aggression (Alcaide et al., 2023), hostile sexism

(Alcaide et al., 2023; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022), hostility (Garcia and Serra, 2019) emotional unresponsiveness (Reyes et al., 2023), and delinquency (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022), and high levels of social competence (Villarejo et al., 2024), and social self-concept (Fuentes et al., 2022). High levels of strictness—which distinguish authoritative from indulgent parenting—may be unnecessary and even detrimental, whereas the use of warmth is associated with important benefits for child adjustment (Gallarin et al., 2021; Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018).

Other benefits related to the indulgent parenting style have also been identified in recent research mainly with European and Latin American families (Pinquart and Lauk, 2024; Garcia et al., 2020b; Lund and Scheffels, 2019; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia and Gracia, 2009). Children from warm but not strict families (indulgent parenting) have advantages compared to their counterparts who also come from warm homes but combine warmth with strictness (authoritative parenting) in areas such as emotional self-concept concept (Martin-Blesa et al., 2024), family self-concept (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), and academic-professional self-concept (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023). Additionally, they report low levels of negative self-esteem (Reyes et al., 2023) and negative self-efficacy (Palacios et al., 2022). Despite research with European-American families predicting that low strictness would be a risk factor for child adjustment, these emerging results indicated that negative scores on psychosocial adjustment were associated not with a lack of parental strictness related to indulgent parenting, but rather with both parenting styles that had a lack of warmth—authoritarian and neglectful parenting (Garcia et al., 2024; Fuentes et al., 2022; Palacios et al., 2022).

1.3. Parenting and their possible long-term effects

Despite parental socialization is over when adolescents reach the adult age, not all of them have internalized the social values and behave according to social norms (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Maccoby, 1992; Baumrind, 1978). For example, some research indicates that levels of drug use may not decrease after adolescence; instead, they may remain constant or even increase into young adulthood (Peacock et al., 2018). As adult members of society, adult children, without parental supervision and care, face different challenges, such as professional development and starting a family (Mañez et al., 2024; Buchinger et al., 2022). Nevertheless, parental socialization can have a long-

term impact on adult children for several reasons (Krauss and Orth, 2024; Maccoby, 1992; Freud, 1933).

The years from birth through childhood and adolescence are critical for parental socialization, during which enduring social skills, personality traits, orientations, and values are developed (Krauss and Orth, 2024; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby, 1992). Although children influence their parents, the power asymmetry between adults and children is enormous (Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2025; Nomaguchi and Milkie, 2020). Parents inevitably have a decisive impact on their children, particularly since children do not initiate their own actions to the same extent as their parents do or should do (Steinberg, 2001; Baumrind, 1978). This influence is especially salient in childhood due to the high level of plasticity during this developmental time. However, parents remain crucial during adolescence, a period when adolescents are increasingly influenced by their peers, who help them in their search for autonomy and personal identity (Riquelme et al., 2018; Erikson, 1968). Adolescence is characterized by significant biological and social changes, during which adolescents compare themselves to slightly older peers and recognize differences (Steinberg and Morris, 2001). Some degree of psychosocial vulnerability is often associated with adolescence, including declines in self-concept and self-esteem (Esnaola et al., 2020; Orth et al., 2015), behavioral problems (Tao et al., 2021), low engagement in school (Veiga et al., 2023), or drug use (Calafat et al., 2014).

Despite the significant influence of peers on adolescents—which can have important benefits but may also lead to problems when adolescents adopt deviant standards from their peer group—parental socialization is considered an important protective factor against adolescent vulnerability (Riquelme et al., 2018; Baumrind, 1991b). Conformity values reflect one's orientation toward social standards without causing harm or annoyance to others, acting as a protective factor against vulnerability. Research based on European-American families indicates that parental strictness favors conformity to social norms and offers protection against problems, while parental warmth fosters child individuality and personal well-being (Steinberg et al., 1994; Lamborn et al., 1991). However, current studies suggest that protection against psychosocial vulnerabilities (e.g., alcohol and drug use) is associated with warmth, even in the absence of strictness (Garcia et al., 2020b; Calafat et al., 2015). Partly due to the malleability of childhood as well as the protective or risk role against psychosocial vulnerability of adolescence, parents, as socializing agents, might a unique role—

positive or negative—to help their children become socially competent and well-adjusted adults (Garcia et al., 2024; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby, 1992).

1.4. The present study

Despite developmental theories suggesting that early experiences have long-term effects on adult development, few studies have focused on the consequences of parenting beyond adolescence (Garcia et al., 2018; Stafford et al., 2015). Although the age range defining adolescence has been debated and includes new conceptualizations that even extend it to age 24 (Sawyer et al., 2018), socialization literature recognizes that reaching the adult age represents a fundamental shift in an individual's societal obligations (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Bugental and Goodnow, 1998; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby, 1992; Baumrind, 1978). This includes changes in interactions with teachers, which differ between university and high school (Steinberg, 2024), as well as with family, as parental socialization typically concludes, although parent–child relationships often continue into adulthood and later years (Zarit et al., 2005). Therefore, an important point to consider is whether the relationship between upbringing during parental socialization and current adjustment in adulthood follows a similar or different pattern compared to what is observed during adolescence. The evidence about parenting and its consequences on adult children is limited, particularly in studies that examine both adolescents and young adults simultaneously (Stafford et al., 2015; Hamon and Schrodt, 2012). Another important issue is whether, as classic literature suggests, a combination of parental strictness and warmth is beneficial for children in achieving conformity to social norms and scoring positively on other criteria of psychosocial adjustment (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991). Recent studies, primarily from European and Latin American countries, call into question the benefits of parental strictness; instead, they propose that parental warmth may be sufficient to encourage children to favor optimal conformity to social norms and develop good adaptation (Garcia et al., 2019; Calafat et al., 2014). The present study aimed to examine the relationship between parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and child psychosocial adjustment (i.e., emotional self-concept, self-esteem, social competence, and conformity) during adolescence and young adulthood. Based on recent evidence, it is expected that: (i) parental warmth will be positively associated with children's psychosocial adjustment (i.e., higher emotional self-concept, self-

esteem, social competence, and conformity); and (ii) parental strictness will not be significantly related to children's psychosocial adjustment.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedure

The sample was composed of 1,224 participants from Spain, including 723 women (59.10%) and 501 men (40.90%). Participants were adolescent and adult children ranging from 12 to 35 years (M = 20.03, SD = 4.54), divided into two age groups: 626 adolescents aged 12 to 18 years (M = 16.84, SD = 1.59), of which 372 were women (59.42%); and 598 young adults aged 19 to 35 years (M = 23.61, SD = 3.77), of which 351 were women (58.70%). Age-specific and sex-specific descriptives were as follows: for adolescent women, M = 16.84, SD = 1.59; for adolescent men, M = 16.28, SD = 1.75; for young adult women, M = 23.25, SD = 3.59; and for young adult men, M = 24.13, SD = 3.97 (see Table 1). An *a priori* power analysis was conducted (Garcia et al., 2020a; Garcia et al., 2008; Erdfelder et al., 1996) to determine the sample size necessary to detect a medium-small effect size for Pearson correlation analysis ($R2$ = 0.028, R = 0.1676) with a statistical power of 0.95 ($1 - \beta = 0.95$) and with conventional values for Type I and Type II statistical inference errors ($\alpha = 0.05$; $1 - \beta = 0.95$). The results of the a priori power analysis showed that a minimum sample of 452 participants was necessary (Faul et al., 2009; Garcia et al., 2008; Pérez et al., 1999; Lamborn et al., 1991; Cohen, 1977). The sample size of the present study (i.e., N = 1,224) exceeds the minimum sample size required.

A sensitivity power analysis showed that for the total sample of this study (N = 1,224), with a statistical power of 0.95 ($1 - \beta = 0.95$) and setting the conventional values for Type I and Type II statistical inference errors ($\alpha = 0.05$; $1 - \beta = 0.95$), it is possible to detect a nearly small effect size ($R2$ = 0.0105, R = 0.1026) for Pearson correlation analysis (Fuentes et al., 2022; Garcia and Gracia, 2010; Faul et al., 2009). Additionally, a sensitivity power analysis for multiple linear regression showed that, by establishing the conventional values for Type I and Type II statistical inference errors ($\alpha = 0.05$; $1 - \beta = 0.95$) and considering four independent variables with 1,219 degrees of freedom for error, it is also possible to detect a nearly small effect size ($R2$ = 0.0150, R = 0.1224). G*Power 3.1 software was used to calculate the statistical power (Faul et al., 2009).

Adolescents were recruited from high schools. Specifically, a random selection was conducted based on a list of high schools from the largest metropolitan area in Spain. The heads of the selected high schools were contacted to invite them to participate in the study (only one refused to participate). If a head refused to participate in the research, another high school from the complete list was chosen until the required sample size was achieved (Garcia et al., 2024; Martinez et al., 2021). Young adults were recruited from university courses (Koutra et al., 2022; Manzeske and Stright, 2009) and received course credit for participating. Data were gathered using an online survey with mandatory responses that was hosted on the university website during the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 academic years. The online survey was administered during class time. Participants took about 45–50 min to complete the online survey. The questionnaires were assessed for uncertain answer patterns, such as implausible inconsistencies between negatively and positively formulated answers (Garcia et al., 2011; Tomás and Oliver, 2004).

All participants signed a declaration of agreement, and parental consent was also required for adolescent participants. The research adhered to the principles of the Helsinki Declaration. All participants in the present study met the following requirements: (a) they were Spanish, as were their parents and grandparents; (b) they lived in two-parent nuclear families with a mother or principal female caregiver and a father or principal male caregiver; and (c) they completed the same questionnaires. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they chose to do so (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Garcia et al., 2021). Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed for all respondents. To safeguard data protection measures, identifiers and survey data were kept in separate files, access to directories was secured with a secret code, and sensitive archives were encrypted.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Parental socialization

Parental socialization was assessed through parental warmth and parental strictness. Respondents were not parents, but rather adolescent and adult children. The parental warmth dimension was measured using the 20 items of the Warmth/Affection Scale (WAS) (Rohner, 2005; Rohner, 1990; Rohner et al., 1978). It assesses the degree

to which parents are affectionate, responsive, and involved in their child's affairs. A sample item for the adolescent group is "Make it easy for me to tell them things that are important to me" while for the young adult group is "Made it easy for me to tell them things that were important to me". For young adult children, there is an adult version that contains identical statements in the past tense. The Warmth/Affection Scale has a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 *Almost never is/was true* to 4 *Almost always is/was true*. Higher scores on this scale signify greater parental warmth. The alpha value was 0.941. The parental strictness dimension was measured using the 13 items of the Parental Control Scale (Rohner, 2005; Rohner, 1990; Rohner et al., 1978). It evaluates the degree to which children and adult children perceive that their parents tend to control and monitor their behavior in a strict, imposing, firm, and demanding manner. A sample item for the adolescent group is "Like tell me what to do all the time", while for the young adult group is "Liked to tell me what to do all the time". In the same way, for the Parental Control Scale, there is an adult version for young adult children that contains identical statements in the past tense. The Parental Control Scale has a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 *Almost never is/was true* to 4 *Almost always is/was true*. Higher scores on this scale signify higher parental strictness. The alpha value was 0.887.

Both the Warmth/Affection Scale and the Parental Control Scale have good psychometric properties. They are reliable and valid measures for children to evaluate parental socialization both as it occurs and in the long term, i.e., the extent of warmth and strictness used by their parents during the socialization process and beyond (Villarejo et al., 2024; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023; Rohner and Khaleque, 2003; Khaleque and Rohner, 2002b; Khaleque and Rohner, 2002a). These scales are widely used in studies around the world (Villarejo et al., 2024; Reyes et al., 2023; Gomez and Rohner, 2011). The Warmth/Affection Scale has been utilized in nearly 500 studies over the past five decades globally. A meta-analysis has been published based on 66 studies reviewing international research, including European countries (Khaleque and Rohner, 2012; Rohner and Khaleque, 2005). The Parental Control Scale has been applied in five culturally diverse contexts (Rohner and Khaleque, 2003), and in several European countries (Reyes et al., 2023; Calafat et al., 2014).

2.2.2. Psychosocial adjustment

Emotional self-concept was assessed using the 6 items from the emotional scale of the AF5 Self-Concept Form 5 (Chen et al., 2020; Garcia and Musitu, 1999). This

scale evaluates the broad self-perception of emotional status and the response to specific daily situations that require a certain degree of commitment and involvement (Yepes-Baldó et al., 2025; Fuentes et al., 2020). A sample reverse item is "I get scared easily". The response scale is a 99-point scale, ranging from 1 *Very little agreement* to 99 *Very much agreement*. Higher scores on this scale are associated with a higher emotional self-concept. The alpha value was 0.763.

Self-esteem was assessed using the 10 items of the Rosenberg questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965). This instrument assesses the extent of feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and self-acceptance (Villarejo et al., 2024; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023; Rosenberg, 1965). A sample item is "I take a positive attitude toward myself". It consists of a 4-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 *Strongly disagree* to 4 *Strongly agree*. Higher scores on this scale is associated to greater self-esteem. The alpha value was 0.869.

Social competence was assessed using the 8 items of the social competence scale from the Psychosocial Maturity Questionnaire (CRPM3) (Zacares and Serra, 1996; Greenberger et al., 1975). It evaluates the development of successful interpersonal relationships with peers and adults (Villarejo et al., 2024; Baumrind, 1978; Greenberger et al., 1975). A sample item is "I consider myself affectionate, warm and open in personal relationships". The scale consists of a 5-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 *Very inadequate to describe me* to 5 *Very suitable to describe me*. Higher scores on this scale correspond to greater social competence. The alpha value was 0.828.

Conformity was assessed using the 4 items from Schwartz's Values Inventory (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987). It assesses the extent to which individuals restrain unruly impulses and inhibit actions that might harm others' interests (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987). A sample item is "Respectful (Showing consideration and honor)". The response scale consists of a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 *Not at all important in my life* to 99 *Essential in my life*. Higher scores on this scale represent greater human values of conformity. The alpha value was 0.717.

2.3. Data analysis

The statistical analyses carried out were correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis. Correlation analysis was performed between the two main parenting

dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and four child adjustment criteria (i.e., emotional self-concept, self-esteem, social competence, and conformity). These correlations were measured separately in the two age groups (i.e., adolescent children and young adult children). A multiple linear regression model was performed for each child adjustment criteria. The predicted variables were the four child adjustment criteria (i.e., emotional self-concept, self-esteem, social competence, and conformity) and the predictors were the two main parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness), age and sex.

3. Results

3.1. Relation between parenting and child adjustment

Correlations between parenting and adjustment variables for adolescent and young adult children revealed some statistically significant results ($p < 0.05$; see Table 2). Higher parental warmth was significantly associated with higher social competence ($r = 0.276$, $d = 0.574$; $p < 0.01$) and conformity ($r = 0.298$, $d = 0.624$; $p < 0.01$) in the adolescent sample. Similarly, in the young adult sample, higher parental warmth was significantly associated with higher self-esteem ($r = 0.196$, $d = 0.400$; $p < 0.01$), social competence ($r = 0.237$, $d = 0.488$; $p < 0.01$), and conformity ($r = 0.210$, $d = 0.430$; $p < 0.01$). In contrast, higher parental strictness was significantly associated with lower conformity in the adolescent sample ($r = -0.125$, $d = 0.252$; $p < 0.01$). Higher parental strictness was also significantly associated with lower emotional self-concept in the young adult sample ($r = -0.135$, $d = -0.272$; $p < 0.01$).

Additionally, adolescents with higher emotional self-concept reported higher self-esteem ($r = 0.283$, $d = 0.590$; $p < 0.01$) and social competence ($r = 0.221$, $d = 0.453$; $p < 0.01$). Higher social competence was significantly associated with higher self-esteem ($r = 0.188$, $d = 0.383$; $p < 0.01$) and conformity ($r = 0.225$, $d = 0.462$; $p < 0.01$) in the adolescent sample. Similarly, young adults with higher emotional self-concept showed higher self-esteem ($r = 0.291$, $d = 0.608$; $p < 0.01$) and social competence ($r = 0.233$, $d = 0.479$; $p < 0.01$). Higher social competence was significantly associated with higher self-esteem ($r = 0.270$, $d = 0.561$; $p < 0.01$) and conformity ($r = 0.196$, $d = 0.400$; $p < 0.01$) in the young adult sample.

3.2. Predictions of child adjustment depending on parenting, age, and sex

All four predictive models of the adjustment components were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$; see Table 3). Specifically, multiple linear regression models were performed for each child adjustment component (i.e., emotional self-concept, self-esteem, social competence, and conformity) depending on parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness), age, and sex. Results revealed differences between predictors on child adjustment components as well as variations in magnitude based on effect size (see Figure 1).

The first predictive model was for emotional self-concept. The two parenting dimensions were statistically significant predictors but in different directions. Warmth was a positive predictor ($\beta = 0.057$, $d = 0.114$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that higher parental warmth predicted higher emotional self-concept. Conversely, parental strictness was a negative predictor ($\beta = -0.095$, $d = 0.190$; $p < 0.001$), revealing that increased parental strictness predicted lower emotional self-concept. Age was a significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.064$, $d = 0.132$; $p < 0.05$); young adults showed higher emotional self-concept than adolescents. Sex was also a significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.249$, $d = 0.514$; $p < 0.001$). Males had higher emotional self-concept than females the contribution of sex to emotional self-concept was the largest among the predictors, as there was no overlap of its intervals with those of the other three predictors (see Figure 1, section A).

The second predictive model concerned self-esteem. Parental warmth was a positive predictor of self-esteem ($\beta = 0.134$, $d = 0.265$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that greater parental warmth predicted higher self-esteem. Parental strictness had no significant contribution to self-esteem ($\beta = -0.019$, $d = 0.038$; $p > 0.05$). Regarding age and sex, age was a significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.105$, $d = 0.212$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that young adults had higher than adolescents. Similarly, sex was a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.111$, $d = 0.225$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that men showed higher self-esteem than women. The greatest contribution of the predictors to self-esteem was identified in parental warmth, although it did not differ in magnitude with the other two predictors (age and sex) because the confidence intervals overlapped (see Figure 1, section B).

The third predictive model was for social competence. Among parental predictors, only warmth reached statistical significance ($\beta = 0.261$, $d = 0.522$; $p <$

0.001), while strictness did not (β = 0.051, *d* = 0.103; *p* > 0.05). The greater the parental warmth, the greater the social competence. Sex (β = −0.057, *d* = 0.118; *p* < 0.05), but not age (β = −0.008, *d* = 0.017; *p* > 0.05), was a significant predictor, with females reporting greater social competence than males. Parental warmth showed the greatest contribution to social competence among the statistically significant predictors, as the confidence interval for parental warmth did not overlap with those of the others (see Figure 1, section C).

The fourth predictive model was for conformity. Again, parental warmth was a statistically significant predictor (β = 0.244, *d* = 0.489; *p* < 0.001), indicating that the greater the warmth, the greater the conformity. In contrast, parental strictness had no significant contribution to conformity (β = −0.013, *d* = 0.025; *p* > 0.05). Age was a significant positive predictor (β = 0.079, *d* = 0.162; *p* < 0.01), but sex was not (β = −0.053, *d* = 0.110; *p* > 0.05); young adults showed greater conformity than adolescents. However, parental warmth, as in social competence, had the most significant contribution to conformity, with the confidence interval for warmth not overlapping with that for age (see Figure 1, section D).

4. Discussion

Based on the two-dimensional theoretical framework (Maccoby and Martin, 1983), the present study examines among adolescent and young adult children the relationship between the two main parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and child psychosocial adjustment (captured by emotional self-concept, self-esteem, social competence and conformity). According to the present findings, parental warmth contributed positively to the self-perceptions about emotional regulation (emotional self-concept) and personal worth (self-esteem), as well as social competence and conformity values. Parental strictness contributes neither to social competence and conformity to social norms nor to self-perceptions (in terms of self-esteem) and may even severely harm the emotional component (i.e., emotional self-concept). This pattern was relatively similar for adolescent children as for young adult children.

It is conjectured that the influence of the first authority figure (i.e., parents), which can be either positive or negative, is crucial in conformity to social norms (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002; Baumrind, 1978). Parents can act as either protective or risk factors in transmitting social values to their children, helping them become

competent adults who are psychosocially adjusted to the cultural context in which they live (Grusec and Goodnow, 1994). The present study clearly identifies the relationship between parental warmth and strictness with emotional self-concept, self-esteem, social competence, and conformity values. Conformity values represent a parenting outcome that has been less studied, as previous research has typically focused on the practices that parents employ to encourage conformity to family norms without measuring whether children have internalized norms that represent self-restraint in their own behavior to respect others (Schrodt et al., 2007; Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 1997). In this sense, family goes beyond merely transmitting certain norms for proper home functioning; rather, the family instills particular social values that allow children to conform to social norms and reject deviant standards: the values of conformity. The priority children give to restraining their actions, tendencies, and impulses to avoid disrupting or harming others (i.e., conformity values) is necessary for an adequate functioning in society, enabling individuals to relate correctly with others in any context (e.g., peers, school), including those in which parents cannot be present (Katz-Gerro et al., 2017; Oarga et al., 2015; Christensen et al., 2004). Interestingly, for both adolescent and adult children, protective and risk parenting factors related to conformity values are in line with those of the other components of psychosocial adjustment studied: one social (social competence) and two related to the self (emotional self-concept and self-esteem).

As theories of socialization point out, parental presence cannot be constant and ubiquitous; instead, parents must prepare their children to live in society (Rudy and Grusec, 2001; Bugental and Goodnow, 1998; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby, 1992; Baumrind, 1978). A parent–child relationship characterized by affection, support, and trust—rather than psychological control and surveillance—can provide children with the security and confidence they need to face difficulties and obstacles. Family trust helps children develop self-confidence and conform to social norms, enabling them to manage situations effectively, especially when monitors cannot be present. Consequently, children can internalize social values and interact positively with their peers, avoiding disruptive behaviors within the peer group. Parental socialization is particularly important during adolescence, as adolescent children spend significant amounts of time away from their parents but in the company of their peers. But parenting years are equally crucial in adulthood, where the roots of their previous upbringing will partially explain their success or failure in the adult world. According to

the findings of the present study, which analyzed child adjustment by age, adolescents have more difficulties than young adults in terms of lower emotional self-concept, self-esteem, and conformity values, thereby confirming some previous research (Alcaide et al., 2023; Vecchione et al., 2020; Klein, 1972). However, as the present study revealed, adolescent children who reported more positive scores are those raised in homes characterized by warmth rather than parental strictness, a pattern that was also observed in young adult children, once parental socialization is over.

According to previous parenting studies, mainly from middle-class European-American families, parental warmth would be benefit for child development, but only accompanied with strictness (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991). However, the present study seriously questions the findings on the benefits of parental strictness for improving individuality within social norms, without showing problems and maladjustment (Lamborn et al., 1991; Patterson and Stouthamerloeber, 1984). Social competence and conformity values are both protective factors against deviant behaviors (Bilsky et al., 2011; Schwartz, 2006; Holder, 1958). Although previous classic European-American studies indicate a positive relationship between parental strictness and social competence and conformity values, the current study conducted in Spain showed that parental strictness does not significantly contribute to these areas; instead, parental warmth alone was a protective factor. These results align with more recent research primarily conducted in European and Latin-American countries, identifying parental warmth—without the accompaniment of strictness—as a protective factor against problems such as alcohol (Garcia et al., 2020b), drug use (Villarejo et al., 2024; Riquelme et al., 2018), and even delinquency (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022).

The present results also provide additional evidence regarding the relationship between parenting and emotional regulation. Parental warmth—supported by evidence from European-American studies—has been suggested to benefit emotional regulation, which is common in both indulgent and authoritative parenting styles. However, surprisingly, adolescents from indulgent homes have scored negatively on various emotional outcomes, likely due to issues such as drug use related to a lack of strictness (Steinberg et al., 1994; Lamborn et al., 1991). According to the present findings, parental strictness, a key component of the authoritative style, is associated with emotional regulation problems, particularly in relation to emotional self-concept (higher parental strictness is associated with lower emotional self-concept). Emotional self-concept acts as a protective factor against mental health and well-being problems

(Sticca et al., 2020). Interestingly, this study identifies that to help children develop the self-confidence needed to cope with stressful situations in daily life (i.e., a high emotional self-concept), parents must be affectionate and nurturing (i.e., showing high parental warmth), while avoiding high levels of control and surveillance (i.e., showing low parental strictness). In terms of self-esteem, parental strictness does not contribute significantly; rather, only parental warmth predicts higher self-esteem scores. Moreover, this study suggests that high parental strictness may actually undermine the benefits of high warmth, acting as a risk factor for emotional self-concept and increasing the child's vulnerability to mental health and well-being issues (Sticca et al., 2020).

The present study agrees with the literature indicating that the so-called positive parenting (the authoritative style, defined by high parental strictness and high parental warmth) may not be beneficial in all contexts (Palacios et al., 2022; Garcia et al., 2019; Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Chao, 2001; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Previous cross-cultural research points out that the same parenting style (e.g., authoritative and authoritarian) might have different consequences depending on the culture in which the family lives (Martinez et al., 2021; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Baumrind, 1972). As observed in the present study, recent empirical evidence, primarily from Europe and Latin American countries, suggests that parental warmth serves as a protective factor for child adjustment (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022), while parental strictness does not contribute positively and may even undermine the benefits of warmth in protecting against deviance and maladjustment (Villarejo et al., 2024; Alcaide et al., 2023). Parental warmth could be as effective or even more so than parental strictness, which appears unnecessary for children's healthy development. Warmth acts as a protective factor for academic adjustment (Villarejo et al., 2024) or self-perceptions (Fuentes et al., 2022). Even in cultures such as China where parental strictness, even unnacompanied by parental warmth, was traditionally considered to be related to optimal child adjustment, current studies in that culture show that parental strictness alone is related to poor levels of child psychosocial adjustment (Chao, 2001; Ho, 1986). In contrast, these current studies in the Chinese culture show that parental warmth is the dimension related to optimal child adjustment, alone or accompanied by parental strictness (Chen et al., 2024). Parenting styles and their effects on child adjustment may differ across cultural contexts (Pinquart and Lauk, 2024; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018). The use of parental strictness, although recommended for children from European-American families, may be ineffective or even harmful in European and Latin

American countries, even when accompanied by warmth. This may be partly due to the more egalitarian nature of parent–child relationships, where individuals are more interdependent with the groups to which they belong (e.g., family, nation) and prioritize group goals over their own (i.e., horizontal collectivistic cultures). It is argued that, for this reason, parental strictness may be perceived by children in European and Latin American countries as a deprivation of their freedom, leading to a lack of association between strictness and positive child adjustment (Garcia et al., 2021; Calafat et al., 2014).

Parental warmth creates an environment of acceptance and fosters two-way communication, providing children with the security and confidence to disclose personal information. This approach allows parents to understand different aspects of their children's lives without resorting to intrusive monitoring or imposition. High levels of parental knowledge about their children's lives have been associated with several indicators of positive child adjustment. Research suggests that spontaneous disclosures from children may contribute more significantly to these positive outcomes than parental monitoring with surveillance efforts (Kerr and Stattin, 2000). Evidence indicates that effective parent–child communication is more beneficial than surveillance and psychological control (Stattin and Kerr, 2000). It is possible that when parents promote open communication, develop cordial relationships, show genuine interest in their children's problems, and provide reasoned explanations for the consequences of their actions (through parental warmth), they help children understand and internalize social norms, thereby enabling them to become mature and responsible adults (Garcia et al., 2020b). Furthermore, the reasoning and openness inherent in parental warmth allow children to feel loved and valued within the family (Ertema et al., 2025; Martinez et al., 2021). A child's perception of being loved and valued is shaped by their interpretation of family experiences and is closely related to parental behaviors and attitudes, particularly warmth (Krauss et al., 2020). Several studies have indicated that this perception is positively associated with various aspects of child adjustment, including lower levels of emotional instability, antisocial behavior, psychological distress, and depressive symptoms, as well as higher academic performance (Ertema et al., 2025; Martinez et al., 2021).

The present study has important strengths, but some limitations should be considered. Due to the long duration of time that has elapsed between parental socialization (when the child has been raised by their parents) and the moment when the

child (i.e., offspring) is a young adult, caution is warranted since this study is based on cross-sectional data rather than longitudinal data. However, some longitudinal studies on parental socialization show similar results, parental warmth during the years of parental socialization is positively related to the child's psychosocial adjustment in adulthood (Hintsanen et al., 2019; Eisenberg et al., 2015). Additionally, other classic and recent studies on parenting have used cross-sectional rather than longitudinal designs and have established relationships between parental socialization and child adjustment in both the short term (i.e., adolescence) and the long term (i.e., adulthood). These cross-sectional studies also show results consistent with the present study, showing that parental warmth is positively related to child adjustment, while parental strictness tends to be unnecessary or even detrimental (Koutra et al., 2022; Meldrum et al., 2015). Additionally, it is worth mentioning that no experimental methodology has been used in this study. Furthermore, the age ranges for adolescents and young adults differ significantly, with the adolescent age range being 6 years compared to 16 years for young adults, reflecting the shorter duration of adolescence in contrast to young adulthood. Other family studies have focused on even shorter durations within emerging adulthood (Padilla-Walker et al., 2021; Rote et al., 2020). Although longitudinal studies are more common in adolescents, future studies should continue the follow-up throughout young adulthood, where the evidence is much more limited (Aquilino and Supple, 2001).

The present findings confirm the impact (positive or negative) of the family even beyond adolescence, when the child is a young adult and has to face difficult challenges such as career development or starting a family. Other studies have also identified the influence of parental socialization in the long term, i.e., on the adjustment of adult children, but have not done so by comparing the adjustment of adolescent and adult children at the same time. When the parental socialization process has been completed and the child is an adult, the parents may have had a positive (protective factor) or negative (risk factor) impact on this child's adjustment. This study is conducted based on four adjustment indicators that can be evaluated throughout different stages of life, such as adolescence or adulthood, and also include aspects of the self (self-esteem, emotional self-concept) and the relationship with others (social competence and conformity). Besides, the respondents of the questions about child adjustment and parenting dimensions were the children because children seem to offer more reliable and accurate data than other sources such as parents (Barry et al., 2008; Gonzales et al.,

1996). The present study analyzes, in addition to the existence of a positive or negative relationship between parenting dimensions and child adjustment criteria, the effect size of this relationship. What is most interesting is that, in general, adjusted children (adolescents and young adults) have benefited from parental warmth during the years of parental socialization, not from parental strictness.

5. References

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Table 1. Participants characteristics for age, sex and frequency

	Adolescents		Young adults	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
N	372	254	351	247
Percentage	59.42	40.58	58.70	41.30
M years	16.84	16.28	23.25	24.13
SD years	1.59	1.75	3.59	3.97

Table 2. Correlations between parental dimensions and child adjustment #

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Parental warmth		-.266** † †	.047	.051	.276** † †	.298** † †
2. Parental strictness	-.182** †		-.077	-.025	-.008	-.125** †
3. Emotional self-concept	.043	-.135** †		.283** † †	.221** †	-.078
4. Self-esteem	.196** †	-.076	.291** † †		.188** †	.004
5. Social competence	.237** †	-.009	.233** †	.270** † †		.225** †
6. Conformity	.210** †	.003	-.022	.080	.196** †	

Correlations for adolescents are shown above the diagonal and for young adults below the diagonal
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$
† *d* (0.20, 0.49) small effect size; † † *d* (0.50, 0.79) medium effect size

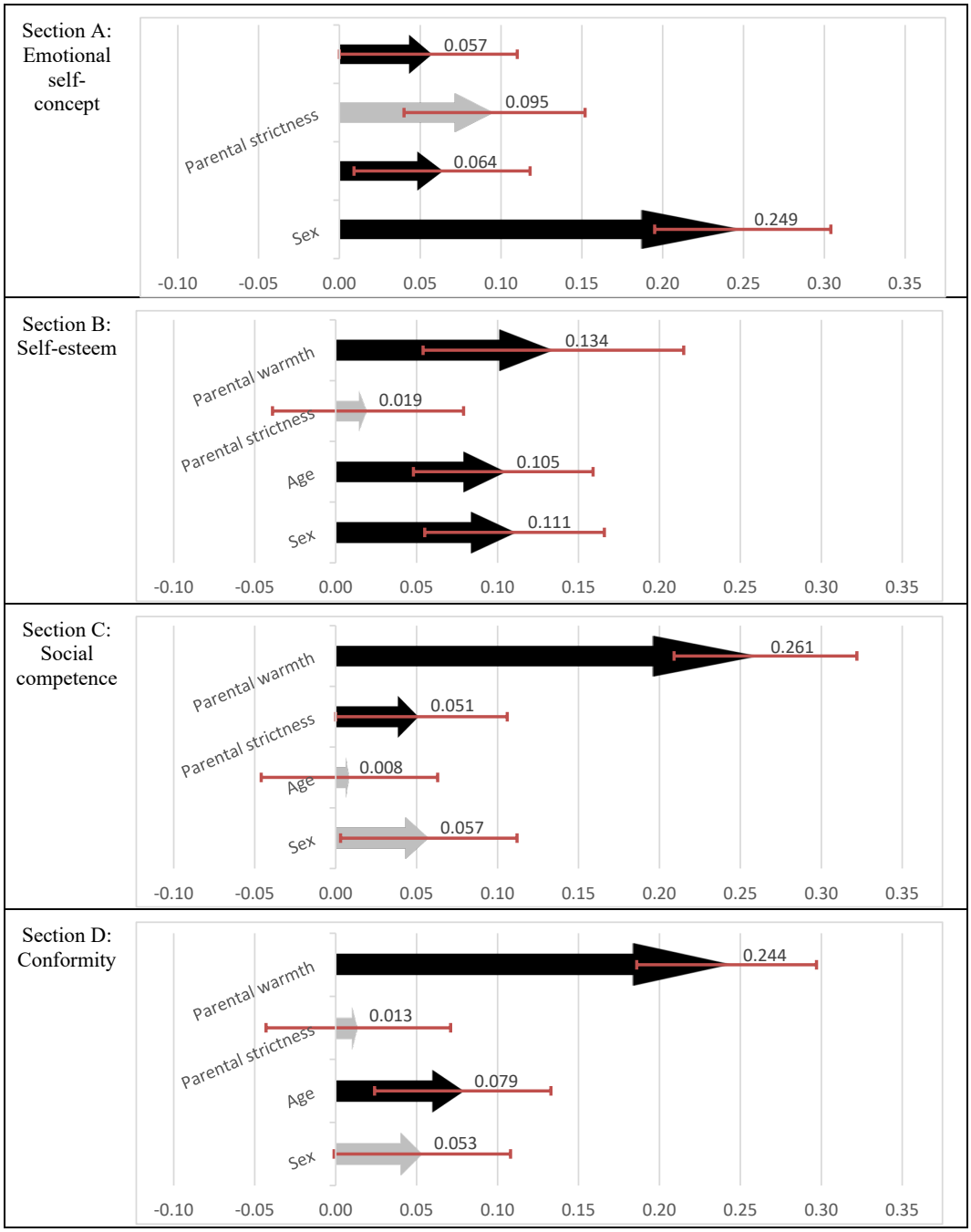
Table 3. Multiple linear regression coefficients between parenting dimensions, sex and age and child adjustment

Dependent variable	Predictors	*B* (95%)	*SE*	*Beta* (95%)	*t*	*d*
	Parental warmth	.009 (.001, .018)	.005	.057 (.001, .110)	1.99*	.114
Emotional self-concept						
	Parental strictness	-.021 (-.034, -.009)	.006	-.095 (-.152, -.040)	-3.32***	.190
R^2_{adj} = .072						
	Age	.222 (.033, .411)	.097	.064 (.009, .118)	2.30*	.132
F(4, 1219) = 24.85***						
	Sex	.881 (.688, 1.074)	.098	.249 (.195, .304)	8.97***	.514 † †
	Parental warmth	.002 (.001, .004)	.001	.134 (.054, .215)	4.62***	.265 †
Self-esteem						
	Parental strictness	.000 (-.002, .001)	.001	-.019 (-.079, .039)	-0.66	.038
R^2_{adj} = .036						
	Age	.041 (.019, .063)	.011	.105 (.048, .159)	3.70***	.212 †
F(4, 1219) = 12.42***						
	Sex	.045 (.022, .067)	.011	.111 (.055, .166)	3.92***	.225 †
	Parental warmth	.016 (.013, .020)	.002	0,261 (.209, .322)	9.11***	.522 † †
Social competence						
	Parental strictness	.004 (.001, .009)	.002	0,051 (.000, .106)	1.80	.103
R^2_{adj} = .069						
	Age	-.011(-.083, .061)	.037	-0,008 (-.063, .046)	-0.29	.017
F(4, 1219) = 23,52***						
	Sex	-077 (-.150, -.004)	.037	-0,057 (-.112, -.003)	-2.06*	.118
	Parental warmth	.033 (.025, .040)	.004	.244 (.186, .297)	8.54***	.489 †
Conformity						
	Parental strictness	-.002 (-.013, .008)	.005	-.013 (-.071, .043)	-0.44	.025
R^2_{adj} = .071						
	Age	.225 (.069, .382)	.080	.079 (.024, .133)	2.83**	.162
F(4, 1219) = 24,37***						
	Sex	-.156 (-.315, .003)	.081	-.053 (-.108, .001)	-1.92	.110

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

† d (0.20, 0.49) small effect size; † † d (0.50, 0.79) medium effect size

Figure 1. Beta value and its confidence interval in the regression analysis.



The sign and order of the lower and upper limits of the beta confidence intervals of the negative predictors have been reversed so that the arrows of all predictors go in the same direction and the differences in the magnitude of each predictor can be clearly seen

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Estudio 3: Raising Generation Z Children in China: Parenting Styles and Psychosocial Adjustment

Tercer artículo

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to analyze the relationship between parenting styles, i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful, and psychosocial adjustment, i.e., aggression, self-concept, and emotional-social competence, among Generation Z (Gen Z) individuals. Method: The participants were 1,417 Chinese individuals, 736 young adults (born between 2003-2005) and 681 adolescents (born between 2006-2008). A multivariate multifactorial design 4 × 2 × 2 × 2 was applied. Dependent variables were various components of child psychosocial adjustment (aggression, five dimensions of self-concept and emotional-social competence). Independent variables were parenting styles, children antisocial tendency during adolescence, sex, and age (adolescent vs. young adult cohorts). Results: Children from authoritarian homes reported higher levels of aggression, and the worst scores in self-concept and emotional-social competence. By contrast, the optimal results were consistently associated with warm parenting (i.e., authoritative and indulgent). Conclusions: Parental warmth was beneficial for Gen Z, including both adolescent and young adult cohorts. The present findings seriously questioned that the Chinese authoritarian parenting, which has often been related to positive outcomes—particularly for educational success—is beneficial for child psychosocial adjustment.

Keywords: Aggression, Parenting styles, Gen Z, Antisocial tendency

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between the way parents interact with their children and child psychosocial adjustment (i.e., aggression, self-concept and emotional-social competence) in Chinese Generation Z (Gen Z) individuals. Parental socialization uses a classical two-dimensional theoretical model (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Schaefer, 1959; Sears et al., 1957). This model has universally been applied (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; F. Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Lamborn et al., 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) and identifies two main dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness). From the combination of these dimensions, four parenting styles are defined: authoritative (high warmth and high strictness), authoritarian (low warmth and high strictness), indulgent (high warmth and low strictness) and neglectful (low warmth and low strictness).

The family serves as the primary social unit for individuals, establishing initial emotional connections with parents (O. F. Garcia et al., 2024; Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2025; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Steinberg, 2001). Parents are responsible for transmitting the values and norms of the society in which their child is raised, facilitating socially desirable behaviors and promoting optimal psychosocial adjustment (Baumrind, 1978; Bowlby, 1969; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby, 1992). The dynamics of parent-child interactions significantly influence a child's psychosocial adjustment, but the cultural context where parental socialization occurs also plays a critical role. Optimal parenting styles might vary across different cultural contexts (F. Garcia et al., 2019; Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2016; Martin-Blesa et al., 2024; Palacios et al., 2022; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Pinquart & Luak, 2024). Evidence indicates that even within a single country, such as the United States, multiple optimal parenting styles coexist, likely due to the cultural and ethnic variations present within American people (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 2001; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Among middle-class individuals in the United States, research suggests that the authoritative parenting style may be considered optimal, whereas children of authoritarian parents may have more problems and lower levels of psychosocial adjustment (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). In contrast, among ethnic minorities in the USA, such as African-American and Chinese-American communities, the authoritarian parenting style might be viewed as more effective (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 2001). In this line, some cross-cultural research also identifies not harmful consequences or even some benefits associated with the

authoritarian parenting style in Arab (Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006; Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, Farah, et al., 2006; Dwairy & Menshar, 2006) and Asian societies (Ho, 1986; Y. Li et al., 2010; Quoss & Zhao, 1995).

Vertical vs. horizontal as well as collectivistic vs. individualistic defines two general cultural traits proposed to explain differences in optimal parenting across various cultural contexts (F. Garcia et al., 2019; Shavitt et al., 2011; Triandis, 2001). Some scholars suggest that, depending on the cultural context of parental socialization, children might perceive their parents' attitudes and behaviors in different ways (Martinez et al., 2021; Pinquart & Lauk, 2024; Triandis, 2001). In vertical collectivistic cultures, such as those found among poor ethnic minority families in the United States and in dangerous neighborhoods, children could perceive parental strictness as a form of care, affection, love, respect, and responsibility. This perception could help a child's adaptation to difficult contexts (Brody & Flor, 1988; F. Garcia & Gracia, 2010; O. F. Garcia et al., 2021; Randolph, 1995). However, in horizontal cultures—that do not prioritize hierarchical relationships—parental strictness tends to be less positively associated with child adjustment. In horizontal collectivistic cultures, where parent-child relationships are more egalitarian and individuals are more interdependent with the groups to which they belong (e.g., family, nation), children give more priority to group goals over their own. As a result, they may perceive parental strictness (e.g., supervision of behavior or imposition of rules) as a deprivation of their freedom, whereas parental warmth could be more beneficial for child adjustment (Calafat et al., 2014; O. F. Garcia et al., 2021).

However, cultural variations in vertical vs. horizontal and collectivistic vs. individualistic have also been identified, which could lead to differences in optimal parenting from one generation to another (Bian et al., 2022; Gorla et al., 2024; Lansford et al., 2021). Interestingly, due to rapid globalization and technological advancement, cultural changes in China have emerged in Gen Z (individuals born after 1995) compared to previous generations (F. Tang, 2019). Moreover, traditional Chinese Eastern culture has undergone significant social changes in recent years. Chinese studies have observed a rise in individualism alongside a decline in collectivism. Children are becoming more autonomous, curious, expressive, and have liberal beliefs while showing less obedience and shyness (F. Tang, 2019; Zhou et al., 2018). Gen Z individuals exhibit different values across various countries; however, the values of

China's Gen Z are quite similar to those of the US Gen Z in certain aspects, such as being more confident, more secularly oriented, self-promoting, and professionally individualistic compared to previous generations (F. Tang, 2019). Parents play a crucial role in their children's education and psychosocial adjustment (X. Lin et al., 2023). Younger Chinese generations show a significant increase in parental warmth, while the pattern of parental strictness remains less clear (Zhou et al., 2018). In contemporary Chinese society, there is a growing trend toward individualism and more egalitarian relationships among family members (i.e., horizontal culture) (Kisbu et al., 2023).

It is possible that having more egalitarian parent-child relationships may render emotional distance and coldness (i.e., authoritarian parenting, strictness, and lack of warmth) detrimental, especially in a context where the hierarchy of the parent's role has become less defined (F. Chen et al., 2024; X. Lin et al., 2023). Recent studies involving Chinese Gen Z children have found that the authoritative parenting style (characterized by high warmth and strictness) is negatively related to behavioral problems (X. Lin et al., 2023) and serves as a protective factor for self-esteem and self-concept, similar to the indulgent parenting style (which emphasizes warmth and non-strictness) (F. Chen et al., 2024). Additional research on Gen Z Chinese individuals indicates that the authoritative parenting style is positively associated with the development of a personal belief in a just world (J. Wang et al., 2024). Furthermore, parental care (a component of parental warmth) appears to be positively related to child adjustment in Chinese Gen Z (Zhu & Zhou, 2022).

The Present Study

The most recent literature on parenting has focused on Western cultures, while fewer studies have examined Eastern cultures. The present study aims to analyze parenting styles and their relationship with child psychosocial adjustment (i.e., aggression, self-concept, and emotional-social competence) in a culture that has undergone significant changes (i.e., China). Additionally, other independent variables analyzed include antisocial tendency during adolescence, sex, and age, in order to test both main and interaction effects.

An important indicator of psychosocial maladjustment is aggression, defined as any behavior directed toward another with the immediate intent to cause harm (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). Recent decades have seen an increase in aggression

(Marciano et al., 2020; Smeets et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2024), posing a public health threat (World Health Organization, 2015), particularly among Gen Z individuals (Boboc & Rosoiu, 2019). A significant body of literature supports the link between aggression and various personal and social adjustment problems, including internalizing and externalizing problems (Card et al., 2008; Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2008; Teng et al., 2015). Aggression correlates with low prosocial behavior, peer acceptance (Card et al., 2008), resilience (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2015), low self-esteem (Donnellan et al., 2005; Teng et al., 2015), and is associated with peer rejection (Morrow et al., 2008) and mental health problems, such as depression (Messer & Gross, 1994; Morrow et al., 2008) and narcissism (Bushman et al., 2009; Du et al., 2022; Kjaervik & Bushman, 2021), as well as drug use (Moore et al., 2008), alcohol consumption (Chermack & Giancola, 1997) and educational failures such as school dropout (Risi et al., 2003). Persistent aggression increases the likelihood of school dropout (Risi et al., 2003).

Antisocial tendency during adolescence has been examined for years, particularly due to its connection to major aggressive behaviors and other forms of maladjustment. Antisocial tendencies, as a form of relative maladjustment during adolescence, might have consequences for adulthood, as well as affect the efficacy of parenting styles. The antisocial tendency may be limited during adolescence (Moffitt, 1993, 2018) or extend into adulthood (Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg, 2001). Adolescents often experience a decline in self-perception of autonomy and identity (Moffitt, 1993), leading to rebellion against parents (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Biological changes and entering high school contribute to dissatisfaction with their maturity compared to slightly older peers (Moffitt, 1993). Some adolescents resort to disruptive behaviors to manage these feelings and assert independence from their parents (Erikson, 1968), which may be seen as normative (Moffitt, 1993). A controversial question is whether problems during adolescence contribute to the development of a healthy and independent identity in adulthood compared to experiencing no significant problems during that period. According to the storm-and-stress hypothesis, an expression of maladjustment and problems (e.g., antisocial tendency) could even help adolescents to achieve a healthy independent identity and good adjustment once they become adults (Arnett, 1999; Erikson, 1968). On the opposite side, studies primarily based on community samples suggest that conflict during adolescence is not normative and may be related to maladaptive parent-child

relationship patterns (Riquelme et al., 2018; Steinberg, 2001). Additionally, some family studies suggest that personal child traits (e.g., antisocial tendency during adolescence) might affect the efficacy of parenting styles (O. F. Garcia et al., 2021; Z. Lin et al., 2023; Reyes et al., 2023; Steinberg et al., 2006).

Self-concept signifies a personal representation of oneself and is positively associated with psychosocial adjustment. Self-concept is the evaluative component of self-perceptions, an individual's construction of his or her personal worth in different interrelated dimensions of self (Ertema et al., 2025; Marsh et al., 1988; Shavelson et al., 1976). Self-concept is positively related to prosocial behavior (Laible et al., 2004), self-esteem, conscientiousness, agreeableness, internal state awareness, and negative with neuroticism (Campbell et al., 1996). Self-concept is also positively associated with social acceptance and scholastic competence and negatively related to socio-emotional behavior (Hotulainen & Lappalainen, 2011). In the same line, emotional-social competence represents other components of psychosocial adjustment. Emotional-social competence is an individual's ability to identify and manage their emotions, comprehend and empathize with others, harmonious relationships through perspective-taking, and make responsible decisions to resolve problems effectively through cooperation with others (Greenberg et al., 2003). The learning of emotional-social competence is very significant in adolescence because it is a critical period in which emotional habits are formed (Kang et al., 2022). Emotional-social competence plays an important role in the prevention of aggression and depression (Kang et al., 2022) and is positively related to academic achievement (Elias & Haynes, 2008).

Research shows that parents significantly influence their child's aggression levels (Delfini et al., 1976; O. F. Garcia et al., 2021; Patterson, 1980; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). They can enhance or impair a child's self-concept and ability to perceive themselves positively (F. Chen et al., 2024; Fuentes et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2021). Parents also contribute to the development of emotional-social competencies in children (Y. Tang et al., 2023). This study examines parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, or neglectful) and their positive or negative relationship with aggression, self-concept, and emotional-social competence in a rapidly changing culture like China. Additionally, this study also tests possible variations in the relationship between parenting and child psychosocial adjustment depending on antisocial tendency

during adolescence (low vs. high), sex (females vs. males), and Gen-Z groups (young adult vs. adolescent cohorts).

Method

Participants and Procedure

The participants were 1,417 children from a large metropolitan urban area in southwest China, with about 4.6 million inhabitants. Participants were Gen Z individuals born between 2003 and 2008, with an age range from 16 to 21 years (M = 18.41, SD = 1.48), comprising 735 females (51.9%) and 682 males (48.1%). The participants were from two cohorts: 736 (51.9%) were from young adult cohort born between 2003 and 2005, with 53.5% females, ranging from 19 to 21 years old (M = 19.63, SD = 0.74), and 681 (48.1%) were from the adolescent cohort born between 2006 and 2008, with 50.1% females, ranging from 16 to 18 years old (M = 17.10, SD = 0.79). A priori power analysis indicated that a minimum sample of 1,200 participants was required to identify a low effect size, f = 0.12. The sensitivity power analysis showed that with the study sample size of N = 1,417 ($\alpha = \beta = .05$), statistically significant differences with a slightly lower small effect size (f = 0.11) can be detected in the main effects among the four parenting styles (Cohen, 1977; J. F. Garcia et al., 2008).

The sample was collected during the first three months of 2024. All participants a) were Chinese, as were their parents and four grandparents, b) did not have any mental disorders, and c) signed the informed consent form, which, in the case of adolescents, was also signed by their parents (Arrojo et al., 2024). This study follows ethic principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. The directors of the high schools invited to participate were contacted, and if they declined the invitation the next high school on the list was contacted until the required sample size was reached. Young adults were recruited from university students. All participants completed an online questionnaire that included items for all study variables, and all items were compulsory. The anonymity of the responses was guaranteed. To ensure data safety, identifiers of participants and investigation data were collected in separate files, sensitive data archives were protected, and passwords for web directories were stored in an encryption-protected system (Alcaide et al., 2025; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). The questionnaires included in the online survey were checked for suspicious response patterns, such as implausible inconsistencies between answers to positively and negatively worded items (J. F. Garcia

et al., 2011; Tomás & Oliver, 2004). Measures were administered in Chinese language, following forward- and back-translation and meetings to resolve any item-by- item ambiguities in linguistic or semantic content (Deater-Deckard et al., 2011; Erkut, 2010). This approach helps prevent errors during translation and ensures conceptual equivalence (Brislin, 1970; F. Chen et al., 2020; F. Garcia et al., 2013; Gomez & Suhaimi, 2015).

Measures

Parenting Styles

Parental warmth was assessed with the 20 items of Warmth/ Affection Scale (WAS) of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (F. Chen et al., 2024; Rohner et al., 1978a). The WAS assesses the extent to which the child perceives parental love and involvement in his or her life (e.g., "Make me feel proud when I do well"). Cronbach's alpha value was .921. Parental strictness was assessed with the 13 items of the Parental Control Scale (PCS) of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (Rohner et al., 1978a). The PCS assesses how children perceive their parents' behavior as strict and controlling towards their own behavior (e.g., "Want to control whatever I do"). Cronbach's alpha value was .921. Adolescents answered the items of the scales written in the present tense, while young adults responded to items in the past tense. Both WAS and PCS provide reliable measures in young adults (Ali et al., 2015). Participants answered for both parental measures on a 4-point scale (1 = *almost never true*, 4 = *almost always true*). Higher scores on WAS and PCS represent higher parental warmth and parental strictness. The two scales show good psychometric properties and has been used in many countries (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002, 2012), such as Australia, the United States (Gomez & Rohner, 2011), Spain (O. F. Garcia et al., 2018), Italy (Senese et al., 2016) or China (Deater-Deckard et al., 2011). The two scales also show the same factorial structure across cultures (Khaleque & Ali, 2017).

Parenting styles were defined using the median dichotomization procedure, which involves splitting the sample into categories of parental warmth and strictness based on the 50th percentile (median), while controlling for sex and age to analyze both parenting variables simultaneously (Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022; Lamborn et al., 1991; Martinez et al., 2012). Authoritarian families scored below the 50th percentile on warmth but above it on strictness. Authoritative families scored above the 50th

percentile on both dimensions. Indulgent families scored above the 50th percentile in warmth but below it in strictness. Finally, neglectful families scored below the 50th percentile on both dimensions.

Antisocial Tendency

Antisocial tendency during adolescence was assessed with the 13 items of the Youth Deviance Scale (Gold, 1970). This measure includes school misconduct (i.e., the rate of recurrence of behaviors such as cheating, copying homework, and tardiness) (e.g., "Misrepresenting a classmate in homework or assignments on purpose) and delinquency (i.e., the frequency of behaviors such as carrying a weapon, stealing, and getting into trouble with the police) (e.g., "Spoiling or damaging trees or plants in public spaces). Participants responded on a 3-point scale (1 = *never*, 3 = *two or more*). The low antisocial tendency condition consisted of participants who scored below the median (50th percentile), whereas the high antisocial tendency condition included those who scored above the median (50th percentile). The medians were calculated controlling for sex and age. Higher scores on this scale indicate a greater antisocial tendency during adolescence in terms of school misconduct and delinquency. The Cronbach's alpha value was .863, indicating good reliability. This scale has been utilized in various parenting studies evaluating antisocial tendency in adolescents (F. Garcia & Gracia, 2009; O. F. Garcia et al., 2021; Lamborn et al., 1991), including China (C. S. Chen et al., 1998). The scale has good reliability indices (C. S. Chen et al., 1998; F. Garcia & Gracia, 2009; O. F. Garcia et al., 2021).

Aggression

Aggression was assessed using the six items of the Hostility/ Aggression Scale from the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Rohner, 1978b). This scale evaluates acts intended to harm something or someone (another person or oneself), which may manifest as verbal (e.g., arguing, humiliation, insults) or physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, scratching) behaviors (e.g., "I get so mad I throw or break things"). Participants responded on a 4-point scale (1 = *almost never true*, 4 = *almost always true*). Higher scores on this scale represent higher aggression. Cronbach's alpha value was .686. This scale has been widely used in parenting studies across the world to assess child aggression in both adolescents and adults (Ali et al., 2019; Khaleque & Ali, 2017),

including China (Li, 2014). The scale has good psychometric properties (Rohner, 1978b).

Self-concept

Self-concept was assessed using five dimensions (i.e., academic, social, emotional, family, and physical), with each dimension measured by six items from the AF5 Multidimensional Self-concept Scale (F. Chen et al., 2020; F. Garcia & Musitu, 1999). The academic subscale evaluates one's perception of performance as a student or worker (e.g., "I am a hard worker [good student]"). The social subscale assesses one's perceived performance in interpersonal relationships (e.g., "It is difficult for me to make friends", reversed item). The emotional subscale evaluates one's perception of their emotional state and performance in response to specific situations (e.g., "When an older person says something to me, I become very nervous", reversed item). The family subscale assesses one's perceived contribution, integration, and involvement in the family (e.g., "My family would help me with any type of problem"). The physical subscale evaluates one's perception of appearance and physical condition (e.g., "I like the way I look"). Participants responded on a 99-point scale (1 = *complete disagreement,* 99 = *complete agreement*). Higher scores on AF5 subscales represent a higher self-concept. Cronbach's alpha values for the AF5 subscales were as follows: academic, .873, social, .774, emotional, .728, family, .749, and physical, .666. The AF5 questionnaire has been widely used to assess self-concept in adolescents (O. F. Garcia & Serra, 2019; Queiroz et al., 2020) and adults (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023; Villarejo et al., 2020). Exploratory (F. Garcia & Musitu, 1999) and confirmatory analyses (Murgui et al., 2012; Tomás & Oliver, 2004) have tested the five-dimensional structure in different cultural contexts, such as Spain (Murgui et al., 2012), Portugal (J. F. Garcia et al., 2006), Brazil (F. Garcia et al., 2018), Chile (J. F. Garcia et al., 2011), Mexico (Ertema et al., 2025), United States (F. Garcia et al., 2013), and China (F. Chen et al., 2020).

Emotional-social Competence

Emotional-social competence was assessed using the Psychosocial Maturity Questionnaire (Greenberger et al., 1975), which includes the eight-item nervousness scale and the eight-item social competence scale. The nervousness scale evaluates emotional stability related to anxiety and tension (e.g., "I rarely feel relaxed"). The

social competence scale evaluates the ability to develop positive interpersonal relationships with peers and adults (e.g., "I am persistent, tenacious; I finish what I start"). Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *disagree strongly,* 5 = *agree strongly*). Higher scores on the nervousness scale indicate greater anxiety, while higher scores on the social competence scale reflect better social skills. Cronbach's alpha values for these subscales were .724 for nervousness and .824 for social competence. This questionnaire is widely used in parenting literature to assess children's emotional and social competencies in Eastern (Palacios et al., 2022; Villarejo et al., 2024) and Asian Societies (Mantzicopoulos & Oh-Hwang, 1998; W. Wang, 1991; Xia, 2025) and has shown good psychometric properties (O. F. Garcia et al., 2021; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022; Greenberger et al., 1975).

Data Analysis

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with a 4 × 2 × 2 × 2 design was conducted to examine aggression, self-concept (including academic, social, emotional, family, and physical aspects), and emotional-social competence (measured through nervousness and social competence). The independent variables were parenting styles (authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful), antisocial tendency during adolescence (low vs. high), sex (females vs. males), and age groups (young adult vs. adolescent cohorts). Following the MANOVA, a univariate *F*-analysis was applied to the sources of variation that were statistically significant. Additionally, Bonferroni post-hoc tests were performed on these significant sources to identify differences across all possible pairs of means.

Results

Parenting Style Groups and Antisocial Tendency groups

Participants were distributed based on parenting styles: 371 (26.2%) authoritative, 312 (22.0%) indulgent, 356 (25.1%) authoritarian, and 378 (26.7%) neglectful. Authoritative (M = 68.95, SD = 5.30) and indulgent parenting (M = 68.67, SD = 5.28) scored higher on warmth than authoritarian (M = 52.47, SD = 8.26) and neglectful parenting (M = 52.62, SD = 6.93). Additionally, authoritative (M = 38.07, SD = 2.41) and authoritarian parenting (M = 38.75, SD = 3.32) obtained higher scores on strictness than indulgent (M = 31.46, SD = 3.08) and neglectful parenting (M = 30.89,

SD = 3.56). Participants were also categorized according to antisocial tendency, with 720 (50.8%) in the low antisocial tendency condition and 697 (49.2%) in the high antisocial tendency condition. The low antisocial tendency condition had a lower antisocial tendency (*M* = 1.01, *SD* = 0.30) than the high antisocial tendency condition (*M* = 1.32, *SD* = 0.34).

Multivariate Analyses

Multivariate analyses found statistically significant differences in the main effects of parenting style, $\Lambda = .734$, $F(24, 3997.2) = 18.75$, $p < .001$, antisocial tendency, $\Lambda = .928$, $F(8, 1378.0) = 13.29$, $p < .001$, sex, $\Lambda = .939$, $F(8, 1378.0) = 11.11$, $p < .001$, and age, $\Lambda = .976$, $F(8, 1378.0) = 4.16$, $p < .001$. Significant interaction effects were also found for parenting style by age, $\Lambda = .971$, $F(24, 3997.2) = 1.71$, $p < .05$, and parenting style by sex and age, $\Lambda = .966$, $F(24, 3997.2) = 2.00$, $p < .01$ (see Table 1).

Main Effects

Parenting Differences

Children raised in warm homes (i.e., authoritative and indulgent) showed less aggression than their peers from households characterized by low warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful), $p < .001$ (see Table 2). Similarly, children from authoritative and indulgent families had higher academic, social, emotional, family, and physical self-concept than those raised by parents characterized by low warmth, $p < .001$. Additionally, children from both authoritative and indulgent homes showed better emotional-social competence (lower nervousness and higher social competence) compared to those raised by authoritarian and neglectful parents, $p < .001$. Although, in general, differences were found between warmth and non-warmth parenting, differences in family self-concept and social competence were identified among those styles associated with low scores (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). Children from authoritarian families scored more negatively in family self-concept than their peers from neglectful families, while the most negative scores in social competence were associated with the neglectful style.

Antisocial Tendency, Sex and Age-related Differences

Children with antisocial tendency had higher levels of aggression and nervousness, but lower academic, social, emotional, and family self-concept than their

peers without antisocial tendency, $p < .05$ (see Table 3). Sex-related differences indicated that males had higher levels of aggression and both emotional and physical self-concept than females. Conversely, females scored higher on social and family self-concept as well as on nervousness than males, $p < .05$. Age-related differences showed that adolescent cohort obtained higher levels of social self-concept and lower physical self-concept than young adult cohort, $p < .05$.

Interaction Effects

A significant interaction between parenting styles, age, and sex was found for aggression, $F(3, 1385) = 4.58$, $p < .01$ (see Figure 1, panels a and b). Sex-differentiated profiles for parenting styles were observed in aggression, males generally reported higher levels than females according to the main effects. Additionally, warm parenting styles were associated with lower child aggression. For females for both young adult and adolescent cohorts, those with authoritarian parents had the highest levels of aggression, whereas daughters with indulgent parents reported the lowest levels. For the young adult cohort, only daughters from non-warm families (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful) scored high in aggression, while young adult daughters with authoritative and indulgent parents reported similar and lower levels of aggression. In contrast, within the adolescent cohort, daughters with authoritative parents scored more negatively than those from neglectful families (see Figure 1, panel a). Males reported the highest levels of aggression in both young adult and adolescent cohorts when raised by non-warm parents (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). In contrast, those with warm parents (i.e., indulgent and authoritative) showed the lowest levels of aggression. While sons with authoritarian parents reported the highest aggression within young adult cohort, their counterparts from neglectful parents reported the greatest aggression in the adolescent cohort. Similarly, sons from indulgent parents reported the lowest aggression in the young adult cohort, whereas the lowest aggression in the adult cohort was found among sons from authoritative parents (see Figure 1, panel b).

A significant interaction between parenting style by age was also found in self-concept in the academic, $F(3, 1385) = 3.01$, $p < .05$, emotional, $F(3, 1385) = 3.91$, $p < .01$, and family, $F(3, 1385) = 3.91$, $p < 0.01$, dimensions (Figure 2 panels a, b, and c). (i) Cohort-differentiated profiles were observed in academic self-concept. Overall, children from homes characterized by high warmth (i.e., indulgent and authoritative) tended to

report better academic self-concept compared to those from homes low in warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). Among the warm parenting styles, both indulgent and authoritative parenting were associated with similarly high academic self-concept scores in the young adult cohort. By contrast, within the adolescent cohort, authoritative parenting was related to higher academic self-concept scores than indulgent parenting. Conversely, both authoritarian and neglectful parenting were associated with poor academic self-concept; however, this pattern was slightly less pronounced in the young adult cohort than in the adolescent cohort. The worst academic self-concept in the young adult cohort corresponded to neglectful parenting, whereas in the adolescent cohort, the lowest scores were associated with authoritarian parenting (Figure 2, panel a). (ii) A similar profile related to benefits of warm parenting was also found in emotional self-concept. Children with indulgent parents consistently reported the highest emotional self-concept, followed closely by those from authoritative homes. Conversely, in parenting styles characterized by low warmth, children from authoritarian households had the lowest emotional self-concept, followed by those from neglectful homes. Interaction effects showed that the degree of difference in this common profile is less pronounced in the young adult cohort than in the adolescent cohort (Figure 2, panel b). (iii) Again, in family self-concept, children from warm homes (i.e., authoritative and indulgent) always had a better family self-concept than their counterparts from non-warm households (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). In parenting styles characterized by warmth, indulgent parenting was associated with higher family self-concept than authoritative parenting within the young adult cohort; however, family self-concept scores related to authoritative and indulgent parenting were both positive and similar within the adolescent cohort. In parenting styles without warmth, children from authoritarian homes always had the lowest emotional self-concept, followed by those with neglectful parents. However, the differences were smaller in young adult cohort than in adolescent cohort (Figure 2, panel c).

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the role of parents in promoting or hindering psychosocial adjustment in children. It focuses on aggression, five dimensions of self-concept, and emotional-social competence depending on parenting styles, antisocial tendency during adolescence, sex, and age. The study analyzes two cohorts of Chinese Gen Z, young adults (born between 2003 and 2005) and adolescents (born between

2006 and 2008), tested in the first quarter of 2024. The influence of parents was assessed using a two-dimensional theoretical model (warmth and strictness) which includes four parenting styles: authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful. Contrary to classical parenting literature, this study found that authoritarian parents not only fail to protect against aggressiveness in their children but may elevate the risk of such behaviors. This finding is relatively unexpected, given that traditional parenting theories have long suggested that authoritarian parenting is related to benefits for preventing external problematic behaviors as violence (Baumrind, 1991; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991; Simons & Sutton, 2021). This assumption has also been supported by perspectives in ethnic minorities in the United States (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 1994, 2001; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996) and hierarchical collectivistic cultures, including China (W. Chen, 2015; Ho, 1986; Leung et al., 1998; Y. Li et al., 2010). Self-concept findings indicate that children raised by authoritarian parents reported low scores across all dimensions—academic, social, emotional, family, and physical. The family self-concept of children from authoritarian homes was even lower than that of their peers from neglectful households. Furthermore, in terms of emotional-social competence, these children experienced heightened nervousness and reduced social skills, performing worse than their peers raised in neglectful homes. Although some previous research supported that authoritarian parenting in the People's Republic of China (PRC) was related to benefits such as academic achievement, less depression, and family cohesion (W. Chen, 2015; Ho, 1986; Leung et al., 1998; Y. Li et al., 2010), present findings identify serious damages related to authoritarian parenting, at least on two Gen Z cohorts.

The classic two-dimensional model (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; F. Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Lamborn et al., 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) provides valuable insights into the emerging trends in the relationship between parenting styles and children's aggression. The present study shows that warm parenting acts as a protective factor, while non-warm parenting serves as a risk factor. This contradicts classical parenting literature, which posits that strict parenting is protective and non-strict parenting is risky (Baumrind, 1983; Lewis, 1981; Steinberg et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Children raised by warm parents—those identified as authoritative (high warmth and high strictness) and indulgent (high warmth and low strictness)— reported the lowest levels of aggression. This trend extends to other psychosocial adjustment

criteria; children raised in warm environments had the highest levels of self-concept and showed better emotional-social competence, characterized by low nervousness and high social skills. The results of this study align, at least in part, with emerging research mainly conducted in Europe that questions classical views about the limitations of indulgent parenting. These emergent studies indicate that warmth alone could be sufficient for reducing aggression levels (Alcaide et al., 2023), decreasing child-to-parent violence (Gamez-Guadix et al., 2012; Suarez-Relinque et al., 2019), lowering proactive school violence (Moreno-Ruiz et al., 2018), diminishing delinquency (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022), reducing drug use (O. F. Garcia et al., 2020; Villarejo et al., 2024) and achieving conformity to social standards (Alcaide et al., 2025). Additionally, the present study conducted in a non-Western society (i.e., China) has also shown that high warmth is crucial for fostering optimal levels of self-concept and emotional-social competence (Fuentes et al., 2015; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023; Palacios et al., 2022; Villarejo et al., 2024). It is possible that the rapid acceleration of social change, described as experiencing more changes in a short period of time (e.g., a decade) than in a much broader timeframe (e.g., a century), may partly explain the radical shifts observed in the Chinese society, describing the transition of authoritarian parenting from a protective factor to a risk factor. It appears that children raised in Gen Z by authoritarian parents have serious psychosocial maladjustment, unlike those from previous generations.

Although the findings of this study do not differentiate between authoritative and indulgent parenting styles regarding their effectiveness in promoting child psychosocial adjustment—at least in terms of main effects—interaction effects reveal significant insights, particularly concerning sex and age. Overall, a relatively consistent pattern was observed between parenting styles and aggression; however, nuances emerged among daughters and sons in the two Gen Z cohorts. Daughters benefit particularly from the combination of high warmth and low strictness (i.e., the indulgent style). These benefits are evident not only in the young adult cohort, who are pursuing university studies, but also in the adolescent cohort, despite the fact that the latter presumably have lower maturity and is still under the supervision of their parents and teachers. For sons, indulgent parenting is beneficial similarly to daughters, but only within the young adult cohort. In the adolescent cohort, authoritative parenting was associated with less aggression than indulgent parenting. Interestingly, warm parenting

(i.e., both authoritative and indulgent styles) is related to a mixed profile of benefits and costs within the adolescent cohort, with differences particularly pronounced among females. While adolescent sons benefit more from authoritative parenting, for adolescent daughters indulgent parenting acts as a protective factor, whereas authoritative parenting is a risk factor similarly negative as authoritarian parenting, which is associated with the highest aggression levels. These findings about parenting styles and aggression may be partly attributed to the greater psychosocial maturity of the young adult cohort compared to the adolescent cohort (Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000), suggesting that young adults may not benefit from the strict component once parental socialization ends. Additionally, results revealed that females tend to score lower in aggression than males, substantiating previous evidence indicating more externalized problems such as aggression among males (Björkqvist & Österman, 2018; Martino et al., 2008). Adolescent females mature psychosocially earlier than males (Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000) and may not gain from strictness. This partially might explain that the strict component of authoritative parenting may be necessary for adolescent sons, but not for adolescent daughters, who appear to benefit in terms of low aggression only with indulgent parenting.

Other important findings included the interaction between parenting style and age on self-concept, particularly in the academic, emotional, and family dimensions. Overall, children from warm homes (i.e., authoritative and indulgent) tended to report the highest levels of self-concept, while children from authoritarian homes scored the lowest, even lower than their peers from neglectful homes. The academic self-concept not only reflects self-perceptions of being a good student but is also associated with academic outcomes, such as grade point average (Preckel et al., 2013; Reynolds, 1988). Within the young adult cohort, parental warmth was beneficial for academic self-concept, while parental strictness was unnecessary; young adults with indulgent parents did not differ in their academic self-concept from young adults with authoritative parents. In contrast, a different pattern was found within the adolescent cohort: strictness combined with parental warmth was necessary to achieve the highest academic self-concept, as authoritative parenting was associated with more positive scores than indulgent parenting. This may be partly because university students generally possess greater abilities and capacities than their high school peers (Mañez et al., 2024; Veiga et al., 2021; Wentzel et al., 2019). The Gen Z young adult cohort seems

to experience the most positive outcomes regarding self-concept when their parents adopt a warm approach, without significant benefits linked to strictness, likely because they are no longer under their parents' supervision and care, indicating that parental socialization has concluded. By contrast, high school can be particularly stressful, especially within the competitive and demanding Chinese education system, where Gen Z adolescents face significant pressure by parents and teachers to secure limited access to university degrees (Liu et al., 2021). This adolescent cohort may also require parental warmth alongside supervision and demands. Additionally, contrary to classical assertions regarding the benefits of Chinese authoritarian parenting for academic success (Chao, 2001; Leung et al., 1998), the present findings caution that parental strictness without warmth (i.e., authoritarian parenting) could negatively impact academic self-concept in both adolescent and young adult cohorts.

A relatively different profile compared to what was observed in academic self-concept was found in emotional self-concept, and even more remarkably in family self-concept. In terms of emotional self-concept, both the young adult and adolescent cohorts showed that high parental warmth was associated with greater emotional self-concept than low parental warmth; the highest scores were related to indulgent parenting, while the lowest scores were associated with authoritarian parenting, with authoritative and neglectful styles occupying a middle position. Furthermore, differences in emotional self-concept related to parenting styles were less pronounced in the young adult cohort than in the adolescent generation, suggesting that family influence could be more critical during adolescence and play a key role in self-regulation during this more difficult developmental stage.

The present study also clarifies how parenting can either harm or enhance family self-concept. Previous research has shown that a child's perception of their involvement in the home (i.e., family self-concept) is related to positive adjustment, such as reduced antisocial behavior, emotional instability, psychological distress, and depressive symptoms (Ertema et al., 2025; Martinez et al., 2021). Only indulgent parenting was consistently associated with the highest scores on family self-concept in both the young adult and adolescent cohorts. The findings indicate that, when comparing families based on warmth, parental strictness even when combined with warmth (i.e., the authoritative style) was detrimental within the young adult cohort (indulgent parenting was related to more positive scores than authoritative parenting), but not for the adolescent cohort

(where no significant differences were found between indulgent and authoritative parenting). These results suggest that warmth is beneficial for feeling loved and valued by the family; however, unlike the adolescent cohort, parental strictness that characterized authoritative parenting could be particularly detrimental in the young adult cohort, probably due in part to the consequences of no longer being under parental supervision and care, given that socialization time has concluded. Moreover, the results further indicate that authoritarian parenting was associated with significant problems related to family functioning; individuals from both adolescent and young adult cohorts raised by authoritarian parents reported even lower levels of family self-concept than their peers from neglectful homes, particularly within the adolescent cohort. These findings contradict traditional views asserting that children from authoritarian homes in cultures such as China feel like valued members of their families (Ho, 1986).

Extending previous evidence, results from the present study showed that children with an antisocial tendency during adolescence, in comparison to their peers without antisocial tendency, reported higher levels of aggression (Coie & Dodge, 1998), lower levels of academic, social, emotional, and family self-concept (O. F. Garcia et al., 2021; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; van de Groep et al., 2023; Vázquez-Figueiredo et al., 2013) and higher levels of nervousness (O. F. Garcia et al., 2021). Results from this study have important consequences for the contemporary society. Based on a community sample of Chinese Gen Z comparing two cohorts, adolescent and young adults, this study found that antisocial tendency during adolescence was related to maladjustment, regardless of age (the interaction effect between antisocial tendencies and age was not statistically significant). Therefore, the findings contradict the notion that adolescent antisocial behavior is relatively normative and beneficial to a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood, as suggested by the classic “storm and stress” hypothesis (Arnett, 1999; Blos, 1967; Erikson, 1968). Instead, present findings align with previous research indicating that problems during adolescence do not contribute positively to the development of a healthy adult identity (O. F. Garcia et al., 2021; Steinberg, 2001), thereby extending evidence to the less-studied context of Chinese society. Furthermore, the results indicated that the effectiveness of parenting style did not change based on antisocial tendency during adolescence (the interaction was not significant). These results partially confirm previous studies in which no greater

effectiveness of a parenting style was observed based on the child individual characteristics (Reyes et al., 2023; Steinberg et al., 2006).

The present results have significant theoretical and practical implications, including for educational and mental health policies. Despite significant cultural variations between Western (e.g., the United States and Europe) and Eastern societies, the two-dimensional theoretical model of four parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) can be extended to Chinese families to consistently identify relationships between parenting styles and child psychosocial adjustment— although there might also be some generational nuances in this relationship. Families, through parental socialization, can be protective or risk factors for children. Public policies should caution against the risks associated with authoritarian parenting (i.e., strictness without warmth), not only due to its highly detrimental effects on children's health but also because it could be highly harmful to academic adjustment, even though the authoritarian style has historically been associated with potential benefits, particularly in terms of academic success. Instead, public policies should promote family interventions that foster affection, involvement, trust, and open dialogue between parents and children. Importantly, even children with adjustment problems — who typically report more difficulties than their peers—can greatly benefit from a warm-based parenting style. Interventions aimed at parents of adolescents with antisocial tendency should focus on ensuring that children feel loved and protected, using dialogue and reasoning to address their maladjustment.

Additionally, consistent with previous research, this study identified differences in child adjustment based on sex and age. Males had higher levels of emotional and physical self-concept, as well as aggression, compared to females (Alcaide et al., 2023; F. Chen et al., 2024; DeBlassie & Healy, 1970; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; Villarejo et al., 2024). In contrast, females had higher levels of social and family self-concept and greater nervousness than males (Bahrami & Yousefi, 2011; Palacios et al., 2022; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1975; Stumpf et al., 2015). Furthermore, adolescent cohort had higher levels of social self-concept and lower levels of physical self-concept than young adults (F. Chen et al., 2024).

The present study has several limitations. It was conducted with an urban sample from a specific region in China; thus, its findings may not be applicable to extensive

rural areas within the country. In the transformations occurring within Chinese society, there appears to be a decrease in collectivism—though it remains significant in some areas, particularly in the emphasis on academic success—and a shift towards more egalitarian relationships (Bian et al., 2022). However, it is possible that these social transformations have a greater impact on urban areas compared to rural ones in China. Therefore, future studies should also examine whether rural children benefit from warm parenting (i.e., authoritative and indulgent) or if more traditional and hierarchical parent-child relationships lead them to benefit from an authoritarian style (i.e., strictness without warmth). Likewise, future studies with Chinese families (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) should continue exploring the relationship between parenting and child adjustment depending on other sociocultural factors such as the parents' socioeconomic status or family structure. The study explores the relationship between parenting styles with aggression, self-concept, and emotional-social competence during the parental socialization process (i.e., within the adolescent cohort) and after its conclusion (i.e., within the young adult cohort), using a cross-sectional design rather than a longitudinal approach. Since this is not an experimental study, causal relationships cannot be established between parenting styles and child aggression, nor can they be determined between the antisocial tendency during adolescence and the aggression experienced in adulthood. Future longitudinal studies should add evidence by analyzing over time the relationship between parenting and child psychosocial adjustment, not only during adolescence but especially when the child reaches the adult age and is no longer under the supervision and care of their parents.

Conclusion

Parents play a crucial role in their children's psychosocial adjustment by preventing deviant behaviors and influencing self-concept and emotional-social competence. Some previous research in collectivistic cultures such as China suggested that authoritarian parenting (i.e., strictness without warmth) was beneficial for achieving good adjustment, especially in school (Ho, 1986). However, the present study shows that in contemporary Chinese culture, authoritarian parenting is a risk factor for aggression, and problems of self-concept —including academically— and emotional-social competence. In contrast, parenting styles characterized by warmth (i.e.,

authoritative and indulgent) were associated with low aggression, high self-concept and social-emotional competence.

When analyzing parenting and adjustment by sex and Gen Z cohorts, nuances emerge that require further research to clarify the socialization consequences for sons and daughters. The adolescent cohort deserves special attention. In terms of academic self-concept, Chinese adolescent sons benefit more from the authoritative style like their European-American peers from USA (Lamborn et al., 1991), while daughters benefit from the indulgent style, similar to their counterparts from Europe (F. Garcia & Gracia, 2009). Additionally, the authoritative style supports academic success in terms of academic self-concept among Chinese adolescents, in line with findings from European-American families of USA (Steinberg et al., 1994), while indulgent parenting is particularly effective for emotional and family self-concept in Chinese adolescents, consistent with recent evidence from Europe (F. Garcia et al., 2019).

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Table 1. Multivariate Factorial MANOVA 4 × 2 × 2 × 2 for Aggression, Self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical), and Emotional-Social Competence (nervousness and social competence).

Source	Λ	*F*	$df_{between}$	df_{error}	*p*
(A) Parenting style	.734	18.75	24.0	3997.2	<.001
(B) Antisocial tendency during adolescence	.928	13.29	8.0	1378.0	<.001
(C) Sex	.939	11.11	8.0	1378.0	<.001
(D) Age	.976	4.16	8.0	1378.0	<.001
A × B	.983	0.98	24.0	3997.2	.494
A × C	.983	0.99	24.0	3997.2	.476
A × D	.971	1.71	24.0	3997.2	.017
B × C	.994	1.10	8.0	1378.0	.361
B × D	.992	1.36	8.0	1378.0	.208
C × D	.997	0.51	8.0	1378.0	.851
A × B × C	.983	1.01	24.0	3997.2	.446
A × B × D	.982	1.06	24.0	3997.2	.389
A × C × D	.966	2.00	24.0	3997.2	.003
B × C × D	.989	1.87	8.0	1378.0	.060
A × B × C × D	.986	0.80	24.0	3997.2	.747

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Mean and Standard Deviations (in parenthesis), for Parenting Style and Univariate *F*-values for Aggression, Self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical), and Emotional-Social Competence (nervousness and social competence)

Children outcomes	Authoritative	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Neglectful	*F*(3, 1385)
Aggression	2.09[2] (0.58)	2.06[2] (0.58)	2.27[1] (0.53)	2.21[1] (0.54)	8.41***
Self-concept					
Academic	7.24[1] (1.84)	6.96[1] (1.97)	6.21[2] (1.89)	6.13[2] (1.88)	24.10***
Social	7.72[1] (1.62)	7.71[1] (1.64)	6.94[2] (1.79)	6.74[2] (1.64)	29.24***
Emotional	5.48[1] (1.98)	5.58[1] (1.92)	4.75[2] (1.81)	5.02[2] (1.79)	13.85***
Family	8.32[1] (1.25)	8.49[1] (1.23)	6.74[3] (1.74)	7.10[2] (1.67)	108.01***
Physical	6.48[1] (1.72)	6.42[1] (1.69)	5.78[2] (1.72)	5.61[2] (1.69)	21.48***
Emotional-social competence					
Nervousness	2.65[2] (0.68)	2.55[2] (0.63)	2.91[1] (0.55)	2.83[1] (0.53)	21.69***
Social competence	3.73[1] (0.67)	3.75[1] (0.62)	3.36[2] (0.66)	3.23[3] (0.62)	53.76***

*** $p < 0.001$; 1 > 2 > 3

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics, Mean and Standard Deviations (in parenthesis), for Antisocial Tendency, Sex and Age, and Univariate *F*-values for Aggression, Self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical), and Emotional-Social Competence (nervousness and social competence)

Children outcomes	Low antisocial	High antisocial	*F*(1, 1385)	Females	Males	*F*(1, 1385)	Young adults (2003-2005)	Adolescents (2006-2008)	*F*(1, 1385)
Aggression	2.06 (0.57)	2.28 (0.54)	55.35***	2.10 (0.55)	2.23 (0.57)	25.26***	2.17 (0.55)	2.17 (0.58)	0.10
Self-concept									
Academic	7.01 (1.90)	6.23 (1.93)	39.64***	6.69 (1.94)	6.55 (1.97)	3.49	6.59 (1.79)	6.66 (2.11)	0.01
Social	7.45 (1.67)	7.07 (1.77)	6.17*	7.37 (1.73)	7.14 (1.72)	8.16**	7.16 (1.67)	7.36 (1.78)	3.91*
Emotional	5.38 (1.89)	5.00 (1.89)	5.83*	5.02 (1.93)	5.38 (1.86)	9.13**	5.11 (1.79)	5.29 (2.01)	2.00
Family	7.86 (1.61)	7.40 (1.71)	13.88***	7.75 (1.72)	7.51 (1.62)	12.26***	7.59 (1.56)	7.69 (1.79)	0.38
Physical	6.15 (1.79)	5.96 (1.70)	0.23	5.96 (1.69)	6.16 (1.80)	4.56*	6.16 (1.66)	5.95 (1.85)	6.64*
Emotional-social competence									
Nervousness	2.67 (0.63)	2.81 (0.59)	12.33***	2.79 (0.13)	2.70 (0.61)	8.95**	2.76 (0.57)	2.72 (0.63)	1.47
Social competence	3.54 (0.68)	3.47 (0.68)	0.19	3.53 (0.68)	3.48 (0.68)	1.18	3.54 (0.64)	3.47 (0.71)	3.83

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

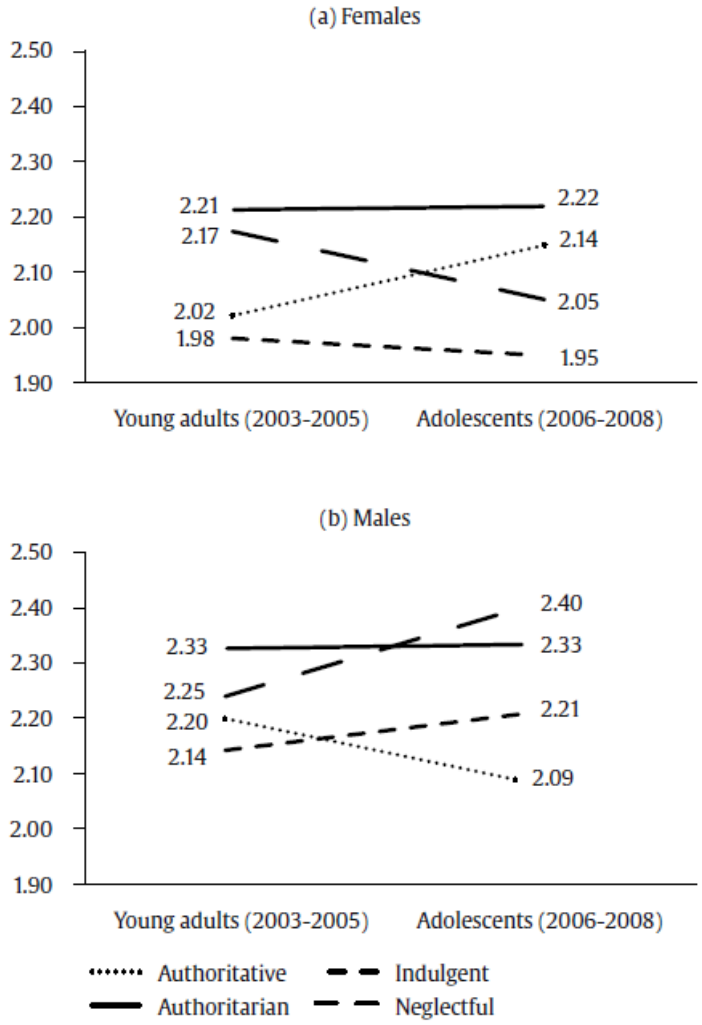

Figure 1. Interaction between Age, Parenting Style, and Sex for Aggression, (a) Females, and (b) Males.

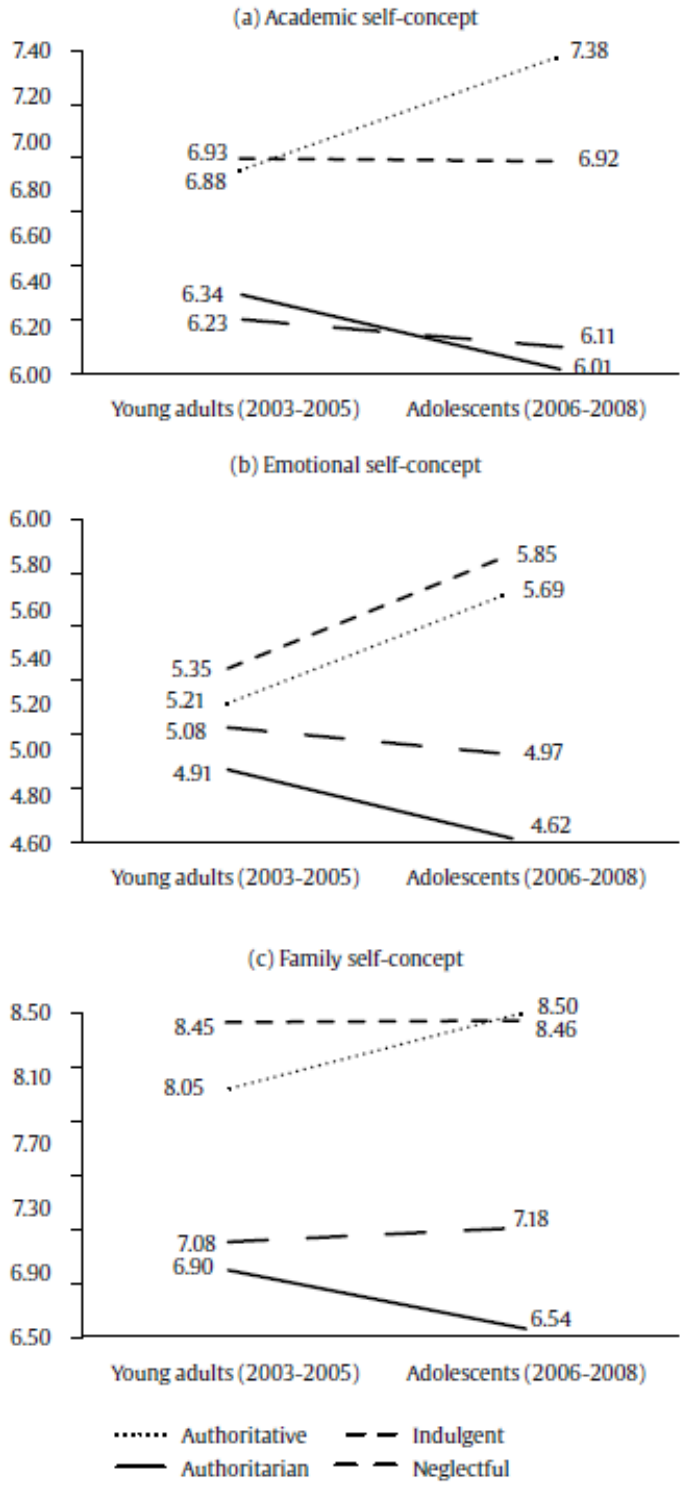

Figure 2. Interactions between Age and Parenting Style for (a) Academic, (b) Emotional, and (c) Family Self-concept.

CAPÍTULO III: DISCUSIÓN Y CONCLUSIONES GENERALES

La presente tesis doctoral incluye tres estudios que se enmarcan en el modelo teórico bidimensional (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), uno desde la perspectiva de las dos dimensiones (Estudio 2) y otros desde la perspectiva de los cuatro estilos (Estudio 1 y Estudio 3). Todos comparten el objetivo común de identificar qué estilo o qué dimensión parental es más eficaz para conseguir un ajuste psicosocial óptimo del hijo y si el estilo parental óptimo cambia ante situaciones como la edad del hijo (adolescencia, cuando la socialización parental aún está teniendo lugar; y adultez, cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado), el contexto cultural en la que se lleva a cabo la socialización parental, o la tendencia antisocial que presente el hijo durante la adolescencia.

En general, los resultados obtenidos en la presente tesis mostraron que los estilos parentales basados en el afecto (autorizativo e indulgente) se relacionaron positivamente con el ajuste psicosocial del hijo mientras que los estilos no basados en afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con el desajuste. Este patrón de relación en general se mantiene en las culturas actuales española y china cuando está teniendo lugar la socialización parental (adolescencia) y cuando la socialización parental ha finalizado (juventud adulta), coincidiendo con los resultados de otros estudios que analizan a la vez la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo mientras el hijo es adolescente y cuando el hijo es adulto (Chen et al., 2024; Palacios et al., 2022; Villarejo et al., 2024).

Otros estudios han examinado las consecuencias de la socialización parental en los hijos. Sin embargo, algunos de los ellos sólo se centraron en el tiempo en que se está produciendo la socialización (adolescencia) basándose en un modelo de tres estilos parentales que incluía los estilos autorizativo, autoritario y permisivo que planteaba Baumrind (Baumrind, 1966; Buri, 1991; Turner et al., 2009; Waterman & Lefkowitz, 2017). Otros estudios se centraron únicamente en el impacto de la socialización parental a largo plazo con hijos adultos (Candel, 2022; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a), sin compararlo con lo que ocurría en la adolescencia, cuando la socialización parental aún está en proceso. Otra limitación de estudios anteriores ha sido el uso de diferentes criterios de ajuste para hijos adultos y adolescentes, según la edad (Stafford et al., 2016). Por lo

tanto, es importante examinar tanto a los hijos que están siendo socializados por sus padres (por ejemplo, los adolescentes) como a los hijos cuyo proceso de socialización parental ha terminado (por ejemplo, los jóvenes adultos) con un modelo teóricamente consolidado basado en las dos dimensiones principales (afecto e imposición). No obstante, estas investigaciones que se llevaron a cabo con algunas diferencias respecto a los estudios de la presente tesis doctoral, tales como utilizando otros modelos teóricos, centrándose en el ajuste del hijo en la edad adulta pero no en la adolescencia o viceversa, o utilizando diferentes criterios de ajuste en la adolescencia que en la adultez, muestran resultados congruentes con los estudios de la presente tesis doctoral: el afecto es beneficioso mientras que la imposición tiene un papel dudoso para el ajuste psicosocial del hijo (Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a; Stafford et al., 2016; Waterman & Lefkowitz, 2017).

La familia es el primer agente de socialización (Garcia et al., 2022) y por ello los padres tienen principal responsabilidad de socializar a sus hijos (Baumrind, 1978a; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022) para que estos adquieran los valores y normas de la sociedad en la que viven y se conviertan en adultos competentes (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Cuando se habla de adultos competentes se refiere a que eviten comportamientos desviados de las normas sociales que perturben a sí mismo o a otras personas, crear y mantener vínculos estrechos con otras personas en los que exista una relación cercana y de intimidad, poder formar una familia, conseguir independencia económica para el sustento económico propio y de la familia y poder educar a los hijos (Maccoby, 1992).

En esta línea, la buena adaptación de un adulto depende, entre otros aspectos, de la socialización que haya recibido de sus padres durante la infancia y la adolescencia. La infancia es un periodo maleable de la vida en el que se establecen habilidades sociales, atributos de personalidad y valores sociales duraderos. La adolescencia es un periodo de vulnerabilidad psicosocial caracterizado por pobres autopercepciones, la necesidad de separación de los padres para buscar la propia identidad y conseguir su autonomía y también por dedicar mucho más tiempo al grupo de iguales, los cuales pueden seguir normas sociales desviadas (Buchanan et al., 2023; Moffitt, 1993; Steinberg, 2001). Por ello, es de especial importancia que, en este periodo de vulnerabilidad, los padres lleven a cabo las conductas y actitudes adecuadas para favorecer que su hijo internalice las

normas sociales y se convierta en un adulto competente y psicosocialmente ajustado a la sociedad en la que vive (Maccoby, 1992). Por tanto, los padres pueden ser factores protectores o de riesgo para el ajuste psicosocial del hijo a corto plazo en la adolescencia y a largo plazo en la adultez. Los padres no pueden actuar como policías omnipresentes que vigilan a sus hijos para que se comporten adecuadamente; de hecho, las dimensiones o estilos parentales deben conducir a los hijos a un cierto grado de autorregulación respecto a las normas sociales, es decir, a la interiorización de la norma (Maccoby, 1992). La interiorización de las normas sociales es el proceso mediante el cual un individuo obtiene una prioridad por la conformidad con una norma de comportamiento y ajusta su forma de comportarse a las normas sociales (Etzioni, 2000; McAdams, 1997). Durante el proceso de socialización parental, los padres intentan transmitir normas y valores sociales a sus hijos para que éstos adopten un funcionamiento adecuado dentro de la sociedad en la que viven sin que el hijo pierda su independencia e individualidad (Maccoby, 1992; Rudy & Grusec, 2001; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022).

Además, los resultados de la presente tesis doctoral mostraron que, en los contextos culturales actuales (por ejemplo, tanto la cultura occidental española como la oriental china), los estilos parentales basados en afecto (autorizativo e indulgente) fueron beneficiosos para un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo mientras que los estilos parentales no basados en afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron negativamente con el ajuste del hijo. Principalmente en la cultura española, el estilo parental indulgente se relacionó con un ajuste psicosocial del hijo igual o mejor que el autorizativo. En este sentido, incluso con afecto, la imposición podría ser innecesaria y hasta perjudicial.

En el caso de la cultura china, a diferencia de lo que se consideraba tradicionalmente de que el estilo parental óptimo era el autoritario, los resultados de la presente investigación mostraron que, en la cultura reciente china el estilo autoritario se relacionó con las peores puntuaciones en criterios de ajuste psicosocial del hijo. En la cultura tradicional china, caracterizada por relaciones asimétricas entre padres e hijos (vertical) y por ser colectivista, los hijos podrían percibir la imposición parental como una forma de cuidado, afecto, amor, respeto y responsabilidad parental y esto podría favorecer la adaptación del hijo a contextos difíciles (Garcia & Gracia, 2010; Garcia et al., 2021). En cambio, fue el afecto parental el que se asocia con un buen ajuste del hijo en la cultura china reciente, coincidiendo con la evidencia empírica más reciente llevada

a cabo en países europeos (como España) y latinoamericanos, pero no coincide con los estudios clásicos de EEUU. En este sentido, en la cultura china reciente se encontró una relativa igualdad de la eficacia de los estilos parentales indulgente y autorizativo en los efectos principales, pero con algunos matices si se tiene en cuenta el sexo y la edad de los hijos. En la juventud adulta, tanto para hijos como para hijas, los estilos parentales asociados con mayor agresión fueron el autoritario seguido de negligente, mientras que los estilos basados en afecto se relacionaron con los menores niveles de agresión (sobre todo el indulgente). Sin embargo, en la adolescencia, el estilo parental autoritario seguía asociándose con los niveles más altos de agresión en hijas, pero no en hijos. Los hijos adolescentes socializados con el estilo negligente obtuvieron la mayor agresión. También en la adolescencia, el estilo parental que se asoció con los menores niveles de agresión fue diferente para hijos (autorizativo) que para hijas (indulgente). En el caso del autoconcepto académico, cuando los hijos son jóvenes adultos, los estilos autorizativo e indulgente fueron los más beneficiosos por igual, mientras que cuando los hijos eran adolescentes, el estilo autorizativo se relacionó con mayor autoconcepto emocional que el indulgente. En el caso del autoconcepto emocional, tanto en la juventud adulta como en la adolescencia, el estilo indulgente fue más beneficioso que el autorizativo, y, los estilos no basados en afecto (sobre todo el autoritario) se relacionaron con el menor autoconcepto emocional. No obstante, en la adolescencia, los beneficios del afecto fueron mayores que en la juventud adulta, lo que se manifestó en que las puntuaciones en autoconcepto emocional de hijos socializados con el mismo tipo de padres (indulgentes y autorizativos) fuera más alta en hijos adolescentes que en hijos jóvenes adultos. En el caso del autoconcepto familiar, cuando los hijos eran jóvenes adultos, el estilo indulgente se relacionaba con las mejores puntuaciones, seguido del estilo autorizativo, mientras que cuando los hijos eran adolescentes, los estilos autorizativo e indulgente fueron los más beneficiosos por igual.

Los resultados de la presente tesis sobre la socialización parental óptima en familias europeas (españolas) y asiáticas (chinas) confirmaron la relevancia del contexto cultural y que no siempre el estilo parental autorizativo (caracterizado por afecto y severidad) es el estilo parental universalmente positivo. La evidencia empírica clásica llevada a cabo con familias de clase media europeoamericanas de EEUU defendía que la combinación de afecto e imposición (estilo parental autorizativo) era la que se relacionaba

con el ajuste óptimo del hijo ya que el afecto favorecía las autopercepciones y que la imposición favorecía el ajuste a las normas sociales. De este modo, según los estudios clásicos, el afecto sin imposición (estilo parental indulgente) se relacionaría con buenas autopercepciones, pero con el incumplimiento de las normas sociales y el desajuste social (Baumrind, 1991b; Lamborn et al., 1991). Sin embargo, los resultados de la presente tesis doctoral mostraron que el afecto sin ir acompañado de imposición se relacionaba con un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo en la adolescencia y en la adultez, tanto en autopercepciones como en el cumplimiento de las normas sociales en las culturas recientes española y china. Estos resultados fueron congruentes con otros estudios recientes realizados en España (Garcia et al., 2024; Palacios et al., 2022; Villarejo et al., 2024) y en China (Chen et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2023). Los beneficios del afecto parental para el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en estudios recientes en España y China podrían explicarse por la cultura en la que tiene lugar la socialización parental. La cultura española es colectivista (se da prioridad a las metas del grupo frente a las metas individuales) y horizontal (las relaciones entre padres e hijos son más igualitarias). La cultura china tradicional ha experimentado cambios sociales recientemente que han dado lugar a una tendencia creciente de individualismo y a unas relaciones más igualitarias entre padres e hijos (cultura horizontal). En culturas horizontales en las que las relaciones entre padres e hijos son más igualitarias (por ejemplo, las culturas recientes española y china), la imposición parental sin afecto se percibe por los hijos como un intento de privación de su libertad por parte de sus padres, lo que da lugar a desajuste psicosocial del hijo, mientras que el afecto parental se relaciona con un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2021). Una relación padre-hijo caracterizada por el afecto, el apoyo y la confianza -en lugar del control y la vigilancia del comportamiento- puede proporcionar a los hijos la seguridad y la confianza que necesitan para afrontar las dificultades y los obstáculos, además de favorecer la conformidad con las normas sociales (Alcaide et al., 2025b).

Por otro lado, la tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia se relacionó con mayor desajuste psicosocial del hijo (Estudio 3). Además, la tendencia antisocial durante la adolescencia no cambió la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo, independientemente del grado de la tendencia antisocial del hijo, el estilo parental óptimo se caracterizó por altos niveles de afecto (autorizativo e indulgente).

Incluso para los hijos con alto grado de tendencia antisocial, el afecto se asoció con un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo en términos de buenas autopercepciones y una buena competencia socio-emocional, además de niveles bajos de agresión.

Otros estudios examinaron si la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo se veía afectada por características del hijo como, por ejemplo, el grado de autoeficacia (Reyes et al., 2023), de agresividad (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020) en hijos adolescentes en España o con delincuentes juveniles de grandes áreas metropolitanas de EEUU (Steinberg et al., 2006). Estos resultados concluyeron que, en España, la autoeficacia no modulaba la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial de hijo, el estilo parental indulgente se relaciona con el ajuste óptimo del hijo. Sin embargo, también en España, la agresividad del hijo sí intervenía en dicha relación. Los estilos parentales basados en afecto (autorizativo e indulgente) se relacionan con los mejores niveles de ajuste del hijo, presentando un ajuste similar los hijos con agresividad alta que los hijos con agresividad baja. Sin embargo, los estilos parentales no caracterizados por afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con niveles bajos de ajuste del hijo. Cuando el hijo presentó agresividad alta y fue socializado con un estilo parental no basado en afecto (autoritario y negligente), los niveles de ajuste fueron mucho menores que cuando el hijo presentó agresividad baja a pesar de haber sido socializado con el mismo estilo parental no basado en afecto. Por otro lado, en grandes áreas metropolitanas de EEUU, el estilo parental óptimo fue el autorizativo para hijos delincuentes juveniles (Steinberg et al., 2006), al igual que en muestras comunitarias (Lamborn et al., 1991). No obstante, estos estudios solamente se centraron en la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo cuando la socialización parental está teniendo lugar (adolescencia) pero no analizaron el impacto a largo plazo de la socialización parental (en la adultez). Además, a diferencia de la presente tesis doctoral, estos estudios no analizaron si la tendencia antisocial del hijo durante la adolescencia podía modificar la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial de hijos adolescentes y adultos de una cultura oriental reciente de China.

Los estudios que se realizaron en la presente tesis doctoral tienen fortalezas y limitaciones. Como limitación, no utilizaron una metodología experimental y su diseño fue transversal, no longitudinal, por lo que no se pudieron establecer relaciones causales entre los estilos o las dimensiones parentales y los criterios de ajuste psicosocial del hijo.

No obstante, se han obtenido resultados similares con estudios longitudinales (Yoo et al., 2013).

Pero también los estudios que conformaron la presente tesis doctoral tuvieron puntos fuertes. En los diferentes estudios de la presente tesis doctoral, partiendo del modelo teórico bidimensional (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), se analizó la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo a corto plazo (mientras estaba teniendo lugar la socialización parental y el hijo era adolescente) y a largo plazo (cuando la socialización parental había finalizado y el hijo era adulto), confirmando así las consecuencias a largo plazo de la socialización parental (Rothrauff et al., 2009; von Bonsdorff et al., 2019). Se midió el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en diferentes etapas a lo largo del ciclo vital (desde la adolescencia hasta la adultez tardía). Para ello, se utilizaron criterios de ajuste ampliamente utilizados en la literatura para medir ajuste del hijo a lo largo del ciclo vital, utilizándose los mismos criterios de ajuste para adolescentes que para adultos. El ajuste del hijo se midió con medidas de autoinforme en las que el informante era el hijo, ya que es quien muestra menor deseabilidad social que los padres y se trata de medidas más fiables (Barry et al., 2008). Además, se utilizaron diferentes análisis estadísticos y los resultados obtenidos fueron los mismos. Además, se estudió la socialización parental en diferentes situaciones y entornos tales como la edad del hijo (adolescente o adulto), la tendencia antisocial que presentaba o no en la adolescencia y diferentes culturas. En todas estas diferentes situaciones se obtuvo un patrón común en la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo: el afecto parental en los años de socialización se relacionó positivamente con unas buenas autopercepciones del hijo, pero también con la adaptación social y el cumplimiento de las normas mientras que la imposición fue innecesaria o incluso se relacionó negativamente con el ajuste del hijo durante la adolescencia y la adultez, resultados congruentes con otros estudios (Gorostiaga et al., 2019). Según los estudios realizados, la tendencia antisocial en la adolescencia es un factor de riesgo de problemas de ajuste psicosocial en la adultez, pero el afecto de los padres es un factor protector frente al desajuste psicosocial incluso en hijos que tuvieron tendencia antisocial en la adolescencia.

Finalmente, se podrían plantear unas líneas de investigación futuras. Podría plantearse realizar estudios longitudinales para conocer la relación entre los estilos o las dimensiones parentales y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo desde la adolescencia hasta la

juventud adulta (Aquilino & Supple, 2001). No obstante, con estudios longitudinales no se podría conocer la relación entre la socialización parental y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo en la mediana edad o la adultez tardía debido al tiempo requerido para realizar dichos estudios. Los estudios de la tesis se focalizaron en familias normativas de clase media en culturas recientes china y española. Se podrían realizar otros estudios para analizar si se mantiene la misma relación entre estilos o dimensiones parentales y ajuste del hijo en otros contextos culturales, en familias con peores recursos socioeconómicos y contextos de riesgo. Existe evidencia empírica acerca de que en la cultura china tradicional el estilo parental autoritario (imposición sin afecto) se relaciona con niveles óptimos de ajuste psicosocial del hijo mientras que estudios recientes muestran que en la cultura china actual el estilo autoritario es perjudicial. Por tanto, sería relevante analizar si en la cultura china actual el estilo parental autoritario sería perjudicial para el ajuste del hijo en la mediana edad o incluso en la adultez tardía. La investigación futura podría analizar si la relación entre los estilos o las dimensiones parentales y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo podría cambiar en función de las características individuales de los hijos (Hong et al., 2025).

Además, los estudios de la presente tesis doctoral tienen implicaciones importantes en la práctica profesional porque aportan herramientas que facilitarían la creación de programas de educación parental que ayudarían a los padres a establecer relaciones con sus hijos basadas en el afecto y esto se relacionaría con un buen ajuste psicosocial de hijo. En esta línea, se podrían plantear estudios longitudinales que evalúen las dimensiones y/o estilos parentales de los padres y el ajuste psicosocial del hijo antes y después de la aplicación de un programa de educación parental, utilizando como informante al hijo.

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ANEXO: OTRAS PUBLICACIONES DURANTE EL PERIODO PREDOCTORAL

Raising Children in Risk Neighborhoods from Chile: Examining the Relationship between Parenting Stress and Parental Adjustment

Sandoval-Obando, E., **Alcaide, M.**, Salazar-Muñoz, M., Peña-Troncoso, S., Hernández-Mosqueira, C., and Gimenez-Serrano, S. (2022). Raising children in risk neighborhoods from Chile: examining the relationship between parenting stress and parental adjustment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(1), 45. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010045 (Impact factor 2021 = **4.614**; 45/182; **Q1**, Public, Environmental & Occupational Health; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **33**).

Abstract

Introduction: Parenting stress and parental adjustment could implicate key differences in the relational dynamics that parents establish with their children, particularly when families come from vulnerable social contexts. Method: Participants were 142 fathers and mothers from a risk neighborhood of Chile. The variables examined were parenting stress (parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) and parental adjustment (depression, anxiety, and stress). Parents also completed a sociodemographic characterization survey. The statistical analyses were a correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analyses. Results: Overall, not all components of parenting stress were related to parental adjustment. Only parental distress was found as a significant predictor of poor parental adjustment (greater depression, anxiety, and stress), but not parent–child dysfunctional interaction and having a difficult child. Conclusions: The present study findings highlight the influence of stress on parenting as a relevant dimension of research for the improvement of the intervention deployed by the state regarding the protection of vulnerable Chilean children, providing multiple clinical and psychosocial applications for research and intervention purposes.

Keywords: parenting; parental stress, depression, anxiety, childhood, development

1. Introduction

Risk neighborhoods are those communities with greater poverty, delinquency, unemployment, violence, or drug use, in comparison to middle-class neighborhoods [1–3]. Parents' main responsibility is raising children [4,5]. However, opportunities for child and adolescent healthy development could be lower in risk neighborhoods than in middle-class neighborhoods [6,7]. In risk neighborhoods, there is a greater risk of problematic development; children and adolescents could be less mature, less competent, and more prone to internalized symptoms and to externalizing problems [3,6,8].

There is a consensus that the work of being a father is a complex task that involves the development of competencies at different levels for an adequate achievement of the parental function [9–11]. In recent years, support programs for families in contexts of psychosocial risk have become an important focus in the design of child protection systems, largely justified by: (a) the high level of child abuse [12–14]; (b) the evidence supporting early family intervention in contexts of psychosocial risk [15–17]; (c) the multiple studies on adverse experiences in childhood and their impact on human development [18–20] and (d) the gradual social recognition of children's rights [13,21].

Overall, the types of support that programs provide to parents are varied, among which can be found, for example, those that focused on providing information and guidance on parental exercise or the delivery of social supports to overcome difficulties, reducing parental stress, and helping families that are usually associated with inadequate educational access [12,22]. Thus, the importance of preventive programs lies in reducing or avoiding the need for more expensive and less effective secondary programs, in addition to preventing violence and child abuse [15,21].

Thus, targeted prevention programs (PPF), as part of the public policy focused on vulnerable children in Chile, seek to intervene in situations of moderate violations of rights. These situations are related to the family context, affecting children and adolescents (NNA) under eighteen years of age, who do not necessarily require separation from their family (mild-to-moderate psychological abuse; witness of domestic violence not constituting a crime; mild-to-moderate physical abuse without

current complaints to the prosecutor's office or police; moderate non-chronic neglect, among others). Therefore, targeted prevention programs (PPF) are, in practice, a relevant device to mitigate some of the effects of early deprivation at the level of violation of rights towards children and adolescents and, potentially, to improve the quality of life of the families admitted [23–25].

At this point, the mental health of caregivers was considered an important variable that could affect the balance of family functioning [9,26,27]. In addition, various studies linked high levels of stress associated with parenting to deterioration in caregiving skills, high rates of child abuse, and negative results in child development and family dynamics [28–30]. Despite this, some investigations, which analyzed the functioning of PPF in the Chilean context reflected the absence of the mental health dimension as a focus of promotional and preventive work, an aspect that contradicts with the international evidence in this field [23–25,31].

The present work aims to examine the level of mental health and psychosocial stress in caregivers who receive support in the Focused Prevention Programs of the National Service for Minors in the Los Lagos Region (Chile).

1.2. Targeted Prevention Program: Areas of Intervention with Families in Vulnerable Contexts

In Chile, the National Service for Minors is the body in charge of executing the special public policy of supporting children and adolescents whose rights are violated in adoption processes and in conflict with the law. Within the outpatient programs in the field of the protection of children's rights are the PPF, which, for the year 2019, covered 41.7% (56, 131) of the total care of outpatient programs in the protection of rights, ranking it as the program with the highest level of care in Chile [32]. The intervention is organized from an ecological perspective, in which the children and adolescents are seen to be part of a family and socio-community environment, and thus is carried out in an articulated way to overcome the situation that warranted entry into the program. This is carried out through actions that aim to strengthen the personal resources of children and adolescents according to their stage of development. These actions include strengthening the parental competencies and resources of the adults in charge that favor the restitution of the violated rights, as well as promoting the incorporation of co-

guarantors from the family and community environment that contribute to the restitution of the rights of children and adolescents by supporting parents (primary caregivers) in the upbringing of their children [32].

In general, there is an international trend of developing family support programs to achieve the exercise of parenting that provides quality care for children and adolescents [12,22]. This was supported by meta-analyses that reported positive effects on children's emotional and behavioral difficulties in selective prevention and specialized treatment programs [33] for reducing child maltreatment [12] and developing parenting attitudes and positive parenting practices [21]. Despite this, in the South American context, evidence-based programs for parents at psychosocial risk tend to be scarce, generating a significant gap between the available research and the intervention practices that are developed in many parenting support programs.

1.3. Parental Mental Health and Quality of Care

There is enough reported evidence that the presence of depressive symptoms in mothers can affect the capacity for a dyadic and triadic alliance with their children [26,34], and high levels of stress causes less availability to respond to children's needs [12,22]. Although fathers have been studied less, there is also research that reports that the presence of high levels of stress [35] and depressive symptoms in parents [36] negatively affects the quality of parent–child interactions.

Parental stress is a specific type of stress that occurs in response to the specific demands of parenting, which in turn can be related to other types of stress within the family context, such as stress caused by social or economic factors [37]. It is an activating element that promotes the use of available resources to satisfactorily face the parental role, the absolute lack of activation being as damaging as extreme levels of stress [38].

The available research described that a large part of the families that are in a situation of psychosocial risk tend to present high levels of tension associated with the exercising of their role as parents [15,17,39,40]. Recently, Santelices et al. (2021) [41] found, in a Chilean sample of 123 mother–child dyads with a low socio-economic level, a positive relationship between stress in mothers with greater difficulties and the socioemotional development of their children of preschool age. Although a direct

association between depressive symptoms and social-emotional development in children was not found, it was observed that the symptoms of depression and parental stress were closely related, especially in the management of children's behavior due to their own characteristics.

The relationship between stress and depression in fathers and mothers was described in different investigations [42,43], as well as the impact of stress on the socio-emotional development of children [44,45]. In Chile, a recent analysis carried out by UNICEF, [40] based on data from the Longitudinal Survey of Early Childhood, a direct association between psychological factors of caregivers with child development in the socio-emotional and cognitive sphere was reported. Specifically, parental stress was the factor most frequently associated with the development of children in various areas, while mental health (specifically depressive symptoms) also appeared as a factor that affected socio-emotional development.

1.4. Present study

Overall, in previous studies the negative consequences for health and wellbeing associated with parental stress were identified [46–49]. Nevertheless, most studies examined the harmful consequences of parenting stress based on a unidimensional (i.e., global) approach [46–48]. Parenting stress, as a global concept, is only assessed if related to adjustment criteria; however, it is not possible to identify which component of parenting stress (e.g., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) is related to each adjustment criteria. By contrast, the use of a multidimensional approach is less common in studies on parenting stress [49,50]. Interestingly, some of these previous studies suggested that not all components of parenting stress could be related to adjustment criteria, although evidence is mostly focused on legal criteria such as parental physical abuse and other forms of maltreatment [50], or child adjustment criteria such as child oppositionality and internalizing and externalizing problems in children [49].

Additionally, the literature regarding parenting stress is usually focused on samples from middle-class neighborhoods [48,51,52]. However, there is less empirical evidence of the consequences of parenting stress in risk neighborhoods [53,54].

Parenting stress and its consequences for children, but also for parents, cannot be the same in risk neighborhoods [47] compared to middle-class neighborhoods [51].

Overall, some studies focused on parental stress attempted to analyze its relationship with internal and external problems in children [9,28], particularly in the early stages of development when the child is more vulnerable [15]. However, less common is the use of samples from an ample age range of children across a parental socialization period (from birthhood to when the adolescent reached adult age) [55,56], in which parents have the main responsibility of raising their children in order for them to become responsible members of society [57,58]. Raising children, particularly in risk neighborhoods [59], could lead to high levels of stress in parents.

Most studies examine parenting stress from a child-centered approach; fewer studies are focused on a parent-centered approach. It could be important to analyze the relationship between parenting stress and parental adjustment due to some reasons. Firstly, parents have a greater responsibility for the physical, psychological, and emotional development of their children [19]. Second, family prevention programs are primarily aimed at parents and provide basic educational tools to increase protective behavior and reduce risk familiar factors [12,28].

This study is focused on parents of children from 1 to 18 years from Chile located in a vulnerable social environment. The present study aims to analyze the relationship between multidimensional parenting stress (i.e., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) and parental adjustment (i.e., depression, anxiety, and stress) in risk neighborhoods.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants and Procedure

An a priori power analysis was conducted, as in previous family studies [60–62]. A priori power analysis determined that 119 participants were required to detect an unfavorable medium effect size ($f = 0.15$) with a power of 0.95 ($\alpha = 0.05$, $1 - \beta = 0.95$) for linear multiple regression. Participants were 142 parents/caregivers (72 females and 70 males) of children aged from 1 to 18 years ($M = 9.76$, $SD = 4.54$) who were users of the Depending Focused Prevention Programs of the National Service for Minors in the Los Lagos Region (Chile). These parents were referred from family courts as a

protection measure since their children were victims of parental neglect (23.9%), witnesses and/or victims of intra-family violence (13.4%), psychological abuse (3.5%) or physical abuse (2.1%), among other problems. The power sensibility test [63,64] for the sample size of this study (n = 142) was 0.95 (α = 0.05), and was able to detect a medium-small effect size (f = 0.12).

The demographic characteristics of the participants were as follows: Regarding most frequent marital status, most of participants were single (57.7%) in contrast to those who were married (28.2%), separated (4.2%) or widowed (2.8%). The parental figures showed a low educational level, since many caregivers only completed basic education (7%) and high school (37.3%). Regarding the socio-economic level, most of the participants (66.2%) received income from dependent and informal work activities lower than the Chilean minimum wage.

The information gathering was carried out between the months of September and December 2019. First, authorizations from the National Service for Minors the approval of the Ethics Committee of St. Sebastian University (Patagonia Headquarters, Puerto Montt, Chile) were requested to carry out the investigation with human participants. Subsequently, the invitation was extended to randomly selected caregivers to participate in the research. Once the caregivers agreed to participate in the study, they proceeded to sign the informed consent and the subsequent application of the instruments in dependencies of the Targeted Prevention Program (PPF), which was dependent on the National Service for Minors. The pen-and-paper questionnaires were filled out by participants in the presence of research assistants [65,66].

2.2. Measures

Parenting stress was measured with the Parenting Stress Index/Short Form (PSI/SF) [37]. It consisted of 36 items answered on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The PSI/SF was designed to measure three parental stress dimensions: parental distress, parental child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child. Each dimension was measured by 12 items. The Parental Distress scale was designed to assess the amount of stress an individual was feeling as a parent due to personal factors, such as impaired parenting competence, conflict with the other parents, presence of depression, lack of social support and life restrictions due to the demands of

child raising. A sample of item was “I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent”. The alpha value was 0.867. The Parent–Child Dysfunctional Interaction scale examined whether the parental interaction with child was seen as reinforcing to the parent or was a negative element in the parent’s life, as well as the degree to which parents perceive that the child does or does not meet his/her expectations. A sample of item was “My child rarely does things for me that make me feel good”. The alpha value was 0.897. The Difficult child subscale assessed behavioral characteristics of the child that reflected their self-regulatory abilities perceived by the parent and whether the child is difficult to manage, due either to temperamental factors or learned patterns of noncompliance and defiance. A sample of item was “My child seems to cry or fuss more often than other children “. The alpha value was 0.838. Higher scores in parental distress, parental child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child were related to higher parental stress. The Spanish version had good psychometric properties for adults [67]. The three-dimensional model, originally proposed in the Parenting Stress Index/Short Form (PSI/SF) [37], was confirmed by confirmatory factorial analysis in previous studies [49,51], including Spanish-speaking samples [68].

Parental adjustment was measured with the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS-21) [69], a self-report measure of negative affect symptoms in depression, anxiety and stress, its presence and intensity. It consisted of 21 items answered on a four-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = *did not apply to me at all* to 4 = *applied to me very much*, *or most of the time* for weekly measures. Each dimension was measured by 7 items. The depression dimension referred to low levels of positive feelings (e.g., dysphoria, hopelessness, lack of energy, and anhedonia). A sample of depression item was “I couldn’t seem to experience any positive feeling at all”. The alpha value was 0.858. The anxiety dimension was characterized by physiological hyperarousal, a mixture of general distress such as irritability, agitation, difficulty relaxing, and impatience. A sample of anxiety item was “I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself”. The alpha value was 0.849. The stress dimension was related to irritability, nervous tension, difficulty relaxing, and agitation [69,70]. A sample of stress item is “I found it difficult to relax”. The alpha value was 0.833. Depression and anxiety were also related to negative feelings [71]. DASS-21 was translated and adapted in Chile [72,73] and it presented

adequate psychometric properties in previous validation studies [74–76] and fit into a three-factor model in Spanish-speaking samples [77,78].

2.3. Data Analysis

A correlation analysis was performed, as well as multiple linear regression analyses. The correlation analysis was conducted between parenting stress (i.e., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) and parental adjustment (i.e., depression, anxiety, and stress). A lineal regression was applied in which the dependent variables were those related to parental adjustment (i.e., depression, anxiety, and stress) and the predictors were the three dimensions of parenting stress (i.e., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child).

3. Results

Results from correlations analyses between parenting stress and parental adjustment are presented in Table 1. Significant associations were found among the three parental adjustment dimensions, as well as among some dimensions of parenting stress and parental adjustment. When examining correlations between parenting stress dimensions (i.e., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) and parental adjustment dimensions (i.e., depression, anxiety, and stress), only one parenting stress dimension (i.e., parental distress) was positively associated with all parental adjustment dimensions. By contrast, the other parenting stress dimensions were not associated with parental adjustment. Within parenting stress dimensions, only a high positive relation between parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child was found. Within parental adjustment dimensions, a high positive correlation between depression, anxiety, and stress was also identified.

The results for the predictions of parental adjustment (i.e., depression, anxiety, and stress), depending on parenting stress (i.e., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) analyzed through a linear multiple regression analyses, are presented in Table 2. A multiple linear regression model for each dimension of parental adjustment was performed. Interestingly, a common pattern was found for the three predictions models. For the prediction of parental depression,

parental distress was found as a significant predictor, but not parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child. Greater parental distress positively predicts depression in parents. In the same way, for the prediction of parental anxiety, the statistically significant predictor was also parental distress. The trend for parental distress was positive; greater scores predicted parental anxiety. Finally, the same is true for the prediction of parental anxiety. Only parental distress was a significant predictor, whereas parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child did not reach the statistically significant level. Overall, parental anxiety was a significant predictor of three components of parental adjustment. However, a higher explained variance was found in parental depression, in comparison to parental anxiety and stress, in which explained variance was similar.

4. Discussion

This study analyzed the relationship between parenting stress (i.e., parental distress, parental child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) and parental adjustment (i.e., depression, anxiety, and stress) in a sample of parents of children aged from 1 to 18 years and located in vulnerable social environments in Chile. These children were in situations where their rights were violated, in adoption processes and in conflict with the law; present findings were provided from a clinical sample. Overall, the present results showed that only one parenting stress dimension (i.e., parental distress) was positively associated with poor parental adjustment in terms of greater depression, anxiety, and stress. Interestingly, not all components of parental stress are significant predictors of parental adjustment. The present findings revealed that the parental adjustment of children in vulnerable social contexts could only be predicted by parental distress, but not by parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child.

The present findings agree with some previous studies on the negative relationship between parenting stress and health/well-being, most of them from middle-class community samples. Parenting stress has a negative impact on child raising, deteriorating the quality of the bond and the deployment of effective skills and tools for the care and protection of children. Parenting stress seems to negatively influence child development [79], expressed in higher levels of behavioral maladjustment problems and child negativity [10,80–83]. A greater perception of stress in parents is associated with

more childhood problems, deteriorating parenting and the quality of the bond between father and son [84–86]. A possible explanation could be that a child's sense of security is affected by parental stress, especially when parents have difficulties regulating their own emotions or maintaining timely, safe family routines that are suitable for the child [87].

However, compared to those studies on parenting stress and its relationship with child development [9,28,44,47], less is known about the relationship between parental stress and parental health. The findings from the present study agreed with some previous studies on the harmful impact of parenting stress [88,89]. For example, those parents who presented high levels of parental stress when raising their children showed a higher incidence of depression and anxiety [11,90] and lower levels of general well-being [91]. Parenting stress is often associated with a greater deterioration in parental mental health [92], evidencing a greater risk of postpartum depression [93,94]. Parenting stress was related to depression, anxiety and stress in mothers of 10-year-old children from a community sample [46]. Other studies reported that parenting stress negatively influences parental competence, such as sensitivity to the needs of the child, the time and quality of parenting, dyadic pleasure and cooperation between parents [95].

An important focus is the analysis of the consequences of parenting stress based on a single variable (i.e., global dimension) or with its specific components (i.e., multidimensional approach). The same is true for other family and personal variables such as parenting dimensions [5,96] and styles [97], self-esteem [98,99] and self-concepts [100,101], family climate [102] and psychosocial maturity [103]. Some studies identified relations between adjustment and parenting stress from a unidimensional perspective [46–48]. For example, global parenting stress was positively related to parental maladjustment (caused by depression, anxiety and stress) [46] and greater child maladjustment (caused by traumatic life events and depression) [47].

Nevertheless, when parenting stress is examined using a multidimensional approach, not all of its different components (i.e., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) are equally related to the different adjustment criteria examined [49,50]. For example, findings from a study with African American mothers showed that the three parenting stress dimensions examined (i.e., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child) were not

equally related to different parental adjustment criteria [49]. Specifically, parental distress was related to self-reported psychological symptoms, parent–child dysfunctional interaction was associated with parent psychological symptoms, and difficult child was most highly associated with a measure of child oppositionality. Similar findings were obtained in a study based on path analysis. Interestingly, for both fathers and mothers, parental distress was positively related to potential parental abuse, whereas parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child did not show a relationship [50].

Additionally, parenting stress may not always be the same for families from vulnerable environments [47,53,54] compared to those from different experiences, i.e., children raised in middle class neighborhoods [48,51,52]. The results obtained in the present study are partially related to the theories on family and parental stress (see [38,104]). The cumulative impact of the different psychosocial stressors for families, especially those related to child rearing (e.g., daily discomfort) could be related to an appearance of higher levels of parental stress, particularly greater in risk neighborhoods in which families, schools, and jobs offer less opportunities for healthy development. In a general risk context for individuals and families, in which daily life is related to a greater general stress, the influences of the different components of parenting stress on adjustment (for children, but also for parents) could not have the same impact as in different contexts [105].

This study has strengths and limitations. The present study examined the relationship between parenting stress and parent psychological health, offering new and crucial evidence of the harmful impact of parenting stress for parents and not simply for children, as was more common in previous studies [84,85]. Furthermore, the present study extends the evidence of parenting stress to vulnerable families from risk neighborhoods. Compared to the classical unidimensional (i.e., global) approach to examining parenting stress, the present study highlights that which component of parenting stress was related to each adjustment criteria should be empirically examined. Interestingly, only parental distress but not parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child are significant predictors of poor parental adjustment. Additionally, the sample size of the present study was determined by a statistical power analysis. However, some limitations should be considered. The present study, with correlation

and regression analyses, does not determine a relationship of causality between parenting stress and parental adjustment variables. The present study was conducted with a clinical sample of parents in a risk neighborhood from Chile, but it was not possible to conduct more studies in other settings to extend the findings on parenting stress to other contexts, particularly the study of which components of parenting stress were related to each adjustment criteria.

Raising children in risk neighborhoods involves many psychosocial stressors that did not appear in community samples, such as poverty, marginalization, unemployment, early experiences of child abuse, domestic violence [106,107], and the problematic consumption of alcohol and drugs. Some studies with vulnerable communities showed that there was a greater stress in risk neighborhoods such as families with children with disabilities [108,109], language disorders, autism or behavioral problems [109]. The impact of these stressors on parental adjustment could be different in community samples than in risk neighborhoods. Parenting distress could affect parental and child adjustment and high levels of parenting distress in risk neighborhoods could be related to poor parental adjustment more than in community samples.

The relation between stressors in risk neighborhoods and parenting stress, and its relation with parental adjustment, is a relevant area of study that could have repercussions on the future development of a child [13], and developing interventions that focus on child protection and adjustment, as well as supporting mental health disorders in parents, should be considered. It is important to keep in mind that the levels of parenting stress could vary depending on the parental perception of the situations and their coping strategies and highlighted the importance of the first interventions, education and support for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities and developing disorders [108]. Similarly, the detection of the deficits in the competence of parents, and the parental implications of this, would allow timely, systematic, and coherent intervention mechanisms to be implemented, considering the needs and requirements of the family, particularly when they are located in vulnerable contexts, and it could be utilized from a public health, legal and psychosocial perspective.

5. Conclusions

This study showed that parenting stress could be related to parental adjustment and provides empirical evidence of the different components of parenting stress and which of its components are more frequently related to parental adjustment in vulnerable social contexts from Chile (i.e., parental distress, but not parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child). The present findings were derived from a clinical sample of parents who raised children in a risk neighborhood. It should be taken into account that, in vulnerable contexts, there is a daily exposure to psychosocial stressors, so the relations between the different components of parenting stress and adjustment could not have the same impact as in different contexts. In the present study, there is a multidimensional approach of parenting stress (i.e., parental distress, parent–child dysfunctional interaction and difficult child). A multidimensional approach reveals which component of parenting stress is related to each adjustment criteria, which is impossible to determine using a unidimensional approach of parenting stress. Parenting stress has a negative impact on parent and child adjustment; therefore, it is important to detect parenting stress and its dimensions and the different impacts on child and parent adjustment. It is important to keep this in mind when developing interventions with parents, as parental stress may affect the psychological health of parents and this could interfere with raising children.

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Table 1. Correlations between parenting stress and parental adjustment.

		Parenting Stress			Parental Adjustment		
		Parental Distress	Parent–Child Dysfunctional Interaction	Difficult Child	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Parenting stress	Parental distress	1					
	Parent–child dysfunctional interaction	0.069	1				
	Difficult child	−0.043	0.732 **	1			
Parental adjustment	Depression	0.821 **	0.13	0.009	1		
	Anxiety	0.637 **	0.059	−0.013	0.757 **	1	
	Stress	0.565 **	0.057	−0.081	0.772 **	0.739 **	1

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2. Multiple linear regression coefficients between parenting stress and parental adjustment.

Dependent Variable	Predictors	*B*	SE B	β	*t*	Lower	Upper
Parental depression	Parental Distress	0.68	0.04	0.81	16.71 ***	0.595	0.755
R^2adj = 0.673	Parent–child Dysfunctional Interaction	0.07	0.06	0.09	1.26	−0.040	0.182
$F(3, 138)$ = 97.83 ***	Difficult child	−0.02	0.06	−0.02	−0.30	−0.134	0.099
Parental anxiety	Parental Distress	0.53	0.06	0.64	9.59 ***	0.417	0.633
R^2adj = 0.393	Parent–child Dysfunctional Interaction	0.01	0.08	0.01	0.09	−0.144	0.157
$F(3, 138)$ = 31.45 ***	Difficult child	0.01	0.08	0.01	0.09	−0.151	0.165
Parental stress	Parental Distress	0.49	0.06	0.55	7.79 ***	0.364	0.611
R^2adj = 0.316	Parent–child Dysfunctional Interaction	0.11	0.09	0.13	1.27	−0.061	0.283
$F(3, 138)$ = 22.70 ***	Difficult child	−0.14	0.09	−0.15	−1.49	−0.316	0.044

*** $p < 0.001$.

Beyond Parenting Socialization Years: The Relationship between Parenting Dimensions and Grandparenting Functioning

Gimenez-Serrano, S., **Alcaide, M.**, Reyes, M., Zacarés, J. J., and Celdrán, M. (2022). Beyond parenting socialization years: the relationship between parenting dimensions and grandparenting functioning. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(8), 4528, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19084528 (Impact factor 2021 = **4.614**; 45/182; **Q1**, Public, Environmental & Occupational Health; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **29**).

Abstract

Parental socialization has been studied mainly when is in process, but less is known about its long-term impact on older adults, particularly on one of the most important developmental tasks in later life: being a grandparent. Participants were 313 Spanish grandparents. The present study examined the relationship between parenting and its impacts in the long term, when the child is a grandparent. The variables examined were parenting (parental warmth and parental strictness) and grandparenting functioning (satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality, emotional closeness with grandchildren, and role overload). The statistical analyses were a correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analyses. A constant pattern between parenting and grandparenting functioning has been found. Warmth was positively associated with grandparenting functioning, as opposed to strictness, which did not show benefits for grandparents and even showed a significant negative relationship with an indicator of grandparenting functioning. Present findings highlight that, during the socialization years, greater parental warmth but not parental strictness might be of benefit for children at the end of their life (i.e., when they are grandparents) but also for their descendants because they have a better relationship with the two following generations (i.e., adult children and grandchildren).

Keywords: parenting, grandparenting, satisfaction with life, older adults, grandchildren

1. Introduction

1.1. Parental Socialization

In the study of parental socialization, the practices of parents are often classified around two main dimensions: warmth (e.g., dialogue, support, or displays of affection) and strictness (e.g., practices like demand, setting limits, punishments, or discipline), based on a two-dimensional model [1,2]. Warmth represents parental love, approval, acceptance, and support [3–5], whereas strictness refers to the discipline from the parents towards their children, controlling and/or supervising their behavior [6–8]. The two-dimensional model is based on theoretically orthogonal dimensions (i.e., non-related) that gives origin to four parenting styles: authoritarian (strictness but not warmth); indulgent (warmth but not strictness); authoritative (strictness and warmth); neglectful (neither strictness nor warmth) [1,2].

Two main parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) have been studied in the scientific literature to identify their impact on child development [9]. Traditionally, the parenting strategy based on warmth and strictness (i.e., so-called authoritative parenting) has been associated with optimal child development for the different criteria. For example, some studies reported that parental strictness combined with parental warmth is related to higher levels of emotional maturity, psychosocial competence, academic performance [1,10–13], secure attachment [14], as well as a lower incidence of emotional disturbances and behavioral problems [9]. However, much of this research is focused on Anglo-Saxon contexts with mainly European-American samples. When analyzing the cultural variability to explain the optimal parenting, the impact of parenting is not always the same in all cultural contexts. For example, in a systematic review on the subject, parenting based on strictness without the warmth dimension (i.e., so-called authoritarian parenting) is associated with greater outcomes in some domains of adjustment among ethnic minorities from the United States, namely Chinese-Americans and African-Americans, as well as in Arab societies or some Asian countries [9]. Overall, culture plays an important role in the psychological process [15,16]. In particular, these discrepancies about the optimal parenting strategy may point to the importance of cultural factors on the impact of parental socialization [17–19]. Parenting defined by warmth combined with strictness may not always benefit child development in all cultural contexts [9,20,21].

Additionally, findings from emergent research in European and Latin American contexts have also pointed out that parenting based on warmth but not strictness (i.e., so-called indulgent parenting) provides equal or even greater benefits than parenting based on warmth and strictness (i.e., authoritative parenting). In these studies, children with parents who are warm but not strict (i.e., indulgent) have higher scores on self-concept [22–24], psychosocial maturity [25], benevolent social values [23], and connectedness with nature [24]. They also show lower levels of aggressiveness, emotional instability, behavioral problems [21,25,26], and less hostile sexism [23,27].

The impact of parental socialization affects children, and adolescents [21,22] but also adult children [23,26], despite the fact that parental socialization is over when the adolescent child reaches the adult age. Nevertheless, most of the scientific literature has focused its studies on the first stages of the life cycle, i.e., when parental socialization is in progress and parents are raising their children [28,29], based on the premise that childhood and adolescence are the stages of greatest plasticity [25,30]. However, the process underlying parental socialization could also be quite relevant for adult children over the years, despite the different and multiple influences across the life cycle, particularly in adulthood and later life. In fact, parenting might have an impact beyond adolescence and differences in adjustment among adult children could be also related to parenting patterns of warmth and strictness. For this reason, a growing body of researchers are trying to study the impact of parental socialization on individuals throughout the life cycle.

1.2. Parental Socialization at the End of the Life Cycle

The literature specializing in parenting and the consequences for adjustment in the later stages of the life cycle is scarce in comparison with the other stages. There are only a few studies that combine samples from different ages. For example, in a study with non-consecutive stages of the life cycle, with adolescents (aged 12–17 years) and adult children (aged 60–75 years), the adolescents and older adults with warm parents (i.e., indulgent, and authoritative) reported higher self-esteem and values of self-transcendence and conservation than their counterparts from families who were not based on warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). However, the highest levels of social, emotional, and family self-esteem were found in the warm but not strict family

group (i.e., indulgent parenting), regardless of age [31]. In another similar study, covering all stages of the life cycle, the analysis found that higher parental warmth and lower parental strictness (i.e., indulgent parenting) in the group of older people was associated with higher scores in family self-esteem, self-competence, social competence, and empathy, and in other age groups the pattern was also quite similar [25]. These findings suggest that, as in adolescence, older adults with greater adjustment might be those who were raised by families characterized by warmth, whereas parental strictness could be unnecessary or even harmful for adjustment in later life. Similar results were obtained in another study with the same age groups [26]. The group of older people with the lowest rates of aggression corresponded to those from warm families (i.e., authoritative and indulgent), but only older people raised by warm but not strict families (i.e., indulgent) had the highest scores on family self-concept and on social adjustment criteria such as the internalization of universal values. Another study, which also included older adults, found benefits for adjustment related to parental warmth, whereas parental strictness was found to be unnecessary or even harmful [23]. Interestingly, higher parental warmth and lower parental strictness (i.e., indulgent parenting) significantly influenced several key social adjustment criteria in older people. Specifically, it was associated with higher levels of internalization of human values as well as lower rates of hostile sexism.

The abovementioned studies agree on the link between parenting and social and psychological adjustment criteria in the short term (when parental socialization is in progress) and in the long term (when parental socialization is over). In addition, these studies seem to suggest that warmth but not strictness (i.e., indulgent parenting) was associated with equal or even better socialization outcomes than warmth and strictness (i.e., authoritative parenting), while a lack of warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful parenting) was associated with the worst socialization outcomes in all areas [23,25,26,31].

There is little evidence regarding parental socialization focused on the last stage of the life cycle. Additionally, within the few studies examining parenting and adjustment among adult children in later life, the adjustment was captured without considering one of the main developmental tasks of later life: being a grandparent. Interestingly, grandparenting represents a family intergenerational continuity:

grandparents (G1), adult children (G2) and grandchildren (G3). Overall, grandparents are a main source of care, protection, and significance to the grandchild, even though the primary caregivers are usually the parents rather than the grandparents [32–34]. Unfortunately, not all grandparents develop a good relationship with their adult children as well as good grandparenting functioning based on an emotional closeness to the grandchild, but low role overload. Differences in competence and adjustment as well as in grandparenting functioning among older adults could be related to the first experiences of the older adult in their family.

1.3. Present Study

The main objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) with different indicators of grandparenting functioning: (i) satisfaction with life, (ii) meaning of life, (iii) parent–adult child relationship quality, (iv) emotional closeness with grandchildren, and (v) role overload. In the present study, it is hypothesized that parental warmth would be associated with better scores in grandparenting functioning, i.e., higher scores on satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality, and emotional closeness with grandchildren; and lower scores on role overload. It also was expected that parental strictness would not be related to grandparenting functioning.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants and Procedure

The study was composed of 313 grandparents (243 females and 70 males; M = 70.73 years, SD = 5.59) aged from 60 to 89 years old, who have a grandchild aged from 1 to 19 years old (M = 8.68 years, SD = 4.38) and take care of them, but not as a caregiver. It was carried out in three large cities of Spain (Barcelona, Seville, and Valencia). The participants were recruited from community senior centers, as in other previous studies [25,31]. A random selection of senior centers was performed from the complete list of centers. Directors of senior centers were invited to participate in the research. If an institution refused to participate, a replacement institution was randomly selected until the required sample size was obtained. This random sampling procedure means that the probability of each unit in the population being selected is the same [35–

37]. The distribution by educational level was as follows: no studies: 5.1% (*n* = 16); primary studies: 24.6% (*n* = 77); secondary studies: 30.7% (*n* = 96); university studies: 39.6% (*n* = 124).

As in previous family studies with older adults, the grandparents were the respondents [38–40]. The research protocol was approved by the research ethics committee of the University of Barcelona (Institutional Review Board, IRB00003099). For all participants, their participation was voluntary, informed consent was required, and anonymity of responses was guaranteed.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Parenting

Parenting was captured in terms of the two main dimensions: warmth and strictness. Warmth was measured with the adult version of the Warmth/Affection Scale (WAS) [41]. This scale measures the extent to which the older adults (in this case, grandparents) perceived their parents as loving, responsive, and involved; for example, "Let me know they loved me". Responses were on a 4-point scale from 1 ("almost never true") to 4 ("almost always true"). The alpha value was 0.957. Strictness was measured with the adult version of the Parental Control Scale (PCS) [41]. The PCS measures the extent to which the older adults (in this case, grandparents) perceived strict parental control over their behavior; for example, "Were always telling me how I should behave". The alpha value was 0.873. Both WAS and PCS scales are reliable and valid measures for adult children to assess parental socialization, when they were raised by their parents during the socialization years. The two scales (WAS and PCS) are widely used in the literature to measure parental socialization in adult children [31,42–44]. Higher scores on the WAS and PCS scales represent a greater sense of parental warmth and parental strictness [45,46].

2.2.2. Grandparent Adjustment

Satisfaction with life was measured with five items from the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) [47,48]. This scale is focused on assessing global life satisfaction, an indicator of hedonic well-being; for example, "In most ways my life is close to my ideal". Items were answered in a 7-point scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). The SWLS has favorable psychometric properties [47], including

high internal consistency and high temporal reliability. It correlates moderately to highly with other measures of subjective well-being. This scale is suited for use with different age groups, including older adults [43,47]. Higher scores are related to greater satisfaction with life. The alpha value was 0.808.

The meaning of life was measured with the reduced Spanish version with 10 items [49] from the Purpose in Life Test (PIL Test) [50,51]. This measure assesses the meaning of life and it has good psychometric properties characterized by an acceptable degree of reliability and validity [52]; for example, "Life to me seems:", with options ranging from "always exciting" to "completely routine". To answer each item, the person places him/herself on a scale from 1 to 7 between two extreme feelings: 1 being related to a poor meaning of life and 7 related to a greater meaning of life. The reduced Spanish version of the PIL Test [49] has been used in studies with older adults [53]. The authors of the instrument proposed the meaning of life as a global concept and it was subsequently corroborated in different studies using confirmatory factor analyses [54,55]. The meaning of life has been related with eudaimonic well-being, positive affect, adequate coping, and happiness [56–60]. High scores on this measure represent a greater meaning of life. The alpha value was 0.905.

2.2.3. Grandparents and Their Adult Children

Parent–adult child relationship quality was measured with the Family APGAR questionnaire [61]. This is a scale aimed at assessing family relationships, but it was specifically adapted to evaluate the parent-child relationship [62]; for example, "I am satisfied that I can turn to my children for help when something is troubling me". The instrument allows three possible responses (2, 1, 0) to each of the five items in the questionnaire. Higher scores were related to a high satisfaction with family function. The alpha value was 0.695.

2.2.4. Grandparents and Their Grandchildren

Emotional closeness with grandchildren and role overload were measured with two subscales (i.e., rewards and stressors) of the Spanish version [63] of the Parental Stress Scale (PSS) [64], adapted for grandparents. It is common in the literature to assess the parental stress [65], but in this case an adaptation was made to assess the grandparenting role [66]. Previous studies have used the PSS [67] and other similar questionnaires [40,68], adapted for grandparents instead of parents. In this case, an

adaptation was made to the PSS, in which respondents, instead of being "parents", had been "grandparents", such as in other previous research [67]. Items were answered on a 4 Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Emotional closeness with grandchildren was measured with the Rewards subscale of the PSS [63]. This subscale assesses satisfaction as a grandparent and closeness towards the grandchild; for example, "I feel happy in my role as a grandparent". Higher scores indicated a higher level of emotional closeness with their grandchildren. The alpha value was 0.746. Role overload was measured with the Stressors subscale of the PSS [63]. This subscale measures discomfort and difficulties in the role of grandparent; for example, "Taking care of my grandchild sometimes takes more time and energy than I have". Higher scores indicated a higher level of role overload. The Alpha value was 0.846.

2.3. Data Analysis

A correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analyses were performed. The correlation analysis was conducted between the two main dimensions of parenting (i.e., warmth and strictness) and grandparenting functioning (i.e., satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality, emotional closeness with grandchildren, and role overload). Additionally, a correlation between the different indicators of grandparenting functioning was applied. Furthermore, a lineal regression was applied in which the dependent variables were those related to grandparenting functioning (i.e., satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality, emotional closeness with grandchildren, and role overload) and the predictors were the two main dimensions of parenting (i.e., warmth and strictness).

3. Results

Results from correlation analysis between parenting dimensions and grandparenting functioning are presented in Table 1. Some statistically significant correlations were found between parenting dimensions and grandparenting functioning. Parental warmth was positively associated with grandparenting functioning. Grandparents who scored higher in terms of parental warmth had greater levels of satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent– adult child relationship quality, and

emotional closeness with grandchildren. In contrast, parental strictness did not show a correlation with grandparenting functioning and was even harmful. Greater scores in parental strictness were related to a greater role overload. Additionally, some grandparenting functioning dimensions were positively correlated between them. Specifically, higher scores in satisfaction with life were associated with a greater meaning of life. In turn, satisfaction with life and meaning of life had a positive relationship with the parent–adult child relationship quality and emotional closeness with grandchildren (these last variables were related to each other).

Results from linear multiple regression analysis were similar to those obtained in the correlation analysis. The results for the predictions in grandparenting functioning (i.e., satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality, emotional closeness with grandchildren, and role overload), depending on parenting dimensions (i.e., parental warmth and parental strictness) are presented in Table 2. A multiple linear regression model for each indicator of grandparenting functioning was performed. Overall, parenting tended to predict grandparenting functioning. Interestingly, a common pattern was found for the five predictions models.

Parental warmth was a significant predictor of grandparenting functioning whereas parental strictness did not reach the statistically significant level. For the prediction of satisfaction with life, only parental warmth was a significant predictor, whereas parental strictness did not reach the statistically significant level. Greater parental warmth positively predicts satisfaction with life in grandparents. For the prediction of meaning of life, parental warmth and parental strictness were not significant predictors. For the prediction of parent– adult child relationship quality, a similar association as for satisfaction with life was found. Again, parental warmth was a significant predictor, but not parental strictness. Scores in the parent–adult child relationship quality were positively predicted by parental warmth. Similarly, for the prediction of emotional closeness with grandchildren, parental warmth was a significant positive predictor, but not parental strictness. Finally, for the prediction of role overload, any of the two parenting dimensions (i.e., parental warmth and parental strictness) reached the significant statistical level. However, a higher explained variance was found in terms of satisfaction with life, in comparison to the other indicators of grandparenting functioning (i.e., meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality,

emotional closeness with grandchildren, and role overload). Satisfaction with life was the most predicted model by parental warmth.

4. Discussion

In this study, we analyzed the influence of the two main dimensions of parenting (i.e., warmth and strictness) of a two-dimensional model [2] on grandparenting functioning, captured by measuring the satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality, emotional closeness with grandchildren, and role overload. Correlation and multiple linear regression analyses have shown significant findings. A constant pattern between parenting and grandparenting functioning has been found. Warmth was positively associated with grandparenting functioning, as opposed to strictness, which did not show benefits for grandparents and even showed a significant negative relationship with an indicator of grandparenting functioning.

Some interesting findings have been obtained in this study. There were positive relationships between different dimensions of grandparenting functioning. Satisfaction with life and meaning of life were identified in previous studies as two important indicators of health and well-being in later life [53,69]. However, less is known about the correlation between satisfaction with life and meaning of life in a specific group of older adults: those who are grandparents. Interestingly, according to the present findings, satisfaction with life and meaning of life in grandparents are connected to healthy relationships with the following generations: the second generation (i.e., adult children) but also the third generation (grandchildren).

Specifically, according to the findings, those grandparents with greater well-being (i.e., higher satisfaction with life and meaning of life) reported a good relationship with the second generation (i.e., parent–adult child relationship quality), and the third generation (i.e., greater emotional closeness with grandchildren). It should be noted that these findings from the present study do not agree with some theorists, who suggest that grandparents with greater well-being might have a positive relationship with their grandchildren regardless of the relationship with their adult children (or even with a negative relationship with their adult children). In contrast, the present findings seem to support the idea that grandparents with greater well-being (e.g., satisfaction with life

and meaning of life) are not only those who may view grandchildren, but also adult children, as a continuation of their lives and experience greater affection (see [70,71]).

Another central result of this study is the different influence of the main parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) of the two-dimensional model [1,2] on grandparenting functioning. Interestingly, differences between grandparents (i.e., in satisfaction with life and meaning of life), as well as the relationship with their adult children (i.e., parent–adult child relationship quality) and grandchildren (i.e., emotional closeness with grandchildren and role overload) were consistently related to the family in which the older adults were raised. On the one hand, parental warmth has been associated with a higher degree of satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality, and emotional closeness with grandchildren, according to correlational analysis. The same tendency was also found in the predictions of grandparenting functioning with parental warmth as a predictor, except for meaning of life (which did not reach the statistically significant level). On the other hand, parental strictness did not contribute to grandparenting functioning and even had some detrimental consequences. A positive correlation has been found between parental strictness and role overload, which may indicate that those grandparents who were raised by families that exercised control and surveillance over them during the socialization years, now seem to experience great overload in their role as grandparents.

Therefore, according to the findings from the present study, parental socialization could indirectly have a crucial impact beyond one generation. Remarkably, during the socialization years, greater parental warmth but not parental strictness might be beneficial for children at the end of their life (i.e., when they are grandparents), and also for their descendants because they have greater relationship with the two following generations (i.e., adult children and grandchildren). A few previous studies have also analyzed the parental socialization and its impact on older adult adjustment [26,31]. The present study also examines the consequences of parenting for older adults (satisfaction with life and meaning of life) but also goes beyond this, because they are focused on being a grandparent, one of the most important developmental tasks for older adults. Even if the grandparent's socialization took place a long time ago, these effects last and affect both the present (grandparents) and indirectly the following generations (adult children and grandchildren). Overall, the present findings suggest that parenting based

on warmth during the socialization years offers broad benefits for grandparenting functioning, while parenting strictness seems to be unnecessary or even harmful. The results of this study do not completely coincide with classical studies based on the two-dimensional model [2] conducted on predominantly European-American middle-class families from the United States. Specifically, parental strictness (accompanied by warmth) was associated with greater benefits for adjustment and competence (e.g., a higher level of emotional maturity, psychosocial competence, and secure attachment). In contrast, the findings from the present study agree with the other studies based on the two-dimensional model [2] conducted mainly in European and Latin American countries. Specifically, parental warmth has been associated with good socialization outcomes, while parental strictness was identified as unnecessary or even harmful for child competence. However, these studies mostly included adolescents [72–74] and less studies are focused on older adults [26,31]. Therefore, the present study offers new evidence extending the benefits of parental warmth to grandparenting functioning in those older adults who have reached one of the most important developmental tasks in later life: being a good grandparent.

The present study has some important strong points, but some limitations should be considered. First, this study examined family socialization using a consolidated theoretical framework: the two-dimensional model [1,2]. Parental warmth during the socialization years is always beneficial for grandparenting functioning, whereas parental strictness seems to be unnecessary or even harmful. Additionally, this study adds new evidence focused on older adults, and, specifically to grandparenting functioning based on five indicators: grandparent adjustment (i.e., satisfaction with life and meaning of life), as well as a good relationship with the second generation (i.e., parent–adult child relationship quality), and the third generation (i.e., emotional closeness with grandchildren and role overload). Grandparenting functioning is influenced by a multitude of psychological and environmental factors that will need further analysis. For example, all participants came from community senior centers, in which a positive impact on health and social aspects has been seen previously [75,76]. However, within this group, the study still found differences relating to grandparenting functioning and the impact on participants' well-being, depending on parenting during the socialization years. Another limitation of this study was related to the high degree of feminization of

the sample. This is closely related to the characteristics of the participants that attend community senior centers, in which older women tend to participate more than men [77].

Focusing attention on older people has allowed the exploration of the consequences of parental socialization beyond adolescence [26,31], as well as its influence on relationships with other generations (indirectly, based on the relationship between the grandparents with their adult children and grandchildren). Taking into account the possible long-term impact of parental socialization on grandparents could help family counsels, in order to facilitate systemic changes to improve intergenerational relationships within three-generation families [78]. Moreover, geropsychologists could use narrative therapy in order to help grandparents who have had malfunctioned parental roles during their childhood to understand this connection and how it relates to their children and grandchildren [79].

Due to the long duration of time between parental socialization (when the older adult was raised by their parents) and the present time of being a grandparent (an adult child in the later stage of their life span), caution is advised when inferring cause–effect, as the study is not based on longitudinal data. However, a consistent pattern between parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and grandparenting functioning was found. Some studies have considered the differences in parenting practices between generations [43]. Nevertheless, less is known about the fact that parental socialization affects both the individual and the other generations (indirectly). Additionally, statistical results from regression analyses are quite similar to those from correlation analysis (although two significant differences obtained in correlation analysis were not found in regression analysis). In addition to the fact that future studies on grandparenting should use measures and adopt designs to overcome these limitations, other suggestions for future research can be noted. Future studies should examine parenting and its consequences with a greater sample [80]. However, a similar pattern was found according to both statistical analyses: parental warmth was positively associated with grandparenting functioning whereas parental strictness was unnecessary or even detrimental to grandparenting functioning. Likewise, it would be necessary to deepen the understanding of psychological processes through which parental socialization continues to influence long-term family relationships. For this, analysis of the internal

working models of attachment of older adults should be introduced in order to show how parenting dimensions are associated with attachment styles in their current family interactions. Finally, measures of the continuity of parental socialization should be obtained through parenting styles and practices as grandparents.

5. Conclusions

Based on the two-dimensional model of parental socialization [2], the present study has found a consistent relationship between parental warmth and strictness during socialization years and grandparenting functioning, captured by satisfaction with life, meaning of life, parent–adult child relationship quality, emotional closeness with grandchildren and role overload. Overall, present findings highlight the beneficial role of the parental warmth dimension associated with better grandparenting functioning, but parental strictness dimension appears as unnecessary or even detrimental grandparenting functioning. Results obtained in the present study coincide with evidence from European and Spanish-speaking contexts [20,21,73]. Nevertheless, recent findings do not coincide with other studies conducted in Anglo-Saxon contexts in which only children with parents who are strict, and warm (i.e., authoritative parenting) have greater adjustment [1,11,13]. In addition, this study has examined some variables characteristic of older adults, which have not been widely used in the scientific literature [26]. This point has helped to understand the internal processes of grandparenting functioning, including well-being of grandparents (e.g., satisfaction with life and meaning of life) as well as family relationships with adult children and grandchildren. The factors that affect both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in old age are of a very varied nature, both personal and relational and associated with the context [81,82]. In this study, only parental socialization has been considered in order to identify its possible influence on current well-being. Despite the amount of influences across life cycle [44], there was found a relation between grandparenting functioning and the family in which grandparents were raised. Grandparents who were raised by parents characterized by warmth have greater grandparenting functioning than those who were raised by parents without warmth. The contributions of the present study are relevant for the literature about parental socialization's impact throughout the life cycle, increasing the evidence of a common pattern in the long term and not only in the short

term [26,31] and focusing on the impact on both the individual and family relationships between different generations.

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Table 1. Correlations between parenting dimensions and grandparenting functioning.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Parental warmth	1						
2. Parental strictness	-0.097	1					
3. Satisfaction with life	0.216**	-0.094	1				
4. Meaning of life	0.121*	0.012	0.439**	1			
5. Parent-adult child relationship quality	0.194**	0.020	0.259**	0.231**	1		
6. Emotional closeness with grandchildren	0.132*	0.101	0.270**	0.222**	0.245**	1	
7. Role overload	0.027	0.138*	-0.066	-0.103	0.012	-0.025	1

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2. Multiple linear regression coefficients between parenting dimensions and grandparenting functioning.

Dependent variable	Predictors	*B*	SE B	β	*t*	Lower	Upper
Satisfaction with life							
R^2adj = 0.048	Parental warmth	0.06	0.02	0.21	3.63***	0.029	0.099
F(2, 287) = 8.22***	Parental strictness	-0.06	0.04	-0.09	-1.48	-0.139	0.020
Meaning of life							
R^2adj = 0.007	Parental warmth	0.12	0.06	0.12	1.97	0.000	0.246
F(2, 287) = 1.96	Parental strictness	0.05	0.14	0.02	.32	-0.234	0.325
Parent-adult child relationship quality	Parental warmth	0.04	0.01	0.20	3.37***	0.017	0.064
R^2adj = 0.032	Parental strictness	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.55	-0.039	0.069
F(2, 287) = 5.72***							
Emotional closeness with grandchildren	Parental warmth	0.02	0.01	0.12	2.00*	0.000	0.045
R^2adj = 0.017	Parental strictness	0.05	0.03	0.11	1.92	-0.001	0.101
F(2, 287) = 3.53*							
Role overload							
R^2adj = 0.010	Parental warmth	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.59	-0.042	0.078
F(2, 287) = 2.51	Parental strictness	0.15	0.07	0.13	2.21	0.017	0.292

* $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

Parental Socialization, Delinquency during Adolescence and Adjustment in Adolescents and Adult Children

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Abstract

Although parental socialization has an influence on child development, current research is questioning which combination of parental strictness and warmth acts as protective or risk factors, especially during adolescence when the child is more vulnerable. The sample was 2125 participants, 58.7% female, divided into four age groups: adolescents (28.57%), young adults (28.38%), middle-aged adults (23.95%), and older adults (19.11%). The families were classified into four parenting styles: neglectful, indulgent, authoritative, and authoritarian according to their warmth and strictness scores. The psychosocial adjustment was measured by children's scores on academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values. A MANOVA 4 × 2 × 4 was applied with parenting styles, sex, and age group as independent variables. The results showed that, for adolescents and adult children, only parenting styles characterized by warmth (i.e., indulgent, and authoritative) were found to factor against delinquency during adolescence and benefit greater academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, and benevolence values, while parenting without warmth (i.e., authoritarian, and neglectful) were identified as risk factors. Contrary to classical research, the present findings seriously question the universal benefits of strict parenting as the only optimal strategy to protect not only against delinquency, but also to foster an adequate self and the internalization of social values.

Keywords: parenting styles, parental socialization, adjustment, adolescents, adults

1. Introduction

Research mainly from Anglo-Saxon contexts with European American families has traditionally identified firm control and maturity demands (i.e., greater strictness) combined with warm and responsive strategies (i.e., greater warmth), the so-called authoritative style, as the optimal parenting as it has been consistently related to the greater adjustment and fewer problems in children and adolescents. However, studies carried out in Anglo-Saxon contexts with ethnic minority groups such as African American and Chinese American families and in Arab countries, in addition to some recent research carried out from other cultural contexts such as Europe and South American countries, seriously questions whether the combination of parental strictness and warmth (i.e., the authoritative style) is always related to universal benefits for adjustment and fewer problems in children and adolescents. Additionally, research generally examines parental socialization during childhood and especially in adolescence, a period of greater vulnerability. However, less is known about the relation between parenting and adjustment beyond adolescence once parental socialization is ended. The present study examines the relationship between parenting and outcomes (self-esteem, academic/professional self-concept, and benevolence values delinquency during adolescence) in Spanish adolescents (during parental socialization) and adult children, including young, middle-aged, and older adults. The aim of this study is to identify which parenting style (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, or neglectful) is related to greater adjustment (i.e., higher self-esteem, academic/professional self-concept, and benevolence values) and less delinquency during adolescence.

1.1. Parental Socialization

Parental socialization refers to the process by which the adult can transmit to the young person the habits and values of the culture of origin so that the child adopts adequate functioning within the culture to which the child belongs [1–3]. Leaving aside cultural or demographic variations of what adopting an “adequate functioning” might mean, broadly speaking, it could be said that a child will be recognized as a competent adult if he or she does not display deviant behaviors, maintains close relationships, is economically self-sufficient and socializes his or her offspring successfully—all of them are the result of education, training, and imitation [4,5]. Therefore, socializing a

child with the right psychosocial development can be a challenge [6,7]. This process comes to an end when children become adults. By then, they are expected to have learned to self-regulate themselves in front of social demands without the presence of parents and to have become responsible members of society [8,9].

It should be emphasized that the socialization of children is not an exclusive task of parents. Although the family is the main (the first) socializing agent for children [9–12], it is not the only agent through which culture and social values are transferred to future generations [13–15]. Other agents come into play in this process, such as the school, which is also responsible for promoting the education of the young person, peers, or the media [11,12]. However, the present study will focus on studying the impact of parents on the psychosocial development of their children due to their greater degree of influence on them [5,9,16,17].

1.2. The Two-Dimensional Framework and Four Parenting Styles

The influence that parents exert on their children can be examined according to the two-dimensional model of Maccoby and Martin (1983) [10], which presents two dimensions, independent of each other, from which the four parenting styles emerge. These two dimensions are warmth and strictness. The first refers to the acceptance [18], sensitivity, and affection of parents when dealing with their children, the quality of the dialogue they engage in, and the use of reasoning [1,19] when children show inappropriate behavior. Recently, this parenting dimension has been called acceptance/involvement [20,21]. On the other hand, strictness is related to parental demands placed on children to promote compliance, i.e., the degree of imposition, authority, or rigidity. This parenting dimension has also been labeled in different ways as control [17,22] or firm control [23], and more recently called strictness/imposition [8].

Four parenting styles emerge from the combination of the two main parenting dimensions [1,8,10,24,25]. The authoritative style is defined by high warmth and high strictness. The indulgent style refers to high parental warmth and low strictness. The authoritarian style refers to low warmth and high strictness. Lastly, the neglectful parenting style comprises low warmth and low strictness. This model has been used as a guide to identify the best parenting style as measured by the degree of psychological

well-being, development, and personal and psychosocial adjustment of children [1,8,10,21,24]. In this model of normative parental socialization, parents transmit social norms and values to their children by acting on them contingent on their behavior. It does not include non-normative parents who are not contingent on their children's behavior (e.g., insulting the child when he/she behaves well) as well as parental practices characterized by child abuse (psychological, physical, or even sexual) and neglect (e.g., leave the teens alone for months) [1,5,7,9,10].

1.3. The Optimal Parenting

Traditionally, mainly from studies conducted in the United States with middle-class European American families, the combination of strictness and warmth has been identified as the best parental socialization style. The authoritative style was defined as the parenting method capable of generating the most optimal outcomes [21,26–29]. This parenting style was found to be associated with different indicators of children's psychological well-being, such as higher optimism, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and happiness [30]. In addition, children whose parents display this parental typology appeared to have greater coping skills in the face of adverse events and, in turn, a wider range of adaptive behaviors [21,28,31–33]. It has also been associated with higher academic achievement, a lower likelihood of experiencing behavioral problems, and lower substance use [21,28,34]. Much of the classical psychological literature points out that parental warmth is able to provide children with the necessary emotional support, while strictness allows for the establishment of clear expected patterns in children's behavior [1,10,21,28,29]. Recent studies found the benefits of authoritative parenting [35–39].

However, these classic results on the benefits of the authoritative parenting style do not always coincide with those obtained from studies conducted in other cultural contexts. Firstly, it should not be overlooked that the vast majority of studies in favor of the authoritative typology were conducted in the United States, and generally with middle-class participants of European American origin [13,21,28,40,41]. Some studies conducted on ethnic minorities in the United States report that the authoritarian parenting style (i.e., strictness without warmth) is associated with greater assertiveness

and independence in African Americans [42] and an absence of mental health problems in Arab adolescents [43].

Additionally, some recent literature about parenting points out that indulgent parenting (i.e., warmth without strictness) is related to optimal child adjustment in criteria such as family self-concept [6], less aggressiveness, and sexist prejudice [3], academic and family self-esteem [13], self-esteem and school performance [44], and greater self-concept and less maladjustment [45] compared to other parenting styles. As a result, new studies question the replicability of the results and claim that the strength of this relationship varies across samples and contexts [13,30,41,46]. So much so, that this evidence against the supposed and undeniable universality of the benefits of the authoritative style has opened an endless debate regarding the best parenting style.

1.4. Variations in the Optimal Parenting and Culture

One way to address the current debate and explain the different results observed in different studies is through the cultural inconsistency hypothesis [24,41]. According to this hypothesis, the same parental socialization could have different consequences depending on the cultural context where parental socialization occurs, so it is possible that for a parental style to be optimal it must match the expectations of parenting subject to the sociocultural context of origin [24,41]. For example, authoritarian parenting (i.e., strictness without warmth) is related to maladjustment in children from European American families [21,28], but to some benefits in those from African American [42] and Chinese American families [20]. In other words, a parenting style that is inconsistent with the environment will not have positive effects or may even be detrimental to the child [41]. Hence, the cultural context in which socialization takes place has an important implication in the relationship between parental style and the child's psychosocial development [47,48]. Alternative explanations in line with the cultural inconsistency hypothesis and thus against the universality of the positive effects of the authoritative typology are in line with Bronfenbrenner's (1986) Ecological Theory [49]—which suggests that people not only fit better but are also more satisfied in environments that display their same values and attitudes—and by the cultural constructs of collectivism and individualism and their variants of verticality and horizontality [48,50–52]. Collectivism refers to the perception of oneself as a part of a

group, while individualism refers to the view of oneself as autonomous [24,50,53]. Regardless of how one perceives oneself in relation to the collective, one can either accept inequality within the unit (vertical) or emphasize equality by seeing all members as equals (horizontal) [14,24,48,54,55].

These two lines are not only able to offer possible explanations about variations in the outcomes of the same parenting style examined in different contexts, but they also show that the authoritative typology is not always the one that presents the best results in the psychological and social well-being of children [13,24,41,48], nor is it always associated with positive outcomes as suggest some benefits related to the authoritarian parenting [20,43] and some recent evidence about the benefits of the indulgent parenting [4,8,14].

On the one hand, some benefits related to authoritarian parenting have been found in families from US minorities, and Arab or Asian countries. For example, it has been observed that in African American families that usually lived in poor and dangerous neighborhoods with greater rates of criminality and lack of opportunities, the authoritarian parenting style might not be related to detrimental consequences as in middle-class families from the US [42,56,57]. This might be explained by the fact that in these contexts, where disobeying parental rules may lead to harmful consequences, the authoritarian style, which has recently been identified as the first of the three stages of optimal parental socialization [13], brings benefits such as protection and might be an effective method in certain contexts [1,14,41]. In this sense, children from authoritarian African American families reported the highest scores in assertiveness and independence [42]. Similarly, in Arab or Asian countries where the vertical collectivist culture predominates, discipline, imposition, and rigidity are perceived as essential in parenting strategies and their lack is seen as a sign of irresponsibility [43,55,58]. Therefore, it is possible that they are understood as a form of protection instead of intrusion [42,56,59]. Therefore, the aforementioned evidence about non-detrimental consequences or even some benefits related to authoritarian parenting (i.e., strictness without warmth) revealed that, at least in some cultural contexts, the parental warmth component within the authoritative parenting style could be unnecessary in generating optimal outcomes, although parental strictness seems to be necessary and effective [42,56–58].

On the other hand, Latin American and Southern European countries are characterized by a horizontal collectivist culture, where affection, acceptance, and involvement in the socialization of the child seem to be necessary for optimal parenting. Unlike hierarchical cultures, in this type of culture, the group is organized on an egalitarian basis [24,48,50,54]. Therefore, parental strictness does not seem to fit into the preconceived scheme of parental socialization in these cultures—which calls into question whether the dimension of strictness within the authoritative parental style is truly indispensable for the socialization of children in collective horizontal cultures [13,24,48]. Thus, different studies carried out in countries such as Spain, Portugal, and Brazil claim the benefits that an indulgent parenting style can offer such as self-concept and the internationalization of social values in adolescents [47,48,60,61]. Additionally, other studies also support the benefits of indulgent parenting in the psychosocial adjustment of the child as greater emotional self-esteem and less emotional maladjustment in terms of nervousness, emotional instability, and hostility [8], greater emotional and family self-concept [4], higher social, emotional and family self-esteem [14].

In summary, studies conducted with ethnic minority groups, with low socioeconomic status, and in countries and cultures other than the United States do not support the positive effect linked to the authoritative style [1,20,24,41,45]. These results suggest that parenting styles are not equally effective in all cultural contexts [24,41–43,56].

1.5. Parenting and Its Contribution to Adjustment during Adolescence and Beyond

Most studies examine the relationship between parental socialization and differences in child adjustment during childhood and adolescence, which is when parents are raising their children. The influence of the family could be especially strong for children, as a family imprint, because parental socialization occurs in a developmental time of greater plasticity. Although experts in the field of development have suggested that parental socialization has crucial implications beyond adolescence [5,9,16,17], there is little empirical evidence about the long-term effects that parental socialization may have on children [3,14,62]. There is a time when parental

socialization is over: when the adolescent child reaches adult age. From that moment on, although the relationship between parents and adult children is generally maintained, parents do not perform their socializing tasks (e.g., punishing their children when they misbehave) [5,8,9]. Throughout adult development, there are also important differences between those with good adjustment and those with poor adjustment [63,64]. Differences in adjustment among adult children may also be related to the type of socialization that they received, although this point has been less examined [14,65]. Development across adolescence and adulthood is usually examined through different indicators of adjustment and maladjustment. Optimal development is based on greater adjustment and poor maladjustment [66–68]. Adolescent delinquency is one of the most serious forms of deviance that is associated with significant personal and social maladjustment, including problems in the school and family environments [69,70], poor self-esteem [71] and self-concept [70,72], and an inadequate internalization of social values [73]. There are significant differences in the rates of delinquent behaviors (e.g., getting into fights and stealing), between normative and adjusted adolescents, compared to maladjusted and antisocial adolescents, who have higher rates [11,66,67].

Additionally, in adolescence but also adulthood, self-esteem and self-concept, and internalization of social values are indicators of optimal development. Self-esteem evolves as time goes by as follows: levels tend to be high in childhood, dropped in adolescence, increase gradually throughout adulthood, and declined in old age [74]. The global valuation of the person (i.e., self-esteem) is based on the different relevant domains of the self (i.e., self-concept) [75–78]. Performance at school and work is beneficial for personal and social adjustment; in adolescence, it is mainly linked to school and academic tasks [68,79], whereas in adulthood it ranges from preparation for work (e.g., college or vocational training), career development and retirement [63,64]. In general, self-perception as a good student or worker (i.e., academic/professional self-concept) is one of the key elements to feel a valuable person with good qualities (i.e., self-esteem) [75,77,78]. Finally, the internalization of social values represents one of the main goals of a society, although not all adolescents and adults prioritize social values [7,9,80]. A good priority towards social values, particularly those more prosocial (e.g., benevolence values) favors good self-esteem and self-concept [7], and a lower tendency towards deviance [73]. Therefore, in family studies, a key question is which parental

strategies are a protective factor for optimal development, and which strategies are a risk factor. In addition, although differences in demographic variables are not the focus of parenting studies, previous research has reported some sex-and age-related differences in self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values. Females tend to have higher academic/professional self-concept and benevolence values [8,81], but lower self-esteem and delinquency during adolescence than males [24,74]. As for age-related differences, a general trend suggests that there are age-related increases in the self from adolescence through middle adulthood, and then a decreasing trend through old age [8,74], while on benevolence values, adolescents tend to report lower scores than adults [81].

1.6. The Present Study

This study aims to analyze which parenting style (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, or neglectful) is related to better adjustment in adolescent and adult children (young, middle-aged, and older adults). Since the development of children is very broad and encompasses innumerable aspects, this study will capture psychological development based on academic/professional self-concept and self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values.

Problems during adolescence can seriously damage adolescent adjustment, particularly when they are clearly opposed to social values and the law (e.g., delinquency) [82,83]. Some theorists have suggested the storm and stress hypothesis [84,85], based on the assumption that problems during adolescence are normative (i.e., they succeed a majority and with a positive impact). Specifically, from traditional clinical studies, they argued that adolescence is a period of "identity crisis" [85] and "individuation" [84] associated with a certain degree of discomfort, disruptiveness, and defiance for the family, but benefits in the path to healthy adulthood because adolescents must free themselves from dependence on their parents as a requirement to become adults with their own identity and sense of self and good adjustment (e.g., personal competence and acceptance of the norms) [68,86]. However, empirical evidence from community samples of adolescents suggests that problems during adolescence have negative consequences for adult adjustment [8,67,87]. The idea of crisis or problems in adolescence also underlies current studies based on a psychosocial

perspective [88–91] and neuroscience [92,93], but these problems during adolescence have a negative impact on health in adulthood.

Parents exert a decisive influence in adolescence, although their influence diminishes [66,94] at the same time as that of peers increases [95,96]. Some problems can appear in adolescence such as drug use [12,97], poor academic achievement and school misconduct [21,59], aggressive behaviors [98,99], antisocial tendency [67], and even delinquency [21,24]. However, the family is not an isolated context in which socialization occurs, as it includes others such as peers, school, and the media [12,49,66,100]. During adolescence, peer approval may be based less on adult standards and more on conformity to peer standards that sometimes deviate from social norms [31,68,101]. For example, school success may be devalued by peers and negatively associated with students' social standing [68,79], and even adolescents with high self-concept may decrease their academic engagement [96]. Despite these extrafamilial influences, parents remain the socializing agents during adolescence [1,10,21,28,29]. However, current parenting raises serious questions about which parenting style acts as a protective or risk factor for adolescents [13,41].

Overall, to protect against deviance in adolescence, parental strictness is constantly identified as a protective factor according to classical studies from middle-class European American families [21,26–29]. Those adolescents with parents who are strict, and also warm (i.e., authoritative), benefit in terms of protection against maladjustment and problems. Even adolescents from families also characterized by strictness, but without warmth and involvement (i.e., authoritarian families), scored reasonably well on measures of obedience and conformity to the social standards; they do well in school, and they are less likely than their peers to be involved in deviant activities. On the opposite side, adolescents from indulgent families, with warm and involved parents (as those from authoritative families), but lower parental strictness, report a higher frequency of substance abuse and school misconduct and are less engaged in school [21,28]. Nevertheless, some recent evidence mostly from European and Latin American countries seems to suggest the benefits of parental warmth [19,60], while parental strictness seems to be unnecessary or even detrimental [13,102] to protect against adolescent maladjustments such as drug use [44,97] and alcohol use [12] and help aggressive adolescents [99] or with an antisocial tendency [67]. The present

study examined the consequences of parenting styles once parental socialization is in the process (in adolescent children), but also when is over (in adult children). The aim is to examine parenting styles and their relationships for psychosocial development during the socialization years (through delinquency during adolescence) but also for the adjustment (through self-esteem, academic/professional self-concept, and benevolence values), in both cases among adolescents and adult children. Along with the problems in adolescence related to delinquent behaviors, which are associated with major problems of personal and social adjustment [21,24,82], the psychosocial development is examined through the global (i.e., self-esteem) and the specific component of self (i.e., self-concept), and also the internalization of benevolence values. In particular, the assessment of oneself as a person with good qualities and value (i.e., self-esteem) is associated with good personal adjustment and well-being [72,103], while academic and professional competence is represented in the academic-professional self-concept, which includes the learning (e.g., school or university) and professional environment (i.e., work) [75,76,104]. Additionally, the internalization of benevolence values is associated with empathy and prosocial behaviors [105,106]. The literature on parenting has focused primarily on examining parental influence on child adjustment during the parental socialization process (i.e., childhood and adolescence) [21,24,28,40,42,44], but fewer studies examine child adjustment beyond adolescence when parental socialization has ended [3,14,62].

According to previous literature, as the present study was conducted in a European country (Spain), the following hypothesis was tested: the parenting styles associated with greater adjustment (i.e., higher self-esteem, academic/professional self-concept, and benevolence values) and less maladjustment (i.e., lower scores in delinquency during adolescence) would be the parenting styles characterized by warmth (i.e., the indulgent and authoritative). Likewise, the parenting styles with the worst adjustment are expected to be authoritarian and neglectful, both characterized by a lack of warmth. Additionally, differences in child adjustment were analyzed as a function of parenting style, but also considering the sex and age of the children, to test for possible interaction effects of parenting style with sex and age, as well as to identify sex and age differences in adjustment criteria reported in previous studies.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of a total of 2125 participants from Spain. Specifically, 1227 females (58.7%) and 878 males (41.3%), both adolescents and adults (M = 36.19 and SD = 20.55). This sample was divided into 4 age groups: adolescents (n = 607, 352 females, 58%) aged 12–18 years (M = 16.63 and SD = 1.61); young adults (n = 603, 352 females, 58.4%) aged 19–35 years (M = 23.55 and SD = 3.72); middle-aged adults (n = 509, 327 females, 64.2%) aged 36–59 years (M = 48.35 and SD = 6.38); older adults (n = 406, 216 women, 53.2%) aged 60 years and over (M = 68.99 and SD = 8.04). The grouping of participants into different age groups is based on different previous studies [3,8,107]. It included adolescents (when parental socialization in process), and three groups of adult children (when parental socialization is finished), divided into young, middle-aged, and older adults based on the common age classification of the studies in adulthood and old age [108]. All participants had similar socioeconomic characteristics and they were from a community sample of middle-class families.

Following the a priori power analysis [109–111] which is usually used in studies to calculate statistical power, a minimum sample of 1724 participants was determined necessary to achieve detection with a statistical power of 0.95 ($\alpha = 0.05$; $\beta = 0.05$; $1 - \beta = 0.95$) a low effect-size, $f = 0.10$ [112,113]. With the sample size of the present study, 2125 participants, it is possible to detect a very small effect size, $f = 0.09$ (by fixing $\alpha = 0.05$; $\beta = 0.05$; $1 - \beta = 0.95$). Sample collection was carried out by collecting responses to online questionnaires with mandatory responses hosted on the university website during the 2019–2020 and 2021–2022 academic years. Participants usually take almost 45 min to answer the online survey. All the participants in this study (a) were Spanish, as were their parents and four grandparents; (b) lived in two-parent nuclear families with a mother or primary female caregiver and a father or primary male caregiver, and (c) participated voluntarily. Adolescents were recruited from the complete list of high schools through random selection. Young adult participants were recruited in undergraduate education courses. Middle-aged participants were recruited from randomly selected middle-class neighborhoods. The procedure of selection was based on door-to-door-canvassing. The different neighborhoods were stratified by quartile of

average household patrimony, and three middle-class neighborhoods were randomly selected. Older adult participants were recruited by randomly selecting from the full list of senior centers. Participants signed a declaration of consent and parental consent was required for adolescent participation. In all cases, anonymity and confidentiality of responses were assured. As data protection measures, (a) identifiers (e.g., university account) and survey data were stored in separate archives and (b) directory passwords were safeguarded, and sensitive archives were encrypted. In addition, respondents were informed about their rights and freedoms following the Helsinki procedure. Participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that they could drop out of the procedure and no longer participate in the study if they wished to do so (for a similar procedure, see Garcia et al., 2021 [67]). The questionnaires were assessed for doubtful response patterns as implausible inconsistencies between negatively and positively worded responses [114–116]. About 1.00% (n = 22) of the participants were recognized as questionable and eliminated from the sample.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Parental Socialization

Parental socialization was measured with two specific scales of the PARQ Questionnaire (Parental Acceptance Rejection/Control Questionnaire): the Warmth/Affection Scale (WAS) [117,118], and the Parental Control Scale (PCS) [117,119]. Parental warmth was assessed by the Warmth/Affection Scale (WAS) [117,118]. This scale consists of 20 items and aims to measure parental involvement and affection perceived by children (e.g., “My parents make me feel loved and needed”; “My parents show me that they love me”). For adult children, the items are the same but are written in the past tense (e.g., “My parents were really interested in what I did”; “They told me how proud they were when I behaved well”). The alpha coefficient of the WAS scale was 0.944. Parental strictness was assessed by Parental Control Scale (PCS) [117,119]. The PCS scale consists of 13 items intended to measure parental control, imposition, and strictness, also perceived by children (e.g., “My parents want to control anything I do”; “My parents tell me exactly when I have to be back home when I go out”). As with the previous scale, in the adult version of the questionnaire, the PCS scale items appear in the past tense (e.g., “My parents told me that I should do things

the way they wanted me to do them"; "My parents gave me tasks and did not allow me to do anything else until I finished them"). The alpha coefficient of the PCS scale was 0.902. The adult version of the WAS scale and the PCS scale have good psychometric qualities to measure parental socialization in adult children [120,121]. Both scales use a Likert-type scale with a range from 1 "almost never true" to 4 "almost always true". Higher scores indicate a greater perception of warmth and strictness.

The four parental socialization styles were defined following the procedure of dichotomization by the median of the warmth/affection and parental control scores, examining both variables simultaneously: authoritative style (above the median in both measures), neglectful (below the median in both measures), authoritarian (below the median in warmth/affection and above in parental control), and indulgent (above the median in warmth/affection and below in parental control) [8,14,21]. For heuristic rather than diagnostic purposes, the median dichotomization procedure (rather than using predetermined cut-off points) allows families to be classified into one of the four parenting styles according to their scores, which may be above or below the median value, providing a sample-specific categorization of families [8,21,105]. For example, families in the "neglectful" household are indeed relatively more neglectful (i.e., less warm and strict) than the other parents in the sample, although we do not know whether the families we have labeled "neglectful" would be considered "neglectful" within a different population (see Lamborn et al., 1991, p. 1053 [21]). The factor structure of the Adult Version of the Parental Acceptance/Rejection Questionnaire (which includes the two subscales used in this study: the WAS and the PCS) was confirmed by confirmatory factor analysis. Its invariance by age has been assessed, making it a valid measure for assessing parental socialization in adult children [14,120,121].

2.2.2. Academic/Professional Self-Concept

Academic/professional self-concept was measured by the 6 items of the Academic/professional self-concept dimension of the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale Form-5 (AF5) [122]. This dimension encompasses how one perceives oneself in the academic/professional environment (e.g., "I do school/professional work well"), and how one feels that one's teachers/superiors value one's performance (e.g., "My teachers/supervisors consider me to be a good worker"). The items are answered on a

Likert scale with a range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 99 (strongly agree). High scores indicate a high academic/professional self-concept. The alpha coefficient for this dimension of this AF5 scale was 0.879. The AF5 is a widely applicated questionnaire for adolescents [8,14,105] and adults [3,6,114] in Spanish language. Several empirical studies have tested the scale's dimensional structure with exploratory analyses [122] and also with confirmatory factor analyses [116,123,124] in different cultural contexts, such as Spain [124], Portugal [125], Brazil [75], Chile [114], the United States [126] and China [76]. Specifically, the validation of the instrument has shown its invariance by sex, age, and different languages such as Brazilian Portuguese [75], Portuguese [125], Chinese [76], and English [126] with the Spanish version. In addition, no method effects were found related to negatively worded items on the AF5 scale [114,116].

2.2.3. Self-Esteem

Self-esteem was measured with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) [127]. This scale is one of the most widely used measures to assess the concept of global self-esteem [30]. It consists of 10 items measuring the degree of self-acceptance and self-respect and is answered on a Likert scale with a range of 1 to 4, with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 4 meaning "strongly agree" (e.g., "I am generally satisfied with myself"; "I have a positive attitude towards myself"). High scores denote high self-esteem. However, 5 of the items are written in negative, so they must be counted in reverse (e.g., "I often think that I am not good at anything"; "I feel that I do not have too many things to be proud of"). The total score on self-esteem is obtained with an arithmetic mean of the scores on the 10 items. The alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.848.

2.2.4. Delinquency during Adolescence

Delinquency during adolescence was measured by assessing the frequency of different behaviors such as stealing, confronting the police, or being armed [21,24], exactly, with 8 items such as "Stealing goods from supermarkets (or department stores)" or "Damage strangers' cars". The response pattern presents 3 alternatives: "never", "once", and "two or more times". Adolescents reported their current rates, while adults (youth, middle-aged and older adults) reported their rates when they were adolescents [21,67]. Self-reported measures of delinquency during adolescence are used primarily in

studies with adolescents, and in studies with adults using the same measures as with adolescents, but with the items in the past tense [21,67]. The coefficient alpha was 0.657. Different scholars support the use of self-report measures to measure delinquency, even though they are subject to fluctuations both above and below the actual level of activity. They are considered to provide information closer to reality than official police reports do [21,24].

2.2.5. Benevolence Values

Benevolence was measured with the benevolence subscale of the Schwartz Values Inventory (SVI) [128]. The benevolence values were: "Loyal (loyal to my friends and my belonging group)"; "Helpful (working for the welfare of others)"; "Forgiving (forgiving to others)"; "Responsible (trustworthy)"; "Honest (sincere, authentic)", whose response pattern is reported by a Likert scale ranging from 1 "not important in my life", to 99 "essential in my life". The alpha coefficient for this dimension of the SVI scale was 0.730.

2.3. Plan of Analysis

The statistical analysis performed comprised a full multivariate factor analysis (MANOVA), followed by univariate factor analysis (ANOVA), and finally, Bonferroni post hoc tests. First, multivariate factorial design MANOVA (4 × 2 × 4) was conducted using as dependent variables academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence, while the independent variables were parenting styles (neglectful, indulgent, authoritative, and authoritarian), sex (female vs. male), and age group (adolescent, young adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults). We will use the two demographic variables (adolescent sex and age group) as independent variables (i.e., factors), rather than as statistical covariate controls, to (a) test for any possible moderation (i.e., interaction) and (b) analyze whether well-documented effects of demographic factors on the dependent variables (i.e., children's outcomes or criterion variables) are as expected in the literature. The factors (i.e., independent variables) in the design controlled (decrease) residual error variance and increase the multivariate Λ-test and univariate *F*-test power [129–131]. Second, univariate tests were applied for analysis in those sources of variation that reached the statistical level of significance in the multivariate analyses. Ultimately, Bonferroni

hypothesis tests were applied to the statistically significant results found in the univariate analysis while maintaining the alpha per study at 5%.

3. Results

3.1. Distribution of Parenting Styles

Table 1 provides an overview of the distribution of the participants according to the parenting style: neglectful, indulgent, authoritative, and authoritarian. On the one hand, the indulgent parenting style, $M = 73.60$ and $SD = 4.36$, and authoritative parenting style, $M = 72.65$ and $SD = 4.19$, had higher scores in warmth than the other two parenting styles, neglectful, $M = 56.87$ and $SD = 9.18$, and authoritarian, $M = 55.30$ and $SD = 9.65$. On the other hand, the authoritative parenting, $M = 39.85$ and $SD = 4.84$, and authoritarian parenting, $M = 41.91$ and $SD = 5.47$, scored higher in strictness than the neglectful parenting, $M = 28.32$ and $SD = 5.47$, and indulgent parenting, $M = 28.28$ and $SD = 5.37$.

3.2. Adjustment Criteria

Results from correlation analysis between adjustment criteria are presented in Table 2. Academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, and benevolence values were positively correlated between them. In addition, academic/professional self-concept and benevolence values were negatively associated with delinquency during adolescence (see Table 2).

3.3. Multivariate Analysis

The results from the multivariate analysis indicated significant differences in all main effects: parenting styles, $\Lambda = 0.861$, $F(12, 5529.9) = 26.83$, $p < 0.001$; sex, $\Lambda = 0.913$, $F(4, 2090.0) = 49.85$, $p < 0.001$; and age groups, $\Lambda = 0.876$, $F(12, 5529.9) = 23.58$, $p < 0.001$. The interaction effects between sex and age group were also statistically significant, $\Lambda = 0.963$, $F(12, 5529.9) = 6.63$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 3). Neither the interaction effect of parenting styles by sex nor parenting styles by age reached the statistically significant level ($p > 0.05$).

3.4. Univariate Analyses and Post-Hoc Tests

3.4.1. Parenting Styles, Delinquency during Adolescence, and Adjustment

The results of the ANOVAs showed that there are statistically significant differences between parenting styles and all development criteria: academic/professional self-concept, $F(3, 2093) = 55.71$, $p < 0.001$, self-esteem, $F(3, 2093) = 53.95$, $p < 0.001$, delinquency during adolescence, $F(3, 2093) = 12.20$, $p < 0.001$, and benevolence, $F(3, 2093) = 44.81$, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 4).

A constant pattern between parenting styles, delinquency during adolescence, and adjustment was found (see Table 4). Overall, the optimal scores were related to parenting styles based on warmth (i.e., the indulgent and the authoritative). Specifically, children from indulgent and authoritative families scored higher on academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, and benevolence. On the other hand, both parenting styles were related to the lowest scores on delinquency during adolescence. In contrast, neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles were associated with the highest scores on delinquency during adolescence, and the lowest scores on academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, and benevolence (the latter especially for neglectful parenting).

3.4.2. Sex and Age Groups

Univariate analyses also showed that there were statistically significant sex and age group differences for all the adjustment criteria measured ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, the interaction effect between sex and age reached the statistically significant level ($p < 0.05$) only for academic/professional self-concept, $F(3, 2093) = 13.79$, $p < 0.001$, and delinquency during adolescence, $F(3, 2093) = 5.32$, $p = 0.001$.

Examining sex-related differences, females had the highest scores in academic/professional self-concept and benevolence. In contrast, males had the highest scores in self-esteem and delinquency during adolescence (see Table 5).

Regarding age-related differences (see Table 6), middle-aged participants (36–59 years old) showed the highest academic/professional self-concept, followed by young adults (19–35 years old) and older adults (60 years old and above). Those with

the lowest scores on this criterion were adolescents (12–18 years old). In self-esteem, young adults, middle-aged and older adults had the highest scores on this adjustment criterion, while adolescents, again, scored the lowest. Regarding delinquency during adolescence, young adults scored the highest, followed by adolescents and middle-aged adults, with older participants scoring the lowest. Finally, regarding benevolence values, middle-aged participants showed the highest search for the well-being of others, followed by adolescents and young adults.

In the interaction between sex and age group on academic/professional self-concept (see Figure 1), it can be observed that, in general, academic/professional self-concept tends to be higher in females than in males (this tendency is noticed especially in adolescents). Adolescents had the lowest academic/professional self-concept, in particular male adolescents. However, these sex differences tended to even out as adolescence progresses. It is also noted that academic self-concept tended to increase with age (this tendency is more pronounced in males). In fact, the highest point in relation to academic/professional self-concept for both sexes is in middle age. However, academic/professional was lower among older adults compared to middle-aged adults (this pattern is more pronounced in women).

In the interaction between sex and age group on delinquency during adolescence (see Figure 2), it is generally found that females tend to have lower scores than males. The greater scores were reported by young adults, especially among males. The lowest scores in delinquency during adolescence were reported by older adults for both males and females. Adolescents and middle-aged adults had similar scores, lower than adolescents (a tendency especially remarkably for males), but higher than older adults (see Figure 2).

4. Discussion

4.1. Main Findings

This study analyzed the relationship between parenting styles (e.g., neglectful, indulgent, authoritative, and authoritarian), delinquency during adolescence, and adjustment based on academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, and benevolence values. The results of the present study in a European country (Spain) revealed that

children from indulgent (warmth without strictness) and authoritative (warmth with strictness) families, both adolescents and adults, are those who showed a greater psychological adjustment based on a higher academic/professional self-concept, higher self-esteem, greater benevolence values and, in turn, a lower rate of delinquency during adolescence. The lower expression of delinquent behavior points to the protective role of these two parental styles against deviance to the social standards. On the opposite side, the neglectful (neither warmth nor strictness) and authoritarian (strictness, but not warmth) styles were associated with the greatest delinquency during adolescence and the lowest adjustment in terms of academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, and benevolence values.

4.2. Comparing Present Findings with Previous Research

The findings from the present study conducted in the Spanish cultural context seem to suggest that parenting styles without the warmth component are those related to the greatest delinquency during adolescence and the lower adjustment. Hence, it seems that parental warmth is an essential component of socialization in this cultural context (i.e., Europe), while strictness might be unnecessary to achieve effective socialization, in line with some recent studies, most of them with adolescents [12,24,48,61].

In addition, as opposed to classical research with middle-class European American families, the findings of this study revealed that parental strictness seems to be unnecessary when it is accompanied by parental warmth (indulgent and authoritative children reported the same scores) and even harmful when is not accompanied by parental warmth (children from authoritarian families had lower adjustment). The present study examined delinquency during adolescence, one of the most extreme forms of deviance against social standards usually examined in parenting studies [21,82]. On the one hand, contrary to the present findings, classical results from European American families identified that adolescents with lower rates of delinquency are those from families with strictness (i.e., authoritative and authoritarian) [21,28]. According to classical research, although adolescents from indulgent families benefit from parental warmth as much as those from authoritative families, they pay the cost for the lack of family control by reporting high delinquency rates, as do those from neglectful families [21,28]. In agreement with classical research, only parental strictness protects against

deviance in its most drastic form (delinquency), but also in other forms such as drug use [21,28]. On the other hand, as opposed to results from European American families, the present findings seem to suggest that the use of reasoning and dialogue within an emotional climate of confidence and security (i.e., parenting styles characterized by warmth) is enough to transmit the social norms.

Among the objectives of socialization is not only to prevent social problems but also to favor the development of the individual as someone valuable and capable of doing well at school and work [9,10]. In this sense, the present results also identify that warmth is the key parental component that ensures maximum benefits for adolescent and adult children to feel valued and with good qualities (i.e., good self-esteem), to be confident in their abilities both at school and at work (i.e., good academic/professional self-concept), and to have as a priority the values of benevolence, which are those that favor empathic and prosocial behaviors.

4.3. The Optimal Parenting across the Globe within the Two-Dimensional Framework

Another contribution of the present study is that allows researchers across the world to examine parental socialization within a common theoretical framework, the so-called two-dimensional model [10], based on the two main parental dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and the four parental styles that arise from the combination of the two dimensions (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful). The use of the same theoretical model makes it possible to compare the results of different studies carried out in different countries and cultural contexts.

The cultural context in which parental socialization takes place is key to understanding the discrepant results of the literature [13,41]. According to classical results, it was identified the benefits of strictness combined with warmth (i.e., the authoritative style). However, at least in this cultural context analyzed (i.e., European countries), it seems that the greatest adjustment is only associated with parental warmth without strictness (i.e., the indulgent style). Additionally, to test which is the best parenting in a particular context, it is quite important to use the same procedure (the use of a split procedure to assign families to the parenting groups) as well as the same

research design and statistical analysis used in the previous studies in European American families [21,28,82] and other recent studies [24,132]. In this sense, the present research follows the same techniques, procedure, research design, and statistical analysis to test which parenting style is beneficial or harmful for adjustment in adolescents and adult children.

Addressing the debate regarding the best parenting style, the results do not support the universality of the authoritative style as the only optimal style and add more evidence that the context plays a key role in the effectiveness of parenting styles. Moreover, that the results advocate the implementation of educational programs based on warmth is consistent with other studies carried out in the Spanish context, or in Latin American or Southern European countries [13,44,60]. Thus, this study extends the evidence on the benefits of the indulgent parenting style, in the short and long term, and on four developmental criteria: academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values.

4.4. Extending the Study of Parental Socialization beyond Adolescence

Another important contribution of the present study is that it provides empirical evidence regarding the relationship between parenting styles and psychological adjustment beyond adolescence—extending the importance of socialization when this process has been completed [3,4,62]. Adolescents, but also adult children, socialized by attachment-based families benefit from having both lower rates of adolescent delinquency and good adjustment. Specifically, according to the multivariate analysis, neither interaction effect of parenting styles by sex nor parenting styles by age were found for the adjustment criteria (self-esteem, self-concept, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values) suggesting that parental warmth without strictness (i.e., the indulgent style) is related to the same benefits in adjustment for sons and daughters as well as in adolescence (during parental socialization) and beyond (in adulthood and old age). In this line, the results seem to support the maintenance of the benefits of successful socialization over time [28,133,134].

Although it was not the focus of the research, some sex and age-related differences were found in line with some other studies [8,14,107]. Males showed higher self-esteem, lower academic/professional self-concept, especially in adolescence, lower

expression of benevolence values, and higher rates of delinquency during adolescence, especially young adults. Additionally, in academic/professional self-concept the greatest scores were obtained by adolescents and the highest but middle-aged adults (young and older adults were in a middle position). In self-esteem, the lowest scores correspond to adolescents. In delinquency, young adults were those who had the greatest rates during their adolescence, followed by adolescents and middle-aged adults, while the lowest scores corresponded to older adults. Finally, in benevolence values, middle-aged adults showed greater scores than young adults and adolescents.

Differences in adjustment in adolescence, adulthood, and old life can be explained by different influences within the family (e.g., parental socialization) and outside the family (e.g., peers or media) [12,49,66]. Despite all these influences, in the present study, there was found a consistent pattern between parenting styles and children's adjustment.

4.5. Limitations

When it comes to the limitations of the study, it is worth highlighting its cross-sectional nature and the non-experimental methodology, so it is not possible to establish causal relationships between the variables studied. However, the measure of socialization has been the same for both adolescent and adult children, as have the criteria for psychosocial development. It should be considered that in the present study, parental socialization is captured through the main two dimensions to conform to the four parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful), which are different parenting typologies of other parenting studies that have captured parental socialization through the clustering method as LPA (i.e., latent profile analysis) [135–137]. Additionally, it should be considered that responses in the present study are offered by children who seem to have more accurate responses compared to parents [138,139]. The study of parental socialization beyond adolescence requires us to use the same measures of parental socialization as for adolescent children, but with the statements in the past tense as it followed in the previous studies [14,65,120,121]. Overall, past-tense reports of general items (e.g., parental socialization) without specific details (e.g., dates or specific events) are usually considered acceptable, especially in community studies [140,141]. Specifically, empirical data support the factorial

invariance of the two-dimensional model (i.e., warmth and strictness) across sex and age [14]. In any case, caution should be exercised because, in the case of adult children, especially middle-aged and older adults, it has been a long time since they were raised by their parents until now [14,120,121,142]. However, according to the main findings of the present study, even though adolescents and adult children grew up at different times, differences in their adjustment are equally related to parenting styles with the same pattern: only those from warm and non-strict families (i.e., the indulgent) reported the highest academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, and benevolent values, and the lowest delinquency during adolescence. Future studies should move towards longitudinal follow-ups of children after socialization [143], although these projects are highly costly and do not usually provide very different results from cross-sectional ones, although they do allow more specific relationships to be established. Finally, it should be considered that all participants were from middle-class families, so results should be extended in future studies to other settings and SES (e.g., risk neighborhoods).

5. Conclusions

The present work examines the relationship between parenting across age groups and its impact on psychosocial adjustment. Most of the previous studies have been focused on the impact of parents on the child's adjustment as the parental socialization process occurs [12,60] or based on the study of parenting practices [4,59] rather than on parenting styles. However, the present study assesses the relationship between parenting styles in which children were raised and children's psychosocial adjustment during adolescence and beyond in a European country (i.e., Spain). Present findings revealed that parenting characterized by warmth (i.e., indulgent and authoritative styles) is related to higher psychological adjustment, as opposed to neglectful and authoritarian styles, which are associated with the poorest results. Specifically, children raised by indulgent families presented similar or higher psychosocial adjustment than those from authoritative homes. These results disagree with other studies conducted in different cultures that state that authoritative [21,28,31] or authoritarian [20,43] parenting are related to the greatest scores in child adjustment. However, the present findings agree with the most recent evidence about parenting conducted in Latin American or Southern

European countries that highlights the importance of warmth without strictness (i.e., indulgent parenting) to achieve the best psychosocial adjustment of the child [13,44,60].

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Table 1. Distribution of participants by parenting style.

	Total	Neglectful	Indulgent	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Frequency	2125	442	625	453	605
Percentage	100	20.8	29.4	21.3	28.5
Warmth					
M	64.71	56.87	73.60	72.65	55.30
SD	11.31	9.18	4.36	4.19	9.65
Strictness					
M	34.63	28.32	28.28	39.85	41.91
SD	8.32	5.47	5.37	4.84	5.47

Table 2. Correlations between adjustment criteria, mean and standard deviation.

	1	2	3	4
1. Academic/Professional Self-Concept	1	0.363 **	−0.130 **	0.412 **
2. Self-esteem		1	0.007	0.202 **
3. Delinquency during adolescence			1	−0.132 **
4. Benevolence values				1
M	7.48	3.24	1.23	7.97
SD	1.49	0.47	0.28	1.13

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. MANOVA (4 [a] × 2 [b] × 4 [c]) for academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values.

	Λ	*F*	$df_{between}$	df_{error}	*p*
(A) Parenting styles [a]	0.861	26.83	12.0	5529.9	<0.001
(B) Sex [b]	0.913	49.85	4.0	2090.0	<0.001
(C) Age groups [c]	0.876	23.58	12.0	5529.9	<0.001
A × B	0.990	1.73	12.0	5529.9	0.055
A × C	0.981	1.10	36.0	7833.9	0.317
B × C	0.963	6.63	12.0	5529.9	<0.001
A × B × C	0.985	0.88	36.0	7833.9	0.671

a_1 neglectful, a_2 indulgent, a_3 authoritative, and a_4 authoritarian. b_1 women, y b_2 men. c_1 adolescents (12–18 years), c_2 young adults (19–35 years), c_3 middle-aged (36–59 years), and c_4 older (60 years and older).

Table 4. Means, standard deviations, univariate *F*-values, and Bonferroni's post hoc analysis of parenting styles for academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values.

	Parenting styles					
Adjustment criteria	Neglectful	Indulgent	Authoritative	Authoritarian	*F*(3, 2093)	*p*
Academic/work self-concept	7.09[b] (1.49)	7.90[a] (1.24)	7.81[a] (1.38)	7.10[b] (1.64)	54.71	< 0.001
Self-esteem	3.15[b] (0.45)	3.35[a] (0.45)	3.36[a] (0.41)	3.09[b] (0.47)	53.95	< 0.001
Delinquency during adolescence	1.26[a] (0.30)	1.20[b] (0.24)	1.20[b] (0.25)	1.27[a] (0.33)	12.19	< 0.001
Benevolence values	7.56[c] (1.21)	8.22[a] (1.03)	8.22[a] (0.97)	7.81[b] (1.16)	44.81	< 0.001

Bonferroni test $\alpha = .05$; a > b > c

Table 5. Means, standard deviations, univariate *F*-values of sex for academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values.

	Sex			
Adjustment Criteria	Women	Men	*F*(1, 2093)	*p*
Academic/work Self-concept	7.60 (1.45)	7.33 (1.54)	7.58	0.006
Self-esteem	3.20 (0.48)	3.30 (0.44)	53.95	0.001
Delinquency during Adolescence	1.17 (0.21)	1.32 (0.34)	150.84	0.001
Benevolence values	8.07 (1.12)	7.82 (1.12)	24.84	0.001

Table 6. Means, standard deviations, univariate *F*-values, and Bonferroni's post hoc analysis of age group for academic/professional self-concept, self-esteem, delinquency during adolescence, and benevolence values.

	Age					
Adjustment criteria	Adolescents	Young adults	Middle-aged adults	Older adults	*F*(3, 2093)	*p*
Academic/work self-concept	7.05[c] (1.62)	7.43[b] (1.34)	8.10[a] (1.16)	7.44[b] (1.62)	49.15	< 0.001
Self-esteem	3.15[b] (0.48)	3.25[a] (0.50)	3.31[a] (0.42)	3.26[a] (0.43)	11.02	< 0.001
Delinquency during adolescence	1.22[b] (0.28)	1.31[a] (0.33)	1.23[b] (0.26)	1.13[c] (0.20)	41.45	< 0.001
Benevolence values	7.78[b] (1.18)	7.94[b] (1.08)	8.19[a] (1.06)	8.01 (1.15)	10.34	< 0.001

Bonferroni test α = .05; a > b > c

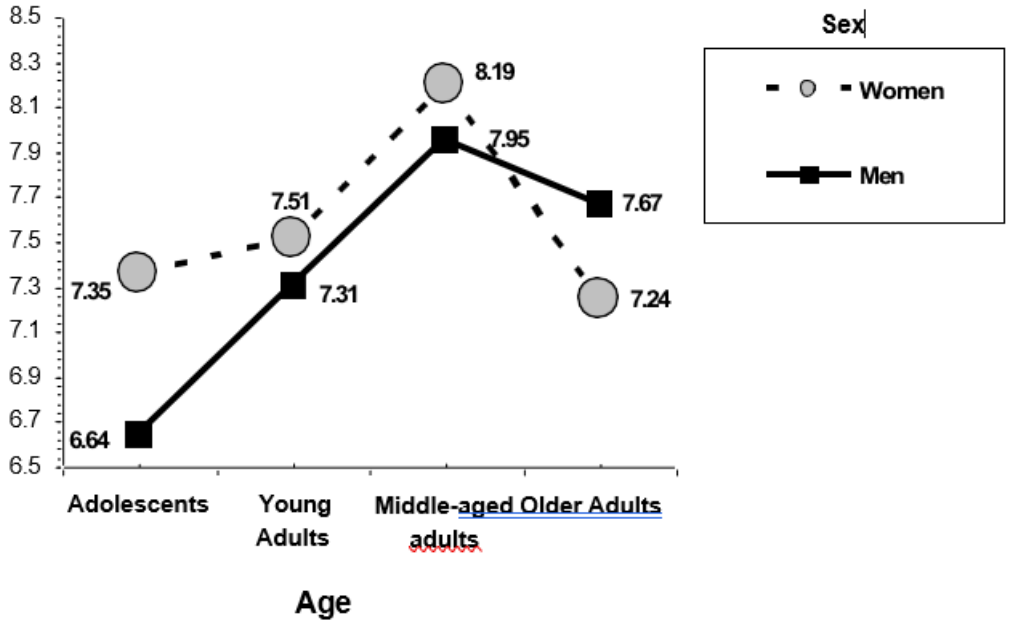

Figure 1. Interactions of sex and age. Academic/professional self-concept.

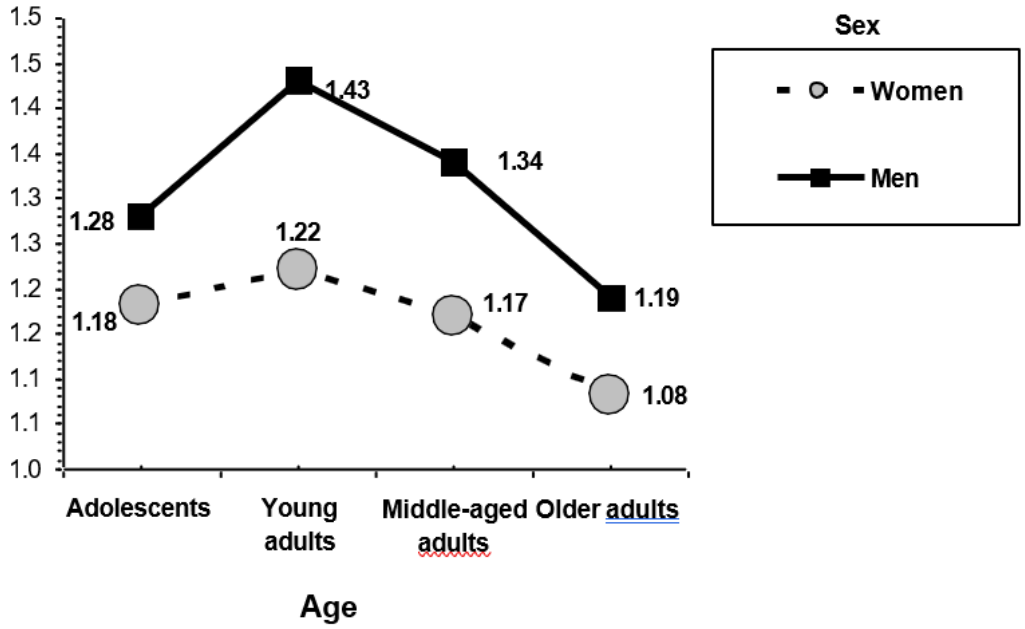

Figure 2. Interactions of sex and age. Delinquency during adolescence.

Analyzing when parental warmth but without parental strictness leads to more adolescent empathy and self-concept: Evidence from Spanish homes

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Abstract

Introduction: Classical research mainly conducted with European-American families has identified the combination of warmth and strictness (authoritative style) as the parenting always associated with the highest scores on developmental outcomes. Additionally, despite the benefits of empathy for prosocial behaviors and protection against antisocial behaviors, most research has considered the contribution of specific practices (e.g., reasoning or power assertion), but not so much the parenting styles. Similarly, family studies tend to study the relationship between parenting and global self-perceptions (self-esteem), but not so much those of each dimension (self-concept).

Methods: In the present study, 600 Spanish adolescents from 12 to 17 years old (M = 15.25, SD = 2.01) were classified within one of the four household typologies (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, or neglectful). Adolescent developmental outcomes were cognitive empathy (adopting perspectives and emotional understanding), emotional empathy (empathic stress and empathic happiness), and self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family and physical).

Results: The results showed that the indulgent parenting (warmth but not strictness) was related to equal or even better empathy and self-concept than the authoritative style (warmth and strictness), whereas non-warm parenting (authoritarian and neglectful) was consistently associated with poor results.

Discussion: Overall, the present findings seriously question that parental strictness combined with parental warmth (authoritative style) is always the parenting style related to the greatest outcomes. By contrast, it seems that reasoning, warmth and involvement, without strictness (indulgent parenting) help adolescents to achieve a good orientation toward others in terms of cognitive and affective empathy and a good self-evaluation in terms of self-concept.

Keywords: parenting styles, empathy, self-concept, perspective taking, adolescents

Introduction

The internalization of social values is usually defined as "taking over the values and attitudes of society as one's own so that socially acceptable behavior is motivated not by anticipation of external consequences but by intrinsic or internal factors" (Grusec and Goodnow, 1994, p. 64). For many years, scholars have discussed how parents can help children to acquire a set of social values to develop the capacity to take the perspective of others, and self-regulatory abilities, including responsibility, psychosocial maturity, and an adequate sense of self in their children (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Grusec and Goodnow, 1994; Grusec et al., 2017).

Parents can encourage or damage the child's capacity to make inferences about how others feel (i.e., empathy) as well as they can foster or harm the child in the construction of his/her portrait as a valuable individual with good qualities (i.e., self-concept; Baumrind, 1978; Pinquart and Gerke, 2019; Martínez et al., 2021). Overall, empathy includes the cognitive trait (e.g., capacity to explicitly infer mental states in others) as well as the affective trait (e.g., capacity to share and understand the internal state of others; Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006; Farrant et al., 2012; Yu and Chou, 2018). Self-concept refers to the evaluative component of self-perceptions, which includes a global dimension, but also different dimensions related to each other (e.g., emotional and social self-concept; Harter, 1988; Garcia F. et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2020). Empathy and self-concept, both positively correlated, are strongly linked to prosocial behaviors (Laible et al., 2004; Ramirez-Jimenez and Serra-Desfilis, 2020). By contrast, antisocial behaviors are associated with lack of empathy and self-concept (Gracia et al., 2008; Lila et al., 2013; Ruiz-Hernández et al., 2021).

Despite variations in the way academics have studied parental socialization over time, researchers agree on identifying two major dimensions (Sears et al., 1957; Baumrind, 1967; Maccoby and Martin, 1983), warmth and strictness, also referred to as responsiveness and demandingness in empirical research (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994), or acceptance/ involvement and strictness/imposition (Martínez et al., 2012, 2017). For example, earlier scholars were already using labels such as warmth, assurance or love, and domination, and labels such as firm discipline or control, with similar meanings to the warmth and strictness dimensions (Symonds, 1939; Baldwin, 1955; Schaefer, 1959; Becker and Krug, 1964). The two parental dimensions are theoretically orthogonal (i.e., unrelated) constructs reflecting two persistent patterns of parental behavior in children's socialization process that organize the different parenting practices (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2015; Ibabe, 2019; Tur-Porcar et al., 2019).

Specifically, the warmth dimension refers to the degree to which parents are emotionally involved in their children's socialization, showing them warmth, affection, and support, and using dialog and reasoning as main parenting strategies to modify their maladjusted behavior (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Lamborn et al., 1991; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2021, 2022). The strictness dimension refers to the extent to which the parental behavior is characterized by firmness and strict discipline, using parenting practices such as control, scolding, or spanking to modify their children's maladjusted behavior and clearly set limits on their conduct (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Axpe et al., 2019; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2021). Four parenting styles are defined by the combinations of the two main parenting dimensions: The authoritative style (high warmth and high strictness), the indulgent style (high warmth and low strictness), the authoritarian style (low warmth and high strictness), and the neglectful style (low warmth and low strictness).

Scholars as Baumrind and Lewis have discussed how parents can favor an effective socialization, usually identify in terms of consideration for others and good personal competence. Lewis (1981) conjectured that parental warmth, regardless of parental strictness, promotes an effective socialization, despite empirical evidence revealed the benefits of authoritative parenting to help children to achieve good prosocial behavior and internalization of the social norms (Baumrind, 1967; Baumrind

and Black, 1967; Baumrind, 1971), but also confidence in one-self and good self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967). Nevertheless, Lewis (1981) argued that children from authoritative homes internalize social norms may be due to the parental warmth rather than by parental strictness. Specifically, based on attribution theory, Lewis (1981) suggests that the *least* salient external control (i.e., parental warmth) might be sufficient to elicit the greatest child internalization of the social norms whereas those more salient external controls (i.e., parental strictness) might be superfluous, so its deletion from authoritative parenting package is not associated with less well-socialized behavior.

As response to Lewis, Baumrind (1983) argued that both warmth and strictness parental ingredients are independently (only appears joined in the authoritative parenting) and she emphasized the relevance of parental strictness as an essential ingredient of the authoritative package. Baumrind (1983) noted that warmth (higher parent–child communication, and nurturance) and strictness (greater control and maturity demands) should appear simultaneously to achieve a well-socialized child. Therefore, according to Baumrind (1983), it is not enough with the parental warmth (e.g., parent–child communication) regardless strictness, contrary to Lewis statements. Instead, Baumrind (1983) pointed out that strictness is not an incidental component of authoritative parenting style, rather than its main component that defined an optimal parenting. Specifically, Baumrind explained the widely benefits of parental strictness, except for when punishment is cruel or noncontingent (agree with Lewis). Additionally, benefits are greater for children when parents combined parental control and high maturity demands (i.e., strictness), and they are responsive and sensitive (i.e., warmth). Data from the so-called three parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) were widely supported by empirical evidence (see Darling and Steinberg, 1993).

The theoretical parenting framework also comprises the consequences of the different child-rearing patterns on child and adolescent competence and adjustment (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Villarejo et al., 2020). One of the most consistent results, based on studies mostly with Anglo-Saxon samples from middle-class families, shows that high parental warmth along with high parental strictness (i.e., authoritative style) provides the greatest psychosocial benefits to children (Baumrind, 1967; Baumrind, 1971; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). For instance, the authoritative style

is related to the highest scores on several criteria, such as psychological adjustment (Kritzas and Grobler, 2005), academic achievement (Im-Bolter et al., 2013), adaptive strategies (Aunola et al., 2000), and protection from deviance such as antisocial behavior and drug use (Montgomery et al., 2008; Hoffmann and Bahr, 2014). However, some studies carried out in the US with ethnic minority groups, including Asian-American (Steinberg et al., 1992; Chao, 2001) or African-Americans (Baumrind, 1972; Pittman and Chase-Lansdale, 2001), as well as some evidence from Asian and Middle Eastern societies (Dwairy and Achoui, 2006; Dwairy et al., 2006b,c), raise doubts about the authoritative style as the best parenting strategy to provide the greatest benefits for adolescents in all cultural and ethnic contexts. Instead, they find that authoritarian parenting (warmth but not strictness) is related to some optimal child and adolescent outcomes. Specifically, it is argued that in these cultural contexts children and adolescents could interpret the authoritarian parenting as a form of protection and caring (Leung and Shek, 2020; Martínez et al., 2021).

These discrepancies in findings from studies examining the relationship between child-rearing patterns and adolescent competence and adjustment seem to suggest variations in optimal parenting depending on the cultural and social context where parental socialization is examined (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Pinquart and Gerke, 2019; Garcia, Fuentes, et al., 2020). In addition, recent family studies are examining parenting and its impact on child competence across different cultural contexts, including Western societies (Wade et al., 2018) as well as Eastern societies (Yeung, 2021). Interestingly, a recent parenting study (Garcia et al., 2019) suggests that three parenting stages (authoritarian, authoritative and indulgent) for the optimal parenting might concur in the Digital Society at the same time in different environments, contexts, and cultures, extending previous evidence based on the traditional paradigm with only two stages (i.e., authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles). The indulgent parenting (i.e., warmth without strictness) is often related to optimal competence and adjustment, according to studies mostly conducted with families in European (Rodrigues et al., 2013; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019) and South-American countries (Martínez et al., 2007; Martínez and Garcia, 2008; Garcia et al., 2019). The third parenting stage (i.e., the indulgent style) is related to the same or even better scores than the authoritative style on different indicators of

adolescent competence such as psychological adjustment (Fuentes et al., 2015b), self-concept (Calafat et al., 2014; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), internalization of social values (Martínez and Garcia, 2007) and environmental values (Queiroz et al., 2020), connectedness to nature (Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019a), positive attitude toward institutional authority (Martinez-Ferrer et al., 2018) or school competence (Fuentes et al., 2015c). In addition, indulgent parenting provides broad benefits in terms of protection against alcohol and other drugs (Fuentes et al., 2015a; Garcia, Serra, et al., 2020), traditional bullying and cyberbullying victimization (Martínez et al., 2019), problematic use of social networking sites (Martinez-Ferrer et al., 2018), child-to-parent violence (Suárez-Relinque et al., 2019) or behavioral problems (Martínez et al., 2013). Some recent studies extend the benefits of indulgent parenting beyond adolescence (Garcia O.F. et al. 2018; Garcia and Serra, 2019; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Garcia et al., 2021).

The present study

The aim of this study was to examine which parenting style (indulgent, authoritarian, authoritarian, or neglectful) is associated with greater benefits in achieving adolescents who can take the perspective of others and have an adequate sense of self. Specifically, it was examined (i) cognitive empathy (adopting perspectives, emotional understanding), emotional empathy (empathic stress and empathic happiness), and (ii) self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical). The process of internalization of self-transcendence values involves socially-focused motivations (Sortheix and Schwartz, 2017), emphasizing the positive effects on others of fostering a child's feelings of empathy and consideration for others (Hoffman, 1970; Lewis, 1981; Baumrind, 1983).

Nevertheless, although social values help children to be able to take the perspective of others, less is known about the impact of parenting on children's empathy, which might be an important expression of social values that emphasize accepting others as equals and having concern for their welfare (Caprara et al., 2012). Most of the available evidence stems from studies conducted in Europe (Carlo et al., 2011), the United States (Hoffman and Saltzstein, 1967) or Asia (Yan et al., 2017) that examine parenting practices rather than parenting styles, with some unexpected findings

(Hoffman and Saltzstein, 1967; Krevans and Gibbs, 1996; Helwig et al., 2014; Llorca-Mestre et al., 2017; Boele et al., 2019). For example, Hoffman and Saltzstein (1967) examined three discipline practices: Power assertion (the parent capitalizes on his power and authority over the child), love withdrawal (direct but nonphysical expressions of anger or disapproval), and inductive reasoning (explanations of parents about the consequences of the child's action for others). Among middle-class families, children with the best competence oriented toward the feelings of others are those whose parents use inductive reasoning and less power assertion, although, unexpectedly, among lower-class families, competence toward others is related to love withdrawal, but unrelated to inductive reasoning. Krevans and Gibbs (1996) found that children whose parents used inductive reasoning reported the highest empathic competence, but contrary to the authors' expectations, parents' use of statements of disappointment was strongly related to children's empathic abilities. As Boele and colleagues noted in their recent literature review (2019), it is unclear how the parent–child relationship could be associated with empathy outcomes, partly because theoretical and methodological weaknesses in the focus of parental practices make it difficult to find conclusive answers (Boele et al., 2019).

Specifically, common parental practices in empathy studies (e.g., reasoning induction, love withdrawal, psychological control, or power assertion) are usually captured in isolation rather than in the general context of the two orthogonal dimensions (i.e., unrelated; Hoffman and Saltzstein, 1967; Krevans and Gibbs, 1996; Helwig et al., 2014; Boele et al., 2019). By contrast, parenting styles also includes the different practices used by parents but classified and ordered based on two main dimensions (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). The study of parenting within the context of parenting styles might add more clearly evidence. The empirical findings about the consequences of parenting practices for children could be different depending on if the parental practices are examined alone or at the same time main time ordered in the two main axis (i.e., warmth and strictness). Baumrind noted (1983) that the negative effects of power assertion (i.e., greater strictness) for moral development identified by Hoffman and Saltzstein (1967), despite power assertion is one of the main components of authoritative parenting, could be explained by its effect is not studied at the same time with inductive reasoning (i.e., greater warmth) within the more general

climate represented by the parenting style. Specifically, Baumrind (1983) argued that "the use of reasoning accompanied by power assertion should be more effective with young children than reasoning alone" (p. 141). The benefits of power assertion, according to Baumrind (1983), may be due to the "the use of a reason accompanied by a display of power also conveys to the child that adherence to a rule of right conduct is independent of the presence of the parent" (p. 141).

Additionally, the cultural contexts seem to be crucial to explain why the same parenting seems to be related to different consequences for child and adolescent development, including for empathy (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Krevans and Gibbs, 1996; Carlo et al., 2011; Helwig et al., 2014; Boele et al., 2019). As Helwig et al., (2014) p. 19, "we know little about children's comprehension of the processes by which different discipline methods are judged to be effective, and virtually nothing about their understanding of the psychological consequences of different types of discipline." In the few previous studies examining the four parenting styles and empathy, an important limitation is that they captured empathy as a global dimension, but without adopting a multidimensional perspective (Garcia and Serra, 2019; Garcia et al., 2021).

Moreover, self-esteem is usually examined in parenting styles self as a global dimension (e.g., Pinquart and Gerke, 2019), but not examining specifically each dimension of self, such as emotional or physical self-concept. The impact of parenting on adolescent psychosocial competence is consistently identified in several studies with adolescents examining different indicators (Garcia et al., 2019; Gallarin et al., 2021; Ridao et al., 2021). In order to explain how parents can contribute to foster adolescent psychosocial competence, self-concept could be especially relevant in part because it reflects the subjective evaluation of adolescent self-competence (Lord et al., 1994; Martínez et al., 2021). Findings from classical studies, mainly conducted with middle-class families from United States, revealed that parental warmth favors greater self-esteem but only when is accompanied by strictness (Coopersmith, 1967; Barber et al., 1992; Pinquart and Gerke, 2019). Adolescents raised in homes in which parents use strictness and imposition, combined with the use of warmth, tend to report greater self-concept than their peers from other households (Lamborn et al., 1991; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Pinquart and Gerke, 2019) and, at the same time, they are protected against deviance in the social realm. By contrast, adolescents from indulgent homes

tend to benefit of greater warmth for their self-concept (as those from authoritative homes), but their lack of parental strictness harm them in the realm of social norms. However, some recent studies revealed adolescents with greater self-concept are those whose parents are warm and involved, while parental strictness could be unnecessary or even harmful for adolescent self-concept (Riquelme et al., 2018; Queiroz et al., 2020).

Sex and age have been considered important variables to understand the consequences of parenting on child and adolescent development. The optimal parenting could be not always the same depending on child sex. Mainly based on studies on parenting practices, some gender scholars have suggested that the consequences of parenting could be distinct for daughters and sons. For example, parental warmth was identified as protective factor against child-to parent violence in daughters but not in sons (Beckmann et al., 2021) and parenting need support (great warmth), which was reported by participants about their mothers, predicted changes in empathic concern in daughters only (Miklikowska et al., 2011). Similarly, unsupervised time at home alone (low strictness) was related to greater smoking only for daughters (Griffin et al., 2000), and poor parental discipline (low strictness) was associated with aggression and other externalizing behavioral problems in sons, but not in daughters (Hosokawa and Katsura, 2019). On the opposite side, other studies not found differences in the impact of parenting depending on child sex (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2021). Additionally, some studies test if the consequences of parenting could change depending on child age. Overall, findings are mixed. Some small variations in the impact of parenting depending on child age were identified, for example, child age moderated the relation between negative affect and supportive-positive parenting (i.e., great warmth), but not harsh-negative parenting (i.e., great strictness; Rueger et al., 2011). On the opposite side, other studies found that the impact of parenting is the same regardless child age (Riquelme et al., 2018; Moreno-Ruiz et al., 2019). Therefore, parenting studies usually includes in the design sex and age as factors (i.e., independent variables) to test the possible interaction effect between parenting and child sex, as well as between parenting and child age.

Based on previous studies, we would expect the parenting style characterized mainly by parental warmth, but not by parental strictness (i.e., the indulgent style), to be related to equal or even higher cognitive and emotional empathy and greater self-

concept than the parenting style characterized mainly by parental warmth and strictness (i.e., the authoritative style), whereas both parenting styles characterized by lack of warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful) would be related to poor empathic competence and self-concept.

Materials and methods

Sample and procedure

A minimum sample size of 600 participants was estimated in an *a priori* power analysis in order to carry out the present study with a statistical power of.95 (the conventional, $\alpha = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.05$, $1 - \beta = 0.95$) medium-small effect size ($f = 0.17$, Cohen, 1977) in a univariate *F*-test among the four parenting style groups (Pérez et al., 1999; Garcia et al., 2008; Faul et al., 2009). Based on the complete list of high schools from a metropolitan area in the East of Spain with a population of about one million inhabitants, six schools were randomly selected to participate (Garcia, Serra, et al., 2020). The headmaster of each school was contacted (one of them declined to participate). The students who freely chose to participate had previously received their parents' permission to complete the questionnaires in one class period (93% response rate). Respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. All respondents were Spanish as were their parents and grandparents. Participants have a similar socioeconomic status; they were from middle-class families. Finally, participants in the study consisted of 586 adolescents, 329 females (56.1%) and 257 males (43.9%), from 12 to 17 years old ($M = 15.25$, $SD = 2.01$). A post-hoc sensitivity analysis for this sample size indicated that the expected medium-small effect size could be detected, $f = 0.171$ (Cohen, 1977), with a power of 0.95 ($\alpha = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.05$, $1 - \beta = 0.95$) (Gracia et al., 1995; Faul et al., 2009). The research protocol of present study conforms to recognized standards from Declaration of Helsinki and it was approved by the research ethics committee of the Program for the Promotion of Scientific Research, Technological Development, and Innovation of the Valencian Community, which supported this research.

Measures

Parenting styles were measured with the Parental Socialization Scale, *ESPA29* (Musitu and Garcia, 2001), based on the classical two-dimensional theoretical model of parental socialization (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Warmth was measured with the acceptance/involvement ESPA-29 measure, and strictness was captured with the strictness/ imposition ESPA-29 measure. The questionnaire consists of 212 items that follow a contextual and situational perspective (Smetana, 1988; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Adolescents responded on a 4-point scale (1 = never, 4 = always) to rate the frequency with which both their father and mother (considered separately) employ practices in 29 representative scenes from daily family life in Western culture. Thirteen of these 29 scenes refer to adolescent compliance situations (e.g., "If somebody comes over to visit and I behave nicely"), and 16 refer to adolescent noncompliance situations (e.g., "If I do not study or I do not want to do the homework from school"). In each of the compliance situations, parenting practices of warmth ("he/she shows affection") and unresponsiveness ("he/she seems indifferent") are rated by adolescents. In the noncompliance situations, parenting practices of reasoning ("he/she talks to me"), detachment ("it's all the same to him/her"), verbal scolding ("he/she scolds me"), physical punishment ("he/she spanks me"), and revoking privileges ("he/she takes something away from me") are rated by adolescents.

The factorial structure of this instrument has been confirmed in various studies conducted in different countries such as Spain, Portugal, Brazil (Martinez et al., 2019), or the United States (Martínez et al., 2017), as well as its factorial invariance across demographic variables such as age and sex (Martínez et al., 2012). Moreover, the orthogonality of the two major measures has been supported (Garcia and Gracia, 2014; Garcia et al., 2015). The different parental practices captured by the ESPA-29 are examined within the two main parenting dimensions (i.e., acceptance/ involvement and strictness/imposition). The family score on acceptance/involvement was obtained by averaging the responses for warmth, reasoning, unresponsiveness, and detachment (on the last two subscales, the responses were reversed because they were negatively related to the dimension). The family score on strictness/imposition was obtained by averaging

the responses for verbal scolding, physical punishment, and revoking privileges. The ESPA29 subscales offer an accurate and reliable measures in which the adolescent gives 212 responses (106 for the father and 106 for the mother, both considered separately). Great reliability for the different subscales is usually reported in studies with adolescents in which parenting is measured by the ESPA-29 (Martínez and Garcia, 2007; Fuentes et al., 2015b; Martínez et al., 2017; Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2019, 2020). The ESPA-29 offers a very reliable measure of parenting which is usually used not only in research (del Milagro Aymerich et al., 2018; Martinez-Ferrer et al., 2018) but also for practice (e.g., clinical and forensic psychology; Castaneda et al., 2012). The alpha values tend to be equal to or even higher than.90 for all subscales according to previous studies with adolescents (Martinez-Ferrer et al., 2019; Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019a; León-Moreno et al., 2020). Ratings for mother and father were averaged as in some studies mainly focused on identify the best parenting regardless of who is the main caregiver (see Lamborn et al., 1991). Both family indices range from 1 to 4 points, and so higher scores represent higher levels of acceptance/ involvement and strictness/imposition. Cronbach's alphas for the subscales were: Warmth, 0.96, unresponsiveness, 0.95, reasoning, 0.96, detachment, 0.93, verbal scolding, 0.95, physical punishment, 0.96, and revoking privileges, 0.97. Cronbach's alphas for the two major dimensions were: Acceptance/involvement, 0.98, and strictness/imposition, 0.97.

Cognitive and emotional empathy were measured using the Cognitive and Affective Empathy Scale, *TECA* (Fernández-Pinto et al., 2008; Lopez-Perez et al., 2018), based on the classical theoretical framework distinguishing the emotional and cognitive features of empathy (Davis, 1983). Cognitive empathy was captured with the *TECA* subscales: Adopting perspectives (e.g., "I try to take into account all viewpoints before making decisions") and emotional understanding (e.g., "I realize when someone tries to hide his/her feelings"). Adopting perspectives refers to the intellectual or imaginative capacity to put oneself in the place of another, and the emotional understanding dimension refers to the ability to recognize and understand situations. Emotional empathy was captured with the two *TECA* subscales: Empathic stress (e.g., reversed item, "I consider myself a cold person because I do not get excited easily") and empathic happiness ("I feel good if others have fun"). Empathic Stress is the ability to share someone else's negative emotions, and empathic happiness refers to the ability to

share another person's positive emotions (Gorostiaga et al., 2014). The *TECA* four-factor structure was confirmed with confirmatory factor analysis. Additionally, *TECA* showed adequate reliability and validity (Fernández-Pinto et al., 2008; Gorostiaga et al., 2014). Cronbach's alpha for each subscale was: Adopting perspectives, 0.75, emotional understanding, 0.71, empathic stress, 0.70, and empathic happiness, 0.79.

Self-concept was measured using the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale, *AF5* (Garcia and Musitu, 1999), based on Shavelson's multidimensional and hierarchical theoretical framework (Shavelson et al., 1976; Byrne and Shavelson, 1996). It consists of 30 items, with a response scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 9 ("strongly agree"). It assesses five self-concept domains, with 6 items for each dimension: Academic (e.g., "I do my homework well "), social (e.g., "I make friends easily"), emotional (e.g., reversed item, "I am afraid of some things"), family (e.g., "My parents give me a lot of confidence"), and physical (e.g., "I take good care of my physical health"). Higher scores represent a greater sense of self-concept in any of the dimensions.

The *AF5* five-dimensional factor structure was confirmed using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis in studies conducted in several countries such as Spain (Murgui et al., 2012; Fuentes et al., 2020), Chile (Garcia et al., 2011), Brazil (Garcia F. et al., 2018), Portugal (Garcia et al., 2006) or United States (Garcia et al., 2013) and China (Chen et al., 2020), as well as its factorial invariance across age and sex (Fuentes et al., 2011). Several studies have also found that negatively worded items showed no method effects (Tomás and Oliver, 2004; Garcia et al., 2011, 2013). Cronbach's alpha for each subscale was: Academic, 0.90, social, 0.79, emotional, 0.80, family, 0.96, and physical, 0.81.

Plan of analysis

First, families were classified according to their parenting style. For this purpose, the sample was dichotomized based on the median-split procedure, considering the scores on the acceptance/ involvement and strictness/imposition dimensions simultaneously (Chao, 2001), and also taking into account the children's sex and age (Musitu and Garcia, 2001). Thus, authoritative families were those who scored above the median on both dimensions, indulgent families scored above the median on

acceptance/involvement and below it on strictness/imposition, authoritarian families scored below the median on acceptance/involvement and above it on strictness/imposition, and, finally, neglectful families scored below the median on both dimensions (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1991). The split procedure is frequently used in studies about parenting styles to assign families to the parenting groups (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian and neglectful) based on the responses in the two main parenting dimensions, i.e., warmth and strictness (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994; Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Garcia and Serra, 2019; Garcia, Fuentes, et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2021). The use of the median-split procedure to classify families into the parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian and neglectful), rather than assigning according to predetermined cutoffs, provides a categorization of families that is sample-specific. For instance, families in the authoritarian parenting style are indeed relatively more authoritarian (i.e., use more strictness/imposition and less acceptance/involvement) than the other families in the sample, although we do not know if the families labeled as "authoritarian" would be considered "authoritarian" within a different population. Thus, it should be note that the categorization of families as one type or another, compared to the other families, is done for heuristic, not diagnostic, purposes (see Lamborn et al., 1991, p. 1053; Queiroz et al., 2020, p. 5; Garcia and Serra, 2019, p. 6).

Second, a multivariate factorial design (MANOVA, 4 × 2 × 2) with each set of criteria (empathy and self-concept) was performed considering the parenting style (authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful), the children's sex (male and female), and the children's age (12–14 years and 15–17 years) as independent variables, in order to test possible interaction effects. Age groups are the same as those from other parenting studies (e.g., Martínez et al., 2019). After that, univariate *F* tests were conducted to examine the differences in the adjustment variables analyzed, and, lastly, Bonferroni's post-hoc test was applied.

Results

Distribution of the families in the parenting styles

Table 1 shows the families' distribution according to their parenting style, as well as their means and standard deviations on each of the main dimensions of the classical model (acceptance/ involvement and strictness/imposition). *A posteriori* analysis indicated that the main dimensions of the model were relatively orthogonal, $r(586) = 0.11$, $r^2 = 0.01$, $p < 0.01$, and the cross-distribution of the families in relation to children's sex, $\chi 2(3) = 6.05$, $p > 0.05$, and children's age, $\chi 2(18) = 17.43$, $p > 0.05$, was statistically homogenous.

Multivariate analyses

The results obtained in the first MANOVA conducted with self-concept showed statistically significant differences in the main effects of parenting styles, $\Lambda = 0.79$, $F(15, 1562.88) = 9.24$, $p < 0.001$, and sex, $\Lambda = 0.93$, $F(5, 566) = 8.67$, $p < 0.001$. Statistically significant interaction effects were not obtained ($\alpha = 0.05$).

The second MANOVA performed with empathy also showed statistically significant differences in the main effects of parenting styles, $\Lambda = 0.89$, $F(12, 1500.43) = 5.43$, $p < 0.001$, and sex, $\Lambda = 0.91$, $F(4, 567) = 13.79$, $p < 0.001$. Interaction effects were not statistically significant ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Univariate analyses of parenting and empathy

The univariate *F* tests performed with empathy showed statistically significant differences between parenting styles and the four dimensions of empathy assessed (see Table 2). Tests conducted *a posteriori* (Bonferroni, $\alpha = 0.05$) indicated that adolescents from indulgent and authoritative families obtained higher scores on adopting perspectives, empathic stress, and empathic happiness than adolescents from authoritarian and neglectful families. Finally, adolescents from indulgent families scored higher on emotional understanding than adolescents from authoritarian and neglectful families.

Univariate analyses of parenting and self-concept

The results obtained on the univariate *F* tests showed statistically significant differences between parenting styles and the five dimensions of self-concept assessed (see Table 3). The Bonferroni tests ($\alpha = 0.05$) indicated that adolescents from indulgent and authoritative families obtained higher scores on academic, social, family, and physical dimensions of self-concept than adolescents from authoritarian and neglectful families. In the emotional self-concept dimension, adolescents from indulgent families obtained better scores than adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful families.

Univariate analyses of sex

Regarding empathy, females scored higher than males on the cognitive (adopting perspectives, emotional understanding) and emotional (empathic stress and empathic happiness) domains of empathy (see Table 4). With regard to the emotional and physical dimensions of self-concept, males obtained higher scores than females.

Discussion

Given the important influence of parenting on children's acquisition of a set of social values to develop capacity to take the perspective of others, and their self-regulatory abilities, as well as the relevant role of cultural influences and the mixed results reported in previous research, the main objective of this study was to examine which parenting style is related to the greatest adolescent cognitive and emotional empathy and self-concept. This study, therefore, contributes to the current international debate on optimal parenting, based on the theoretical model with four typologies.

The results confirmed main findings from previous studies. Adolescents from indulgent families reported equal or even better empathy and self-concept than those from authoritative families, whereas adolescents with non-warm households (those who define their parents as authoritarian and neglectful) reported worse scores. On cognitive empathy outcomes, adolescents from indulgent and authoritative families showed greater skill in adopting perspectives than their peers from authoritarian and neglectful homes. Indulgent parenting was related to the highest emotional understanding, whereas

authoritarian and neglectful styles were related to the lowest emotional understanding. A similar tendency was found for the self-concept outcomes. Warm parenting (i.e., indulgent and authoritative) was constantly associated with better academic, social, emotional, family, and physical self-concept than non-warm parenting (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). Additionally, in the emotional domain, adolescents from indulgent families obtained better self-concept scores than those with authoritative parents.

Classical studies in parenting literature usually consider parental demandingness as an essential component for an effective parental socialization. To achieve children with prosocial behaviors, in which empathy represents an essential component (i.e., understand and feel the others), the use of punishment and strictness is recommended to parents (Baumrind, 1983; Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Nevertheless, according to the present findings, strictness seems unnecessary or even detrimental for adolescent empathy and self-concept in line to some recent studies which suggested the benefits related to parental warmth, but not parental strictness (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022). Adolescents who achieve the greatest levels of empathy seem to benefit of parents that are warm and involved, which could be enough to achieve a greater orientation toward the others (i.e., empathy) and confidence in oneself (i.e., self-concept).

In the parenting literature, a main question is how parents might help their children to cope with social demands. To deal with these social demands, it is crucial for children and adolescents to acquire social values that allow them to regulate their actions, take the perspective of others, and develop self-regulatory abilities, including an adequate sense of self (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Grusec and Goodnow, 1994; Grusec et al., 2017). The findings from the present study are consistent with some previous studies conducted in European (Rodrigues et al., 2013; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019) and South-American countries (Martínez et al., 2007; Martínez and Garcia, 2008; Garcia et al., 2019), suggesting that the indulgent style (i.e., warmth but not strictness) is related to the best psychosocial competence and offers the same or even greater benefits than the authoritative style (i.e., warmth and strictness).

Since years scholars have discussed how parents can favor an effective socialization (Lewis, 1981; Baumrind, 1983). The cultural context could be crucial to examine why the same parenting based on the two main dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) is related to different benefits for children (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart and Gerke, 2019). Overall, the main parental component which help children seems to be strictness, especially useful when is accompanied by warmth (i.e., authoritative) as it was identified in classical studies with European-American middle-class families since seminal studies of (Baumrind, 1967; Baumrind and Black, 1967; Baumrind, 1971) and the following of Steinberg (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Additionally, even parental strictness accompanied by lack of parental warmth could be benefit as for example in ethnic minorities from US (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 2001) or Arab societies, (Dwairy and Achoui, 2006; Dwairy et al., 2006a). Nevertheless, in the digital society seems that, at least in some cultural settings, the main parental component of a successful socialization could be warmth, but not strictness (Garcia et al., 2019). The so-called third parenting stage (i.e., warmth without strictness) could favor adolescents internalize the social message transmitted by their parents.

Parents have as main responsibility raising children and transmit social values to them, although the parents used different strategies (based on warmth and strictness) and not all parents have the same success (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Veiga et al., 2021; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022). In fact, the literature has also examined the relationship between parenting patterns and the child psychosocial adjustment using different psychosocial adjustment criteria such as social anxiety (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2019), cyberbullying (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2018), resilience and attachment (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2015). Effective socialization might be identified when adolescents have greater priority toward others (e.g., higher empathy in both cognitive and affective dimensions) and confidence in oneself (e.g., greater self-concept in different domains). Interestingly, and contrary to classical studies, at least in the so-called digital society, the main findings from the European country examined in the present study (i.e., Spain) showed that parental warmth seems to be the main parental component for an effective socialization, whereas strictness is not relevant or even could be detrimental: adolescents from families based on warmth without strictness (i.e., indulgent) reported

equal or even more empathy and self-concept than those from homes based on warmth with strictness (i.e., authoritative).

Families based on warmth really achieve an effective socialization due to their adolescents report greater empathy and self-concept according to the present findings. It is possible that adolescents raised by warm parents benefit to an emotional climate based on reasoning, involvement, and acceptance, which could help them to internalize the societal values transmitted by their parents (confidence in the others and in oneself). On the opposite side, adolescents from non-warm homes (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful) could perceive their family is intrusive and not appreciated them, rejecting the message and societal values transmitted by their parents, including the importance considering others (cognitive and affective empathy) as well as the contribution of oneself as a valuable person for the society (self-concept). Regardless, for each specific cultural context is needed to examine which is the optimal parenting stage (Garcia et al., 2019).

Overall, the present findings do not agree with other previous studies examining the optimal parenting in various cultural contexts, highlighting the idea that the relationship between parenting and adolescent competence and adjustment might be different depending on the cultural and social context in which parental socialization take place (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Pinquart, 2017; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Dakers and Guse, 2020; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022). Both the indulgent and authoritative parenting styles are characterized by high warmth. However, only the authoritative style is also characterized by high parental strictness. Importantly, in other cultural contexts, high parental strictness is considered as the crucial parenting dimension defining optimal parenting as the authoritarian style (i.e., low parental warmth and high strictness), as in the case of some socialization outcomes in Asian and Middle Eastern societies (Chao, 2001; Dwairy et al., 2006b,c). Similarly, in other cultural contexts, parental strictness and high parental warmth are necessary in defining the authoritative style as leading to optimal adolescent competence and adjustment, mainly in Anglo-Saxon cultural contexts (Baumrind, 1971; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg et al., 1994). By contrast, at least within the European cultural context examined (i.e., Spain), according to the present findings, parental strictness does not seem to be a crucial parenting dimension because with high parental warmth alone (high

warmth and low strictness, the indulgent style), adolescents showed similar or even better empathic competence and self-concept than those whose parents are also characterized by high strictness (high warmth and high strictness, the authoritative style). It seems that the cultural context in which parental socialization take place might vary the association between parenting and child adjustment (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Garcia et al., 2019). The same families (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) are living in different cultural contexts with variations in cultural values (e.g., vertical-horizontal, individualism–collectivism; Singelis et al., 1995; Martínez and Garcia, 2007). Parental warmth could be especially beneficial if the cultural context values the collective (e.g., the family), but with relationships between members that, despite having a different status (parents as adults vs. children and adolescents), tend to be more egalitarian and not so hierarchical, so the parental strict component (common in authoritative families) could be unnecessary or even detrimental since it could be perceived by the children as intrusive (Martínez and Garcia, 2007; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). Thus, the same family (e.g., authoritarian, authoritative and indulgent) could have a different impact on child development, maybe because of the children's assessment of whether their family loves and appreciates them (family self-concept; Baumrind, 1996; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Martínez et al., 2021), or perhaps in part by parenting beliefs (Ridao et al., 2021) which, in turn, are influenced by culture (Rubin and Chung, 2006; Sanchez et al., 2020). As a previous parenting study noted (Garcia et al., 2019), it seems that the three parenting stages (i.e., authoritarian, authoritative and indulgent) might coincide at the same time in different environments, context, and cultures, thus extending previous evidence on the traditional paradigm with only two stages (i.e., authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles). At least in the European cultural context examined (Spain), the third parenting stage (i.e., indulgent style) is again found to be the optimal parenting style.

It should be noted that previous evidence shows ambiguous findings about how the parent–child relationship could be associated with empathy outcomes (Boele et al., 2019). Most of this evidence captured parenting through isolated parental practices (e.g., reasoning, love-withdrawal, and power assertion), without analyzing it according to the two main orthogonal dimensions of parenting (i.e., warmth and strictness).

However, this point is an important limitation, even though, as Hoffman highlighted (Hoffman and Saltzstein, 1967, p. 51), parents who use reasoning (induction) are not necessarily low on power assertion. Additionally, most previous studies do not take into account that parents help their children to develop empathic competence in different cultural contexts (Helwig et al., 2014; Boele et al., 2019). The process of internalization of self-transcendence and conservation values involves socially-focused motivations (Sortheix and Schwartz, 2017), emphasizing the positive effects on others of fostering a child's feelings of empathy and consideration for others (Hoffman, 1970; Lewis, 1981; Baumrind, 1983). Some previous studies that have examined the relationship between parenting styles (i.e., indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful) and the internalization of self-transcendence and conservation values in families Europe (Martínez and Garcia, 2007; Martinez et al., 2020), South America (Martínez et al., 2007), and more recently the United States (Garcia et al., 2019), also showed the benefits of the indulgent style (warmth but not strictness). Nevertheless, less is known about the relationship between parenting styles and empathy. In these previous studies, an important limitation is the way empathy is captured, through a global dimension (Garcia and Serra, 2019; Garcia et al., 2021). By contrast, the present study extends the benefits of indulgent parenting to four indicators of cognitive empathy (adopting perspectives and emotional understanding) and emotional empathy (empathic stress and empathic happiness), based on the classical theoretical framework distinguishing the emotional and cognitive features of empathy (Davis, 1983). In addition, the findings from this study make an important contribution by showing that the indulgent style is the optimal parenting style to foster self-concept, a socialization outcome that is still a source of debate in the parenting literature (Pinquart and Gerke, 2019).

In addition, in the present study there were no statistically significant interaction effects between parenting styles and sex neither between parenting styles and age. So, the relation between parenting styles and the patterns of adolescent self-concept and empathy are consistent across adolescent age and sex as in some previous studies (Riquelme et al., 2018; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020), regardless the multiple differences that have been established in different aspects of developmental adjustment depending on age and sex, i.e., sex-and age-related differences, for example, females tend to report greater academic self-concept than males (Riquelme et al., 2018;

Queiroz et al., 2020). According to the findings of the present study, adolescent daughters and sons achieve greater self-concept and empathy only when are raised by families that are warm, but not strict. Therefore, the benefits of the optimal parenting seem to transcend the boundaries of child sex and age in line with some previous studies (Riquelme et al., 2018; Queiroz et al., 2020). By contrast, evidence from present study does not support the idea that parents should be use different practices with their sons and daughters suggested by some gender scholars based on some previous studies (Miklikowska et al., 2011; Beckmann et al., 2021). For example, parenting need support (great warmth) predicted changes in empathic concern in daughters only (Miklikowska et al., 2011). Additionally, although it was not the main objective, sex-related differences in the present study agree with other previous studies carried out with adolescents (Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Veiga et al., 2015; Tur-Porcar et al., 2019; Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019b). The highest empathic competence was found in females. Females reported greater empathy than males in both cognitive (adopting perspectives and emotional understanding) and emotional (empathic stress, and empathic happiness) domains. Males showed greater physical and emotional self-concept than females. It is important to note that there are different processes within and without the family that could affect the adolescent competence. For example, other family process such as marital satisfaction (Chis et al., 2022), parenting stress (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2022), family functioning (Yeung, 2021) family climate (Hernandez-Serrano et al., 2021) and the predisposition to have more children (Gomez-Ortiz and Sanchez-Sanchez, 2022). The same is true for other influences not directly related to the family, for example, the individual child characteristics such as emotional intelligence (Cabello et al., 2021) or the cultural context (Sacca et al., 2021) or the historical time (e.g., digitalization; Hung, 2022).

The present study has strengths and some limitations. Regarding the strengths, it is necessary to highlight the following issues: (i) This study was carried out taking into account the minimum sample size required to achieve adequate statistical power, thus reducing the likelihood of making type II errors in statistical inference and increasing the likelihood of detecting real relationships between parenting styles and children's psychological adjustment. (ii) Parenting styles were measured using an orthogonal instrument based on the classical two-dimensional and four-typology theoretical model

of parental socialization. (iii) Findings from the present study are easily replicable by other researchers all over the world, contributing to the current international debate about optimal parenting. (iv) Adolescent empathy is captured with four indicators, distinguishing between cognitive (adopting perspectives and emotional understanding) and emotional (empathic stress and empathic happiness) features of interpersonal empathy, as well as the self-concept competence, captured with five indicators (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical). Empathy is usually examined in parenting studies focused on early and middle childhood (e.g., Hoffman, 1970), but less in adolescence as in the present study.

As a limitation, it should be noted that the classification of the families in one of the four typologies of the model was based on the children's ratings, and one might think that parents' responses would offer more objective information. However, some studies obtained the same findings with different parent response reports (Yeung et al., 2019). Furthermore, some empirical evidence shows that parents' responses tend to be more biased by social desirability (Barry et al., 2008). Another limitation that is common in this research area refers to the cross-sectional design of the study. Thus, it is not possible to draw conclusions about causal relationships between the studied variables.

Longitudinal studies aim to test if there are continuing benefit or harming of particular patterns to parenting (e.g., indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian and neglectful) in specific developmental periods (e.g., adolescence). Overall, the parenting style identified as the optimal is usually related to the greater psychosocial competence over time (Steinberg et al., 1994; Milevsky, 2020). Although previous longitudinal studies confirmed the long-term impact of parenting on child empathy and self-concept (Koestner et al., 1990; Miklikowska et al., 2011; Yoo et al., 2013; Pinquart and Gerke, 2019), some of them examined different parenting practices, but not in the general context of parenting styles (e.g., Yoo et al., 2013), so results are difficult to compare with other studies, or even the findings revealed that the same parenting practice (e.g., need-supportive parenting) had a different impact on sons and daughters when is used by mothers or fathers (see Miklikowska et al., 2011). In this regard, further research using longitudinal designs is needed in order to analyze these relationships in depth (Garcia and Gracia, 2009). Future studies should examine, at the same time, the

impact of parents in the internalization of social values, empathy and prosocial behaviors or self-concept to capture more accurately an effective socialization, but present study offer clearly evidence about how parents could contribute (positively, but also negatively) to adolescent empathy and self-concept.

Despite these limitations, the results of this study contribute to the validation of the classical theoretical model of parental socialization across the globe (Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart and Gerke, 2019), adding empirical evidence about the benefits of the so-called third parenting stage, the indulgent style (Garcia et al., 2019). Therefore, parenting practices pertaining to the acceptance/ involvement dimension, such as parental warmth and support and the use of dialog and reasoning with children, should be taken into account in prevention and intervention programs for improving parent–child relationships and fostering children's adjustment in the family context and in society.

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Table 1. Distribution of the families in the parenting styles, means (*M*), and standard deviations (*SD*) on acceptance/involvement and strictness/imposition.

	Authoritative	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Neglectful	Total
Frequency	145	138	117	186	586
Percentage	24.7	23.5	20.0	31.7	100
Acceptance /involvement					
M	3.54	3.44	2.71	2.70	3.09
SD	0.25	0.34	0.36	0.41	0.52
Strictness/ Imposition					
M	2.16	1.48	2.11	1.45	1.77
SD	0.29	0.22	0.32	0.20	0.42

Scores on acceptance/involvement and strictness/imposition ranged from 1 to 4.

Table 2. Means (standard deviations), *F* values, eta square values, and Bonferroni's test[#] of parenting styles for cognitive and emotional empathy.

	Parenting style				*F*(3, 582)	Eta square
	Authoritative	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Neglectful		
Cognitive empathy						
Adopting perspectives	3.06[1] (0.45)	3.17[1] (0.48)	2.87[2] (0.55)	2.92[2] (0.47)	11.02***	0.054
Emotional understanding	2.96 (0.44)	3.03[1] (0.50)	2.81[2] (0.45)	2.84[2] (0.46)	6.87***	0.034
Emotional empathy						
Empathic stress	2.64[1] (0.57)	2.67[1] (0.57)	2.46[2] (0.51)	2.38[2] (0.52)	10.42***	0.051
Empathic happiness	3.41[1] (0.44)	3.42[1] (0.46)	3.12[2] (0.55)	3.21[2] (0.48)	13.20***	0.064

[#]$1 > 2$, ***$p < 0.001$

Table 3. Means (standard deviations), *F* values, eta square values, and Bonferroni's test[#] of parenting styles for self-concept.

	Parenting Style				*F*(3, 582)	Eta square
	Authoritative	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Neglectful		
Self-concept						
Academic	6.94[1] (1.48)	7.02[1] (1.41)	6.02[2] (1.66)	6.37[2] (1.58)	12.78***	0.062
Social	6.82[1] (1.29)	7.21[1] (1.24)	6.15[2] (1.40)	6.35[2] (1.54)	16.07***	0.077
Emotional	4.89[2] (1.65)	5.56[1] (1.57)	4.76[2] (1.60)	5.07[2] (1.66)	6.20***	0.031
Family	7.65[1] (1.39)	7.91[1] (1.05)	6.02[2] (1.79)	6.94[2] (1.53)	42.77***	0.181
Physical	6.16[1] (1.62)	6.06[1] (1.46)	5.27[2] (1.70)	5.56[2] (1.54)	9.47***	0.050

[#]1 > 2, ***$p < 0.001$

Table 4. Means (standard deviations), *F* values, and Bonferroni's test[#] of sex for empathy and self-concept.

	Sex		*F*(1, 582)
	Males	Females	
Cognitive empathy			
Adopting perspectives	2.92 (0.50)	3.07 (0.48)	13.514***
Emotional understanding	2.85 (0.46)	2.95 (0.47)	6.54*
Emotional empathy			
Empathic stress	2.35 (0.52)	2.67 (0.55)	53.13***
Empathic happiness	3.19 (0.52)	3.37 (0.46)	18.16***
Self-concept			
Academic	6.47 (1.61)	6.70 (1.55)	2.88
Social	6.67 (1.52)	6.61 (1.37)	0.15
Emotional	5.34 (1.66)	4.88 (1.61)	11.46**
Family	7.15 (1.53)	7.17 (1.67)	0.02
Physical	6.07 (1.58)	5.53 (1.60)	16.60***

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$. ***$p < 0.001$.

Positive parenting style and positive health beyond the authoritative: Self, universalism values, and protection against emotional vulnerability from Spanish adolescents and adult children

Palacios, I., Garcia, O. F., **Alcaide, M.**, and Garcia, F. (2022). Positive parenting style and positive health beyond the authoritative: self, universalism values, and protection against emotional vulnerability from Spanish adolescents and adult children. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13,* 1066282. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1066282 (Impact factor 2022 = **3.8**; 34/147; **Q1**, Psychology, Multidisciplinary; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **29**).

Abstract

Introduction: Recent research is fully questioning whether the combination of parenting warmth and strictness (the authoritative style) is always identified as positive parenting across the globe. This study analyzes parenting styles and the positive health of adolescents and adult children.

Methods: The sample was 2,090 Spanish children (59.9% women), from four age groups: 600 adolescents, 591 young adults, 507 middle-aged adults, and 392 older adults. Parenting styles (indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful) were obtained by warmth and strictness measures. Children's positive health was measured by self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-efficacy), universalism values, and emotional vulnerability.

Results: The main results showed that the indulgent parenting style was associated with equal and even better scores than the authoritative style, whereas the authoritarian and neglectful styles were consistently associated with low scores in positive health indicators for all age groups. However, two triple interactions of sex by age group by parenting style showed that women children from neglectful families reported the lowest family self-concept in old age and the highest emotional vulnerability in middle age.

Discussion: The study findings question the universal benefits of the so-called positive parenting (the authoritative style) for positive health.

Keywords: warmth, strictness, parenting styles, self, values, emotional vulnerability

Introduction

The first social nucleus of any person is the family, where children establish their first emotional relational links with their parents (or main caregivers) and where they learn behavioral models adapted to the culture in which they live (Bowlby, 1969; Baumrind, 1978; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022). Therefore, parents are the first socializing agent responsible for transmitting the values, beliefs, and attitudes that will shape the personality of adult children (Freud, 1933; Maccoby, 1992; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). In this sense, parental socialization acquires special relevance, understood as the set of strategies and practices that parents use to relate to their children and that will influence their personal and social development (Maccoby, 1992; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). One of the strategies identified by Baumrind (1978) as central to defining the socialization styles of parents was the degree of authority they use in the education of their children, giving rise to three parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Baumrind's model was updated by another approach proposed by Maccoby and Martin (1983) to define parenting styles in two dimensions. Specifically, the so-called two-dimensional model includes the different parental practices based on two independent dimensions (i.e., orthogonal): on the one hand, the warmth dimension, also labeled acceptance/involvement (Lamborn et al., 1991) and responsiveness (Baumrind, 1991), which includes parental practices related to affection and warmth, dialog, the ability to show support to the children, as well as to communicate using inductive reasoning (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Martinez et al., 2019; Villarejo et al., 2020); and, on the other hand, the dimension of parental strictness, also labeled demandingness, defined by strategies such as the establishment of strict limits and rules, the use of physical and/or verbal coercion, as well as demanding attitudes on the part of the parents (Lamborn et al., 1991; Axpe et al., 2019; Martínez et al., 2021). Based on the combination of these two dimensions, the four parental styles are defined as following: The indulgent style

(parents characterized by high warmth and low strictness), the authoritative style (parents characterized by high warmth and strictness), the authoritarian style (parents characterized by low warmth and high strictness), and the neglectful style (parents characterized by low warmth and low strictness) (Lamborn et al., 1991; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2019).

Interest in socialization styles emerged in the first half of the last century, and there has been a great deal of research on this subject, especially due to the relationship that has been observed between parenting styles and the degree of child competence and psychosocial adjustment (Baldwin, 1948; Baumrind, 1966; Steinberg et al., 1994; Garcia and Gracia, 2010; Lavriè and Naterer, 2020). Overall, the research findings revealed the relation between parenting styles and differences in child competence and psychosocial adjustment. According to classical research, mostly from studies with European-American families, the authoritative style (i.e., warmth and strictness) has been pointed out as the best because children raised by warm and strict parents obtained better results in the different variables of personal and social adjustment studied in comparison with their peers from the other families (Baumrind, 1966; Steinberg et al., 1989, 1992; Lamborn et al., 1991; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). However, the benefits of the authoritative style, mainly found in studies with white middle-class European-American families, have not always been identified in all cultural contexts across the globe (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018). The discrepant research findings about which parenting is the best to promote child and adolescent development could be explained by the influence of the cultural context in which parents raise their children since families develop and evolve within a social system with values and beliefs specific to each culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Rudy and Grusec, 2001; Garcia and Gracia, 2009), so that, by identifying with these values inherent to their culture, it will be more likely that a certain socialization style will be related to better results in the adjustment variables of the children (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Martínez and Garcia, 2007). Thus, for example, some cross-cultural research conducted with ethnic minorities in the United States, such as African Americans (Baumrind, 1972; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996) and Asian-Americans (Chao, 1994, 2001), showed that the authoritarian style (i.e., strictness without warmth) has been positively related to some psychosocial adjustment variables (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018). The same has been

observed in studies conducted with the Arab population, where authoritarian style is the one related to better mental health (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018).

Additionally, in more recent research carried out mainly in European and South American countries (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020), it has been found that indulgent parenting (i.e., warmth without strictness) stands out as the best, being related to equal and even better scores than the authoritative style (Martínez and Garcia, 2008; Garcia and Gracia, 2010; Alonso-Geta, 2012), while children of authoritarian and neglectful parents present a lower level of psychosocial adjustment (Alonso-Geta, 2012; Suárez-Relinque et al., 2019; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2021). For example, children with indulgent parents reported the highest scores in adjustment indicators such as school adjustment (Fuentes et al., 2015), empathy (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020), emotional stability (Garcia and Serra, 2019), and showing a higher priority toward social values (Garcia and Serra, 2019; Martinez et al., 2020). In the same way, parenting characterized by warmth without strictness (i.e., the indulgent style) has also been related to lower substance use (Riquelme et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2020b) and criminal behaviors (Martínez et al., 2013).

The present study

Parental socialization is a process through which parents transmit to their children the values, beliefs, and learning necessary to function adaptively in the family and cultural context in which they live and ends when the children reach adult age. Overall, differences in adjustment during adolescence increase compared to childhood (Veiga et al., 2015, 2021; Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019). In this sense, most of the research conducted on the appropriateness of parenting styles has been carried out during the socialization period of itself, that is, with minor children and, above all, in the adolescent stage (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1992, 1994; Garcia and Gracia, 2010; Alonso-Geta, 2012; Martínez et al., 2013). However, socialization style can also influence the level of competence and adjustment of children even when they are adults, although little is known about the relations with adulthood (Buri, 1991; Garcia O. F. et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2021; Candel, 2022; Koutra et al., 2022).

During the socialization process, the child develops a sense of self, which originates from his or her accumulated experiences in different contexts (Shavelson et

al., 1976; Marsh and Shavelson, 1985; Harter, 1988), among others, the family (Harter, 1988; Martínez et al., 2021). The child's self-perceptions as a valuable person and loved by his or her family (i.e., family self-concept) (Garcia F. et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2020; Martínez et al., 2021) are also key in the development of a positive general valuation as a valuable person with qualities (i.e., self-esteem) (Byrne and Shavelson, 1996; Bracken et al., 2000; Martín-Albo et al., 2007). Particularly for personal and good social functioning as a productive member of society, self-efficacy should be developed, that is, the individual belief in the ability to be able to do things well that help the child and adolescent to have achievement and success (Bandura, 1977; Chen et al., 2004). On the opposite side, poor self-efficacy (i.e., negative self-efficacy) is related to greater problems and lower adjustment (Martin et al., 1996; Bandura and Locke, 2003; Ali et al., 2015). In addition, the child in turn must internalize social values (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Rudy and Grusec, 2001), although the transmission of these values (e.g., by parents or school) does not guarantee that all of them will internalize them (Rudy and Grusec, 2001; Martínez and Garcia, 2007; Garcia et al., 2019). In particular, the social values of self-transcendence and self-conservation are key to producing adjustment behaviors (e.g., prosocial behaviors) and protection against deviant behaviors (Rudy and Grusec, 2001; Martínez and Garcia, 2007; Garcia et al., 2019). Likewise, adjustment can be seriously affected by emotional vulnerability (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg and Morris, 2001; Riquelme et al., 2018). Thus, processing of situations as dangerous or threatening to oneself can seriously alter personal and social functioning (MacLeod et al., 2002; Mathews and MacLeod, 2005).

Parental socialization ends when the child reaches adulthood (Baumrind, 1978; Maccoby, 1992; Garcia and Serra, 2019), and development continues throughout adulthood and old age. There are differences in adjustment over time for men and women. For example, in self-esteem, men tend to have higher scores than women, whereas, over time, levels decline during adolescence, gradually increase throughout adulthood, and decline sharply in old age (Robins and Trzesniewski, 2005). Therefore, an important question is whether differences in adjustment during adolescence, but also in adulthood, may be related to parenting styles and to which parenting is the most positive. Specifically, whether differences in men and women adjustment at a given time (e.g., adolescence or midlife) can be related to parental socialization and whether

these differences follow the same pattern when parenting styles are sorted to identify beneficial and detrimental parenting styles.

Overall, the so-called positive parenting or effective parenting is usually identified as authoritative parenting: The combination of parental responsiveness and demandingness is consistently related to adolescent adjustment, school performance, and psychosocial maturity (e.g., Steinberg and Morris, 2001, p. 88). Positive parenting is defined in terms of greater positive health and lower deviance. According to research mostly conducted with European-American families, only the parental strategy based on greater responsiveness and higher demandingness always benefit children and adolescent in their positive health not only by offering them protection against deviance but also good adjustment and wellbeing (Baumrind, 1966; Steinberg et al., 1989, 1992; Lamborn et al., 1991; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Specifically, in terms of adjustment and wellbeing, adolescents from warm and strict families reported greater self-conceptions and maturity, while similar benefits are reported by those from other warm families, but without the strictness component (i.e., the indulgent). On the opposite side, adolescents from families characterized by a lack of warmth (i.e., the authoritarian and neglectful) reported the poorest scores. In terms of deviance, again, adolescents from strict families with warm households reported the lowest rates, while similar benefits are obtained by those from other strict families (i.e., the authoritarian). On the opposite side, adolescents from families characterized by a lack of strictness reported the highest scores. However, the so-called positive parenting or effective parenting has been proposed as having universal benefits (Steinberg, 2001), but recent research suggests that not always authoritative parenting can be the best for positive health (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Garcia et al., 2019). This study analyzes the relationship of parental socialization styles with self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-efficacy), internalization of universalism values, and emotional vulnerability, and using a sample of adolescents and adult children (young, middle-aged, and older). The new previous evidence seriously doubts that the so-called positive parenting (i.e., the authoritative) would be always the best (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Garcia et al., 2019). Based on recent research, it can be expected that the indulgent style will be the best adjustment, being related to scores equal to, and even better than, those obtained by the

children of authoritative parents in self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-efficacy), universalism values, and emotional vulnerability.

Materials and methods

Sample and procedure

The sample was 2,090 participants, 1,251 women (59.9%), and 839 men (40.1%), adolescents and adults (M = 36.14 and SD = 20.40), with four age groups: adolescents (n = 600, 361 women, 60.2%), aged 12–18 years (M = 16.68 and SD = 1.59); young adults (n = 591, 349 women, 59.1%), aged 19–35 years (M = 23.71 and SD = 3.78); middle-aged adults (n = 507, 327 women, 64.5%), aged 36–59 years (M = 48.34 and SD = 6.37); and older adults (n = 392, 214 women, 54.6%), aged 60 years or older (M = 68.91 and SD = 7.85). With *a priori* power analysis, a minimum required sample of 1,724 participants was needed to detect, with a power of 0.95 ($\alpha = 0.05$; $1 - \beta = 0.95$), a small effect size ($f = 0.10$) for the univariate F-test among the four parenting styles (Cohen, 1977; Gracia et al., 1995; Pérez et al., 1999; Faul et al., 2009). With the study sample of 2,090 participants, nevertheless, a sensitivity power analysis between the four parenting styles guaranteed the detection of an effect size of at least 0.091 ($f = 0.091$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $1 - \beta = 0.95$) (Calafat et al., 2014; Fuentes et al., 2015; Queiroz et al., 2020). The responses were collected by online questionnaires with mandatory responses hosted on the University website. Participants generally required about 60 min to respond. Adolescents were recruited from the full list of high schools. Six schools were selected, and one head declined to participate. Young adults were recruited from undergraduate courses. Middle-aged adults were recruited from middle-class neighborhoods. Older adults were recruited by random selection from the full list of senior centers. Four urban senior centers were selected. All participants in this study, including adolescent children and adult children: (a) completed the same questionnaires; (b) they were Spanish, as well as their parents and grandparents; (c) participated voluntarily; (d) informed consent was required, and in the case of adolescents, parental consent was also requested; and (e) the anonymity of the responses was guaranteed.

Measures

Parental socialization

The two main dimensions of parental socialization were measured to define the four parenting styles: warmth and strictness (Steinberg et al., 1992, 1994; Chao, 2001; Alonso-Geta, 2012; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019, 2020b). The warmth dimension was measured with the 20 items of the Warmth/Affection Scale of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (Rohner, 2005; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia O. F. et al., 2018). Warmth items measure certain behaviors concerning affection, care, empathy, and positive parenting in general, as perceived by the children during the adolescent period (e.g., "Say nice things about me," "Make it easy for me to tell them things that are important to me"). For adult children, the same scale was used but with reference to the past (e.g., "Said nice things about me," " They believe in having a lot of rules and sticking to them"). High scores indicate a high degree of warmth. The alpha value was 0.946. Additionally, the strictness dimension was captured with 13 items of the Parental Control Scale of the PARQ (Rohner, 2005; Calafat et al., 2014). Control items assess questions related to the degree of parental supervision and strictness perceived by the children (e.g., "Are always telling me how I should behave," "They believe in having a lot of rules and sticking to them"). For adult participants, the same scale was used (Senese et al., 2016) but referring to the period of their adolescence (e.g., "Were always telling me how I should behave," "They believed in having a lot of rules and sticking to them"). Higher scores indicate a greater degree of parental strictness. The alpha value was 0.906. The response scale used for both dimensions was Likert-type with a range from 1 (almost never true) to 4 (almost always true). Based on these two dimensions, the four parenting socialization styles were defined by dichotomizing the sample by the median (50th percentile) of the scores of both dimensions, considering them jointly (Chao, 2001; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2020a). Parenting styles were typified as follows: Indulgent families are those that score above the median in the warmth dimension and below in strictness; authoritative families are those that score above the median in both dimensions (warmth and strictness); authoritarian families are those that score above on strictness and below on warmth; and neglectful families score below on both dimensions (Lamborn et al., 1991;

Steinberg et al., 1994; Chao, 2001; Calafat et al., 2014). As has been done in classic and recent studies on parenting styles, the median dichotomization procedure (rather than using predetermined cutoff points) was used. This procedure provides a sample-specific categorization of families (Lamborn et al., 1991; Garcia and Serra, 2019; Queiroz et al., 2020). For example, families in the "neglectful" household are, in fact, relatively more neglectful (i.e., less warm and strict) than the other parents in the sample, but these families we have labeled "neglectful" might be considered to be another family type in a different sample (see Lamborn et al., 1991, p. 1,053).

Self

Family self-concept was measured with the 6 items of the Form-5 Self-Concept questionnaire (Garcia and Musitu, 1999), whose Likert-type response scale ranges from 1 (totally disagree) to 99 (totally agree). The person's self-image within the family system is evaluated in terms of involvement and integration (e.g., "I am happy at home"), so high scores reflect a high family self-concept. The alpha value was 0.806. The AF5 is a widely applied questionnaire for adolescents (Garcia and Serra, 2019; Fuentes et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020) and adults (Garcia et al., 2011; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Villarejo et al., 2020) in the Spanish language. The dimensional structure of this instrument has been tested in many empirical studies with exploratory factor analyses (Garcia and Musitu, 1999) and confirmatory factor analyses (Tomás and Oliver, 2004; Fuentes et al., 2011; Murgui et al., 2012) in different cultural contexts, such as Spain (Murgui et al., 2012), Portugal (Garcia et al., 2006), Brazil (Garcia F. et al., 2018), Chile (Garcia et al., 2011), United States (Garcia et al., 2013), and China (Chen et al., 2020). In addition, its invariance for sex and age has been confirmed in several studies across different languages, such as Brazilian-Portuguese (Garcia F. et al., 2018), Portuguese (Garcia et al., 2006), Chinese (Chen et al., 2020), English (Garcia et al., 2013), and Spanish (Tomás and Oliver, 2004; Fuentes et al., 2011; Murgui et al., 2012). Furthermore, the AF5 has been used to validate other self-concept measures (Garaigordobil and Pérez, 2007; Martín-Albo et al., 2007; Fuentes et al., 2020).

Self-esteem was measured with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg et al., 1995; Martín-Albo et al., 2007), which consists of 10 items aimed at evaluating feelings of self-respect and acceptance (e.g., "On the whole, I am satisfied with

myself"), with a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). High scores suggest a high sense of self-esteem. The alpha value was 0.849.

Negative self-efficacy was measured with the six items of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) (Rohner, 1978), whose Likert-type response scale ranges from 1 (almost never true) to 4 (almost always true). This scale allows assessing the person's perception of his or her ability to perform tasks (e.g., "I feel I am a success in the things I do"). High scores indicate a high degree of negative self-efficacy. The alpha value was 0.719.

Universalism values

Universalism values were measured with the eight items of the *Schwartz Value Inventory* (SVI) (Schwartz, 1992), assessing the degree of orientation toward values related to the wellbeing of people and the environment (e.g., "Equality [Brotherhood, equal opportunity for everybody]"). The Likert-type response scale ranges from 1 (not at all important in my life) to 99 (essential in my life). High scores reflect a high priority toward universalism values. The alpha value was 0.826.

Emotional vulnerability

Emotional vulnerability was measured with the eight items of the nervousness scale of the psychosocial maturity questionnaire (Greenberger et al., 1975; Garcia and Serra, 2019). This dimension refers to the degree of emotional stability of the person in terms of anxiety and/or tension (e.g., "My mood changes easily," "I am usually tense, nervous, and anxious"). The Likert-type response scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). High scores indicate a high degree of emotional vulnerability. The alpha value was 0.779.

Plan of analysis

To analyze the relationship between parenting styles and children outcomes, a multivariate factorial design (MANOVA) (4 × 2 × 4) was applied between the adjustment variables, which were self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-efficacy), universalism values, and protection against emotional vulnerability, and

the independent variables, which were parenting styles (indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful), sex (women and men), and age (adolescents, 12– 18 years; young adults, 19–35 years; middle-aged adults, 36– 59 years; and older adults, 60 years and older), to test for possible interaction effects. Subsequently, for those variables that were statistically significant, several analyses of variance (ANOVA) were performed and, finally, for those univariate results that were statistically significant, Bonferroni *post hoc* test ($\alpha = 0.05$) was applied to compare all possible pairs of means.

Results

Parenting styles

The distribution of the participants in the four parental socialization styles is shown in Table 1. The indulgent style consisted of 592 subjects (28.3%), with high scores in warmth ($M = 73.46$ and $SD = 4.56$) and low scores in strictness ($M = 28.02$ and $SD = 5.58$). The authoritative style grouped 456 participants (21.8%), with high scores in warmth ($M = 72.45$ and $SD = 4.40$) and strictness ($M = 39.81$ and $SD = 5.06$). The authoritarian style, with 611 participants (29.2%), scored low in warmth ($M = 54.81$ and $SD = 10.05$) and high in strictness ($M = 41.89$ and $SD = 5.67$). Finally, the neglectful style consisted of 431 participants (20.6%), with low scores in warmth ($M = 57.11$ and $SD = 9.37$) and strictness ($M = 28.25$ and $SD = 5.70$).

Multivariate statistical analysis

Statistically significant differences were obtained for the main effects of parenting style [$\Lambda = 0.754$, $F_{(15,5670.6)} = 40.68$, $p < 0.001$], sex [$\Lambda = 0.952$, $F_{(5,2054.0)} = 20.57$, $p < 0.001$], and age groups [$\Lambda = 0.931$, $F_{(15,5670.6)} = 9.88$, $p < 0.001$], and for the interaction effects between parenting styles, sex, and age groups [$\Lambda = 0.964$, $F_{(45,9191.1)} = 1.66$, $p = 0.004$] (**Table 2**).

Parental socialization styles

In the relationship of parenting styles with the different outcomes, it was observed that the indulgent style was related to the same, and even better scores, than the authoritative style, while the lowest scores corresponded to the authoritarian and neglectful styles (see Table 3).

Self

In family self-concept, the highest scores corresponded to indulgent parenting while the lowest corresponded to authoritarian parenting. Authoritative parenting was related to lower scores than the indulgent, but greater than the neglectful. Within parenting associated with lower scores in family self-concept, the neglectful was related to greater rates compared to the authoritarian. In self-esteem, children from warm families (i.e., indulgent and authoritative) reported greater scores than their peers from authoritarian and neglectful homes. In negative self-efficacy, only children from indulgent families reported the lowest scores, the highest corresponded to those from authoritarian and neglectful households, and those with authoritative parents scored in a middle position.

Universalism values

The scores in universalism values showed that indulgent and authoritative were associated with greater scores than authoritarian and neglectful parenting.

Emotional vulnerability

The scores in emotional vulnerability showed that again parenting based on warmth (i.e., the indulgent and authoritative) was related to lower scores than non-warmth parenting (i.e., the authoritarian and neglectful).

Sex and age group

Statistically significant sex differences were found in the five psychosocial adjustment variables evaluated (see Table 4). It was observed that women participants obtained higher scores in family self-concept, negative self-efficacy, emotional vulnerability, and universalism, while men participants reported greater self-esteem.

In addition, statistically significant differences in age were also found in the five measured child outcomes (see Table 5). In family self-concept, all age groups scored higher than older adults, and young adults higher than middle-aged adults. On self-esteem, adolescents scored lower than young and middle-aged adults. On negative self-efficacy, adolescents and older adults scored higher than young and middle-aged adults.

On the priority given to values related to universalism, young adults scored higher than adolescents and older adults.

Interaction effects

An interaction effect was observed between parenting style, sex, and age group on family self-concept [$F_{(9,2058)} = 2.25$, $p = 0.017$] (see Figure 1) and emotional vulnerability [$F_{(9,2058)} = 1.95$, $p = 0.041$] (see Figure 2).

In family self-concept, a common pattern by sex was found across all the age groups. Overall, indulgent parenting was related to slightly greater scores than authoritative parenting, while the lower scores corresponded to parenting characterized by a lack of warmth (i.e., neglectful and authoritarian). Interestingly, some variations in the family self-concept were found in non-warmth families (i.e., neglectful and authoritarian), particularly since middle age. Neglectful parenting was related to greater scores than the authoritarian among adolescents and young adults, whereas the scores tended to be equal in the middle-aged groups. However, for older adults women participants, those raised by authoritarian parents scored greater than their peers from neglectful families, whereas for older adults men participants, the scores between neglectful and authoritarian parenting tended to be equal (see Figure 1).

In emotional vulnerability, for women participants, in the group of adolescents, those from indulgent and authoritative families had lower emotional vulnerability than their peers from authoritarian and neglectful homes; in the group of young and middle-aged adults, the lowest scores corresponded to those raised by indulgent parents, the highest to those raised by authoritarian parents, and in a middle position were those from authoritative and neglectful families; finally, in the group of older adults, the lowest scores corresponded by those raised by warm parents (i.e., indulgent and authoritative), the highest by those raised by neglectful families, while those from authoritarian families scored lower than their peers from neglectful households but higher than those from authoritative and indulgent homes (see Figure 2).

In emotional vulnerability, for men participants, the pattern was quite similar for adolescents and young and middle-aged adults: The indulgent and authoritative parenting were related to lower scores compared to the authoritarian and neglectful (the

differences between the four parenting styles were lower for middle-aged adults). Similarly, in older adults, the lowest scores corresponded to indulgent parenting, the highest to neglectful parenting, and in a middle position were the authoritarian and authoritative parenting (see Figure 2).

Discussion

This study analyzes the relationship between parental socialization and positive health in adolescent children but also in adult children (young, middle-aged, and older adults from a European country (Spain), using the classical two-dimensional socialization model (i.e., warmth and strictness) and four parenting styles (i.e., the authoritative, the indulgent, the authoritarian, and the neglectful). To evaluate positive health, self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-efficacy), universalism values, and emotional vulnerability were measured. In general terms, the results indicate that indulgent parenting is related to best scores: high in family self-concept, self-esteem, and internalization of values of universalism, and low in negative self-efficacy and emotional vulnerability. Therefore, children from indulgent families (i.e., warmth without strictness), compared to those from authoritative families (i.e., warmth combined with strictness), obtain equal or even better scores in positive health, whereas children from authoritarian and neglectful families obtain scores that are related to more detrimental scores: low scores in family self-concept, self-esteem, and universalism, and high scores in negative self-efficacy and emotional vulnerability.

Overall, the results from the present study about the benefits of indulgent parenting agree with the research carried out in southern European and South American countries (Martínez and Garcia, 2008; Garcia and Gracia, 2010, 2014; Martinez et al., 2020), in which it has been identified that the indulgent style, characterized by high warmth and low strictness, is the best for the adequate adjustment (Garcia et al., 2021). In this sense, in line with the results of this study, the children of indulgent families obtain the best scores in different indicators such as school adjustment (Fuentes et al., 2015), empathy (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020), emotional stability (Garcia and Serra, 2019), or higher priority toward social values (Martinez et al., 2020). In view of the above, one of the contributions of the present study to the recent scientific literature on parental socialization and children's adjustment is that the use of parental practices

based on affection and warmth, dialog, the ability to show support to children, as well as to communicate using inductive reasoning to correct maladaptive behaviors of children (i.e., strategies of the acceptance/implication dimension), appears as the most appropriate strategy to achieve greater personal and social adjustment of children (Garcia and Gracia, 2010; Garcia and Serra, 2019; Garcia et al., 2020b, 2021; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020).

In addition, the main findings from this study differ from those found in classic studies, mainly carried out with the European-American middle-class families, in which positive parenting is authoritative (i.e., strictness and warmth) (Baumrind, 1966; Steinberg et al., 1989, 1992; Lamborn et al., 1991; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). In European-American families, adolescents from authoritative families are those who are related to greater positive health, including not only fewer behavioral problems but also greater adjustment and wellbeing (Lamborn et al., 1991). The parenting styles in which one dimension is characterized by lower levels (i.e., authoritarian and indulgent) are associated with mixed results, while only the best benefits are related to the combination of strictness and warmth (i.e., authoritative parenting) (Lamborn et al., 1991). On the one hand, adolescents from authoritative and authoritarian families (both shared greater strictness) do not differ in academic performance, drug use, and delinquent behaviors. On the other hand, no differences were found between authoritative and indulgent styles (both shared greater warmth) in psychosocial development, including social competence and self-confidence (Lamborn et al., 1991).

Contrary to the results of classic studies with European-American families, those obtained in the present study suggest that the so-called positive parenting seems not to be authoritative but rather indulgent. Adolescents and adult children of indulgent families benefit from the warmth dimension since they show the greatest scores in self and internalization of universalism values and the lowest in emotional vulnerability. Therefore, these results contradict those found in classic studies (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1992, 1994), in which the component of strictness within authoritative parenting is emphasized to help children to achieve greater positive health. By contrast, according to the present study, it seems that the greatest benefits in terms of positive health are provided by those parents who are involved, caring, attentive to their needs, and who use reasoning and dialog to help their children understand the consequences of

their actions on themselves and others. The strictness component seems to be unnecessary or even harmful to positive health. Therefore, it is worth noting the importance of the cultural context insofar as the values of the culture in which one lives could be the key to understanding the different results obtained regarding the appropriateness of the parental socialization style (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Garcia et al., 2021). The so-called positive parenting or effective parenting could not be always authoritative in all cultural contexts.

In addition, the present study examines the relationship between the parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) and self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-efficacy), universalism values, and emotional vulnerability in adolescents and adult children. The pattern between parenting styles and health is quite similar; the parenting based on warmth was related to greater scores compared to non-warmth parenting, while the greatest scores correspond to parenting based on warmth without strictness (the indulgent), although some differences across age groups in men and women participants were found, especially in the most detrimental parenting styles (i.e., the authoritative and the authoritarian).

Specifically, the age profile showed on family self-concept showed that the authoritarian style is associated with slightly lower scores than the neglectful style, both styles are equal in the middle-aged group, and, at the end of life, this middle-aged trend was also observed in women, but in men, the neglectful style was associated with better family self-concept than the authoritarian style. In women participants, the neglectful style is associated with low but relatively stable scores in all four age groups, whereas, in men participants, they tend to report lower scores even from young adulthood, once parental socialization has ended, until the end of life when they have lower scores even than those raised by authoritarian parents. Women participants present a better family self-concept than men participants, so it is possible that, with the same type of family (neglectful) characterized by low warmth, men participants are more affected especially when the family socialization process ends. In addition, the age profile for women on emotional vulnerability revealed the harmful consequences associated with authoritative parenting, which are related to similar scores as neglectful parenting in young adults and specially marked in the middle-age group, the authoritarian parenting related to relatively stable but lower scores, and the neglectful, which is especially harmful in old

age. Women tend to have greater emotional vulnerability than men, but only when being raised in homes characterized by warmth and without strictness, they have the maximum protection against emotional vulnerability. The age profile for mens participants tends to be more similar across age groups with lower scores between warm parenting compared to non-warm parenting.

This study presents some strengths and limitations. First, the use of a two-dimensional model and four typologies of parental socialization provides a common theoretical framework with which to compare research results from different countries. In the present study, the categorization of families (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) is provided by the split procedure on each dimension (i.e., warmth and strictness). The use of the split procedure, a statistical technique to assign participants to the parenting styles based on the measures of the two parenting dimensions, is a strategy commonly used in studies from different parts of the world, for example, the United States (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994; Milevsky, 2020) or Europe (Calafat et al., 2014; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Fuentes et al., 2022). Other parenting typologies different from the classical parenting styles have been examined based on clustering methods such as latent profile analysis (LPA) (Borden et al., 2014; Ayon et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2022). Second, a large and broad sample has been used. In addition, the relationship between socialization styles and personal and social adjustment variables in both adolescent and adult children (young, middle-aged, and older) is analyzed. In this way, we contribute to the current debate on the best socialization strategy, and, in addition, the results of this study allow us to test whether the differences in personal and social adjustment among adults are also theoretically predictable from parenting styles. As limitations, it should be considered that self-reported questionnaires were used, which were answered by adolescent and adult children, although there is evidence that social desirability is lower in children than in parents (Barry et al., 2008). It should be considered that participants are mainly from middle-class families, so future studies should examine families from other socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g., poor neighborhood). Moreover, this is a cross-sectional study, so no conclusion can be drawn about the impact of parenting styles in the long term. In addition, the results should be interpreted with some caution, without inferring causal relationships.

Finally, as a conclusion, it should be noted that the present study contributes to current research on the appropriateness of parental socialization styles (Fuentes et al., 2015; Lorence et al., 2019; Garcia et al., 2021). On the one hand, the results of this research coincide with several studies conducted mainly in European and Latin American countries (Martínez and Garcia, 2008; Garcia and Gracia, 2010; Martinez et al., 2020), suggesting that the indulgent style is the best parental socialization style. However, these results do not coincide with those found in classic studies, carried out mainly with samples of American and ethnic minority families from Anglo-Saxon countries (Baumrind, 1978; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Lim and Lim, 2003). The cultural context in which socialization takes place seems to influence the relationship between parental socialization styles and the pattern of personal and social adjustment of children (Pinquart and Kauser, 2018; Garcia et al., 2021). Future research should analyze what is the appropriate parental strategy for the education and adequate development of children, considering families from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, as well as the individual differences of the children.

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Table 1. Distribution of participants by parenting style, mean scores, and standard deviations for the main parenting dimensions.

	Total	Neglectful	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Frequency	2,090	431	592	611	456
Percentage	100	20.60	28.30	29.20	21.80
Warmth					
M	64.42	57.11	73.46	54.81	72.45
SD	11.53	9.37	4.56	10.05	4.40
Strictness					
M	34.69	28.25	28.02	41.89	39.81
SD	8.52	5.70	5.58	5.67	5.06

M, mean; SD, standard deviation.

Table 2. MANOVA ($4^a \times 2^b \times 4^c$) for self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-adequacy), universalism values, and emotional vulnerability.

Sources of variation	*h*	*F*	*df* between	*df* error	*p*
(A) Parenting styles$^{a\,1-a\,4}$	0.754	40.68	15.00	5670.6	<0.001
(B) Sex$^{b\,1,b\,2}$	0.952	20.57	5.00	2054.0	<0.001
(C) Age groups$^{c\,1-c\,4}$	0.931	9.88	15.00	5670.6	<0.001
A × B	0.987	1.79	15.00	5670.6	0.030
A × C	0.956	2.08	45.00	9191.1	<0.001
B × C	0.982	2.47	15.00	5670.6	0.001
A × B × C	0.964	1.66	45.00	9191.1	0.004

a_1 , neglectful; a_2 , indulgent; a_3 , authoritarian; a_4 , authoritative.

b_1 , women participants; b_2 , men participants.

c_1 , adolescents (12–18 years); c_2 , young adults (19–35 years); c_3 , middle-aged (36– 59 years); c_4 , older (60 years and older).

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, univariate *F*-values, and Bonferroni's *post-hoc* analysis of parenting styles for self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-adequacy), universalism values, and emotional vulnerability by parenting styles.

	Parenting Style					
Child outcomes	Neglectful	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Authoritative	*F*(3, 2058)	*p*
Family self-concept	7.44[c] (1.49)	8.69[a] (0.97)	7.08[d] (1.55)	8.46[b] (1.04)	191.85	< 0.001
Self-esteem	3.16[b] (0.47)	3.36[a] (0.44)	3.10[b] (0.48)	3.35[a] (0.40)	46.44	< 0.001
Negative self-efficacy	1.89[a] (0.52)	1.58[c] (0.43)	1.89[a] (0.52)	1.68[b] (0.44)	55.32	< 0.001
Universalism values	7.44[b] (1.34)	7.82[a] (1.26)	7.25[b] (1.47)	7.73[a] (1.22)	26.25	< 0.001
Emotional vulnerability	2.52[a] (0.63)	2.20[b] (0.62)	2.56[a] (0.63)	2.28[b] (0.61)	39.87	< 0.001

Bonferroni test $\alpha = 0.05$; a > b > c > d.

Table 4. Means, standard deviations, univariate *F*-values for self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-adequacy), universalism values and emotional vulnerability by children sex.

	Sex			
	Womens	Mens	*F*(1, 2058)	*p*
Family self-concept	8.02 (1.46)	7.76 (1.46)	15.22	< 0.001
Self-esteem	3.19 (0.47)	3.31 (0.50)	38.63	< 0.001
Negative self-efficacy	1.79 (0.50)	1.71 (0.50)	18.43	< 0.001
Universalism values	7.67 (1.33)	7.38 (1.37)	20.21	< 0.001
Emotional vulnerability	2.44 (0.66)	2.32 (0.61)	22.09	< 0.001

Bonferroni test α = 0.05

Table 5. Means, standard deviations, and univariate *F*-values, and Bonferroni's post-hoc analysis for self (family self-concept, self-esteem, and negative self-adequacy), universalism values and emotional vulnerability by age groups.

	Age groups					
Child outcomes	Adolescents	Young adults	Middle aged	Older adults	*F*(3, 2058)	*p*
Family self-concept	7.95[1] (1.53)	8.13[a] (1.40)	7.86[b] (1.41)	7.60[c,2] (1.46)	15.92	< 0.001
Self-esteem	3.14[b] (0.48)	3.26[a] (0.50)	3.32[a] (0.41)	3.25[a] (0.43)	14.12	< 0.001
Negative self-efficacy	1.83[a] (0.51)	1.72[b] (0.50)	1.66[b] (0.46)	1.83[a] (0.51)	16.66	< 0.001
Universalism values	7.46[b] (1.42)	7.71[a,1] (1.23)	7.62[1] (1.31)	7.38[2] (1.44)	26.25	< 0.001
Emotional vulnerability	2.44 (0.64)	2.41 (0.65)	2.33 (0.64)	2.36 (0.63)	2.51	0.057

Bonferroni test α = 0.05; a > b > c > d; 1 > 2

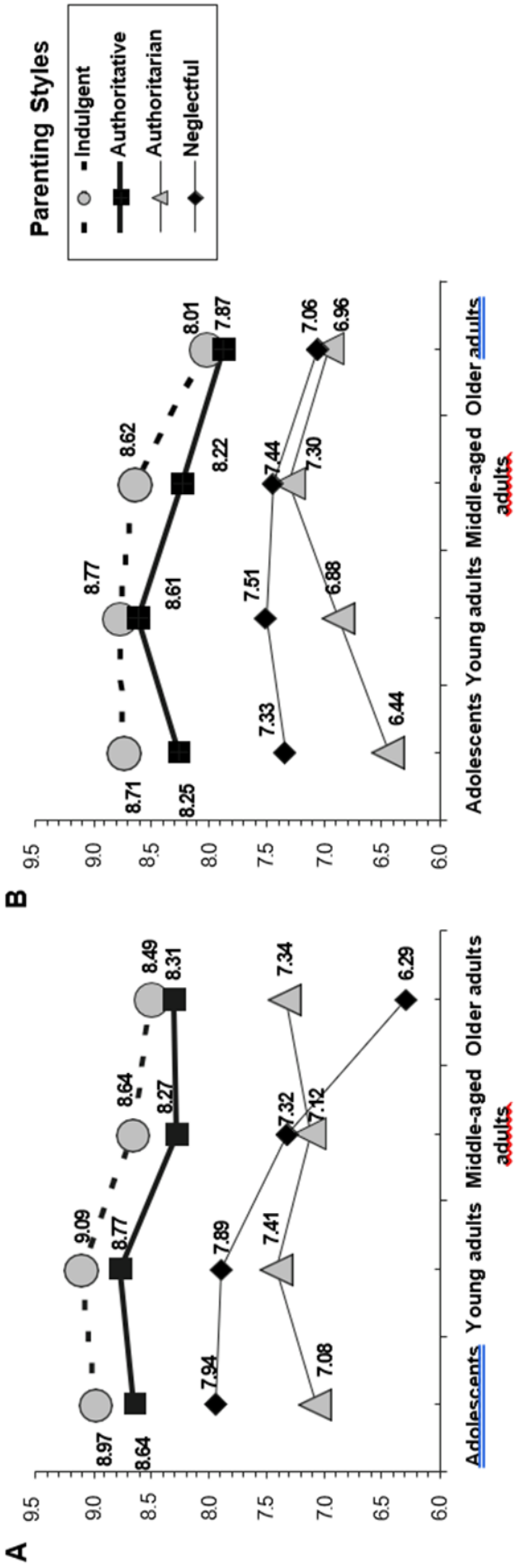

Figure 1. Interaction of parenting styles by age group and sex on family self-concept. (A) Family self-concept (women). (B) Family self-concept (men).

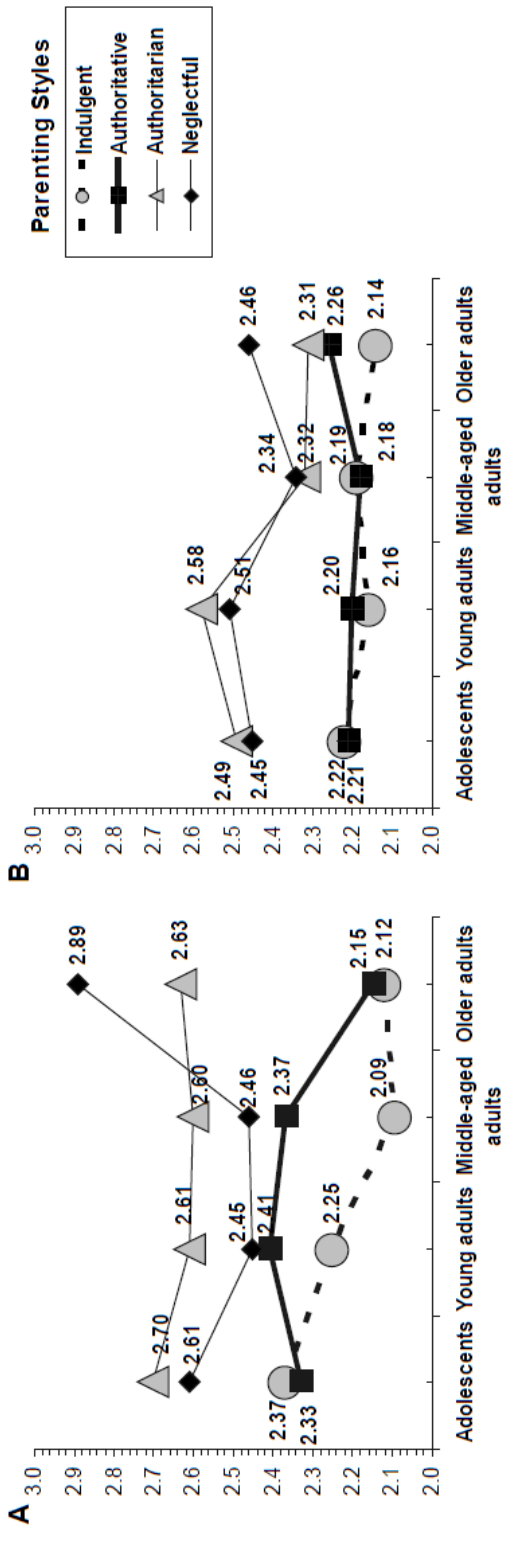

Figure 2. Interaction of parenting styles by age group and sex on emotional vulnerability. (A) Emotional vulnerability (women). (B) Emotional vulnerability (men).

Parental socialization and adjustment components in adolescents and middle-aged adults: How are they related?

Martinez-Escudero, J. A., Garcia, O. F., **Alcaide, M.**, Bochons, I., and Garcia, F. (2023). Parental socialization and adjustment components in adolescents and middle-aged adults: how are they related? *Psychology Research and Behavior Management, 16,* 1127-1139. https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S394557 (Impact factor 2023 = **2.8**; 49/219; **Q1**, Psychology, Multidisciplinary; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **19**).

Abstract

Purpose: Classic studies mainly of European-American families broadly identify the benefits of parental strictness combined with parental warmth. However, current research tends to identify parental warmth as positive for adjustment, even without parental strictness. In addition, less is known about the relationship between parenting and adjustment beyond adolescence. The present study examined warmth and strictness and its relationship with self, sexism, and stimulation values. Self-esteem, academic-professional self-concept, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values were used to capture adjustment.

Patients and Methods: Participants (n = 1125) were adolescents and adult children of middle-age from Spain. The statistical analyses used were correlation analysis and multiple linear regression.

Results: In general, the relationship between parenting and adjustment was found to have a similar pattern for adolescent and middle-aged adult children, although more marked in adolescents. Parental warmth and strictness were predictors of adjustment, but in a different direction. Specifically, parental warmth positively predicted academic-professional self-concept and self-esteem, whereas parental strictness was detrimental as a predictor of higher benevolent sexism.

Conclusion: Overall, the present findings suggest that an effective socialization during the socialization years and even beyond can be positively predicted by parental warmth, whereas parental strictness might be unnecessary or even detrimental.

Keywords: parenting, parental socialization, family, adjustment, adolescence, adulthood

Introduction

The socialization process takes place in different contexts in which several agents participate such as parents,[1] peers,[2] teachers,[3] and the media.[4] Parental socialization is the process of transmitting social values or standards with the objective that the child, who is immature and dependent, when reaching the adult age becomes a mature adult, autonomous, and adjusted to social demands.[5–7] Once the children reach adult age, they and their parents are both adults.[8,9] Adult children tend to maintain the relationship with their parents,[10] while continuing their development in the areas of work, partnership, and even becoming parents themselves.[11–13] An important question is to know the relationship between parenting dimensions and child adjustment during parental socialization, for example, in adolescence but also when parental socialization is ended, such as in middle-life.

Much of the studies on parenting use the two-dimensional model, based on two theoretically orthogonal or non-related dimensions: warmth and strictness.[14–17] Parental warmth refers to parental love, support, and acceptance. It represents the degree to which parents show their children warmth and acceptance, give them support, and communicate reasoning with them.[18,19] On the opposite side, parental strictness is also known as discipline or rigor as parents control their children's behavior by maintaining an assertive authority position with their children.[18,20]

Parents can be characterized by two main dimensions: warmth and strictness.[14,17,21,22] Within parents defined by higher levels of warmth, those characterized by high strictness or authoritativeness have been distinguished from those characterized by low strictness or indulgentness. Authoritative families are close and involved and use reasoning with their children, but, at the same time, they are strict and tend to use authority and punishment to correct misbehavior. The indulgent families are

also close and involved in parenting and use reasoning as a way of correcting their children but without using punishment and imposition.[14,23,24] Within parents defined by lower levels of warmth, those characterized by high strictness or authoritarian homes have been distinguished from those characterized by low strictness or neglectful homes. Both families share low involvement, less love and warmth, and less use of reasoning and dialogue. In addition, authoritarian families use correction and authority, without reasoning when their children misbehave.[14,23,24]

Family studies examine the relationship between parenting and child adjustment. Overall, according to the studies mainly carried out with European-American families, only greater parental strictness when is combined to greater parental warmth (ie, the authoritative style) tends to be related to the highest child adjustment.[6,8,23,25–30] Children benefit from high levels of parental strictness combined with high levels of parental warmth reporting good self-perceptions[23,29] and self-esteem,[31,32] fewer behavioral problems[23,26] and a good social adjustment[28,29] and greater internalization of norms.[23,29] Nevertheless, the combination of greater levels of warmth and strictness are not always associated with the highest adjustment in all cultural contexts.[15–17,33–35] Some studies revealed some benefits of higher parental strictness accompanied by low warmth in ethnic minority families from US such as African-American[35,36] and Chinese-American[34,37] as well as in those from Arab Societies.[38–40]

Additionally, emergent studies mainly conducted in European and South American countries revealed the benefits of parental warmth but with lower parental strictness on child adjustment.[4,16,17,41–50] Children raised in homes characterized by high warmth with low strictness (ie, the indulgent style) showed the greatest adjustment in different indicators such as self,[43,46] maturity,[17] less problems and better social adjustment,[47,48] school achievement,[16,48] and internalization of social values.[43,44]

Among the objectives of socialization are that children achieve self-confidence and a good self-perception, as well as an adequate social adjustment to social demands and the internalization of social values. Within self-perceptions, self-esteem as the global dimension and self-concept as the specific components have been distinguished.[32,51–54] Self-esteem and self-concept have been considered important indicators of psychosocial adjustment in children, adolescents, and adults across cultural

contexts,[31,32,43,55–60] although some scholars have described differences in self-concept scores across ethnic and cultural contexts.[56,61] Self-concept, defined as a person's perception of self in different domains, is formed through experiences with the environment,[62] and it is influenced by environmental reinforcement and significant others, such as parents.[52,56,57] Specifically, academic/professional self-concept, defined as self-perceptions of competence in school and work, is positively related to academic performance and success in high school and college studies, as well as in work and career.[52,53,56,63]

Furthermore, a good adaptation to any cultural context requires a great adjustment of the individual to the demands of society.[11,14–17] Prejudice represents a drastic form of poor adaptation to the demands of society. Sexism is a prejudice against women, which is related to high maladaptation[64–66] and even to a higher probability of aggressive behavior.[67,68] Sexism, in general terms, has been related to attitudes that legitimize violence against women.[64,65] This is particularly benevolent sexism, which according to the theory of ambivalent sexism is conceptualized as a set of beliefs about women and their relationship to men that are subjectively positive but are stereotyped by seeing women in restricted roles.[66,69]

Additionally, the internalization of social values represents the individual identification with their own society, so that the socially acceptable behavior is motivated by internal and not external factors, is one of the main objectives of parental socialization,[14,15,70] and it has been identified as the key to obtaining well-developed children.[6,17,44,50,71,72] It has also been observed that parenting differentially affect children's internalization of values.[70,72] Within social values, stimulation values derive from the organismic need for variety and stimulation.[73,74] The stimulation values help to maintain an optimal, positive, rather than threatening, level of activation. In this sense, stimulation values are related to the need underlying self-direction values [74,75]

The Present Study

The present study analyzes the relationship between warmth and strictness parenting dimensions with child adjustment in adolescents and also in middle-aged adults. Most of parenting studies have focused on socialization years (ie, childhood and adolescence),[6,17,23,27] but less is known about the if the relationship between parenting

dimensions and child adjustment shows a similar pattern once parenting is ended, in adult children of middle years. In particular, family studies with middle-aged adults tend to be focused on their developmental task as parents and their relationship with their children, who are often adolescents[76–78] or with their parents, who are usually older adults.[12,79–82] However, less has been explored for middle-aged adults as adult children in their relationship with their parents during socialization years based on warmth and strictness. Even when examining parenting and adjustment in middle-life, middle-aged adults and adolescents who are raised by their parents have not been compared at the same time based on the main parenting dimensions and using the same outcomes or criteria for the comparisons.[83]

The present study aims to examine the relationship between parental warmth and strictness with self (academic/ professional self-concept and self-esteem), benevolent sexism, and stimulation values in adolescents and middle-aged adults. It is expected that parental warmth would be related to greater scores in adjustment in terms of greater scores in self and values and lower in benevolent sexism. By contrast, it was also expected that parental strictness would not be associated with adjustment.

Materials and Methods

Design and Setting

The design includes four independent variables, parental warmth, parental strictness, age, and sex, as well as four dependent variables, which were academic-professional self-concept, self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values. The methodology of the present study is non-experimental as in most of previous parenting studies conducted with a community sample in US[23] and Europe[48] but also in non-western setting such as Arab Societies.[38] The study was conducted in a European country: Spain. Participants were attending from high school or from middle-class neighborhoods in a Spanish city of approximately one million inhabitants.

Participants and Recruitment

The study was based on adolescent children and adult children of midlife. There are different criteria to define age groups, especially adolescence,[84,85] for example, a

recent proposal suggests adolescence up to 24 years of age.[86] However, age groups for adolescents and middle-aged adults were defined based on previous parenting studies. Adolescent children were participants aged 12 to 18 years,[87,88] while adult children from midlife were participants aged 36 to 59 years.[89,90] The inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) they were Spanish, as well as their parents and grandparents; (b) lived in two-parent nuclear families with a mother or primary women caregiver and a father or primary male caregiver.

The sampling method for the participants (adolescents and middle-aged adults) was as follows: Adolescent participants were recruited from the full list of high schools (six were selected and one of them refused to participate). For this purpose, the principals of each high school invited to participate were contacted. If high school refused to participate, a replacement high school was elected from the full list until the required sample size was reached.[42,47] Middle-aged respondents were recruited from randomly selected middle-class neighborhoods. The selection of middle-aged respondents was based on door-to-door canvassing. The different neighborhoods were stratified by quartiles of household wealth, and four middle-class neighborhoods were randomly selected. This sampling method is usually used with middle-aged adults in community studies.[91,92]

Measures

Parental Socialization

Parental socialization was assessed under two main dimensions (ie, warmth and strictness). Warmth was measured with 20 items from Warmth/Affection Scale (WAS).[93] This scale measures the degree to which children perceive their parents as warm and affectionate (eg, “Say nice things about me”). WAS adult version measures the degree to which adult children had perceived their parents as warm and affectionate and has all items written in the past tense (eg, “Said nice things about me”). The alpha value was 0.945. Strictness was measured with 13 items from Parental Control Scale (PCS).[93] This scale measures the degree to which children perceive their parents as controlling and strict (eg, “It make sure that I know exactly what I can and can not do”). The PCS adult version measures the degree to which adult children had perceived their parents as controlling and strict and has all items written in the past tense (eg, “It made

sure that I knew exactly what I could and could not do"). The alpha value was 0.907. For the two scales, responses were given on a 4-point scale from 1 ("almost never true") to 4 ("almost always true"). In general, studies with adult children use the same measures to assess parenting as the one used for adolescent children, but the items are written in the past tense, as in WAS and PCS scales[94] but also in other questionnaires.[95,96] The WAS and PCS scales are reliable and valid measures for children to assess parental socialization, ie, the degree of warmth and strictness used by their parents in the socialization process and beyond.[94,97,98] Higher scores on the WAS and PCS scales represent a higher degree of parental warmth and strictness.[99]

Adjustment

The academic-professional self-concept was measured with the 6-item subscale of the Form 5 Self-Concept Scale [AF5].[100] This dimension of the self includes how one perceives oneself in the academic/professional context (eg, "I do my homework well [professional works]"), and how one feels that one's teachers/superiors value one's performance (eg, "My superiors [teachers] think that I am a hard worker"). Participants responded on a scale of 1 to 99, being 1 (strongly disagree) and 99 (strongly agree). The higher the score on the scale, the higher the academic-professional self-concept. The alpha value was 0.902. The AF5 questionnaire has been widely applied in adolescents[42,43,46] and adults.[9,24,101] Exploratory analyses[100] and confirmatory factor analyses[102–104] have been carried out and have proven the invariance in the dimensional structure of the AF5 in different cultural contexts such as Spain,[103] Portugal,[105] Brazil,[52] Chile,[101] United States,[106] and China.[56] Besides, its invariance by sex and age has been validated in several studies across different languages, such as Brazilian-Portuguese,[52] Portuguese,[105] Chinese,[56] and English[106] with the Spanish version.

Self-esteem was measured with the 10-item Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale [RSE].[51] This scale assesses the extent of self-acceptance and self-respect (eg, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself"). Participants responded on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The higher the score on the scale, the higher the self-esteem. The alpha value was 0.848. This scale is one of the most widely used measures of global self-esteem.[107]

Benevolent sexism was measured with the 11-item subscale of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory Scale [SAS].[65] This scale assesses the extent of benevolent sexism understood as "viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles, but are subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver) and also tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as prosocial (eg, helping) or intimacy-seeking (eg, self-disclosure)"[65] p. 491. A sample of item is "Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess." Participants responded on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The higher the score on the scale, the higher the benevolent sexism. The alpha value was 0.875.

Stimulation values were measured with the 3-item subscale of the Schwartz's Values Inventory [VAL].[108] This scale assesses the excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (eg, "A variegated life [Full of challenges, changes and surprises]"). Participants responded on a scale of 1 to 99, being 1 (strongly disagree) and 99 (strongly agree). The higher the score on the scale, the higher the stimulation values. The alpha value was 0.770.

Data Collection

Power analysis was calculated with G*Power, a statistical program widely used in previous studies.[109,110] A priori power analysis showed that with a small effect size (R^2 = 0.010, R = 0.100), assuming a type I error probability of 0.05 and a power of 0.95, a sample of 1302 is required to find statistically significant differences.[109,111] However, the sensitivity analysis showed that with the sample size of the study (n = 1125) and assuming a probability of type I error of 0.05 and a power of 0.95, statistically significant differences can be found with a small effect size (R^2 = 0.016, R = 0.128).[112,113]

Data were collected through online questionnaires with mandatory responses that participants completed during 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 academic years. The data collection tools contains an online survey that includes all measures (parental socialization, academic-professional self-concept, self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values) and demographic basic data (ie, age and sex). It was mandatory to answer all the items of the online survey. Additionally, it should be considered that respondents (a) participated voluntarily; (b) informed consent was requested; (c)

anonymity of responses was warranted; and (d) parental consent was obligatory for adolescent participation. To warrant anonymity of responses, identifiers and survey data were deposited in independent files and directory passwords were protected, and sensitive files were coded.

The questionnaires were screened for questionable response patterns,[101,104] and those participants whose responses were questionable were eliminated. About 1.6% (n = 18) of the participants were deleted from the sample due to questionable response patterns such as implausible inconsistencies between negatively and positively formulated responses.

Research Ethics Committee Approval or Ethical Consideration

The investigation was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. The research project was approved by the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) of Nottingham Trent University (protocol code No. 2017/90, May 2017) for studies involving humans.

Data Analysis

Correlation and multiple linear regression analysis were performed. Correlation analysis was performed between the two main parenting dimensions (warmth and strictness) and four child adjustment criteria (academic-professional self-concept, self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values) that were measured separately for adolescent and middle-aged children. In addition, a linear regression was applied in which the predicted variables were the four child adjustment criteria (academic-professional self-concept, self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values) and the predictors were the two main parenting dimensions (ie, warmth and strictness), age and sex.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

The present study was composed of a sample of 1125 participants (687 women, 61.1%, and 438 males, 38.9%; *M* = 30.59; *SD* = 16.43) that included adolescent children and middle-aged children. The adolescent children group consisted of 628

participants (56%) aged from 12 to 18 years (*M* = 16.53; *SD* = 1.72); the sex distribution of the adolescent children group was 379 women (60.4%) and 249 men (39.6%). On the other hand, the middle-aged group was composed of 497 participants (44%) aged from 36 to 59 years (*M* = 48.36; *SD* = 6.46); the sex distribution of the middle-aged group was 308 women (62.0%) and 189 men (38.0%). Age-specific and sex-specific descriptives were as follows: for adolescent women, *M* = 16.74, *SD* = 1.65; for adolescent men, *M* = 16.22, and *SD* = 1.80; for middle-aged women, *M* = 48.49, *SD* = 6.17, and for middle-aged men, *M* = 48.13, *SD* = 6.92 (see Table 1).

Relation Between Study Variables

The results of the correlation analysis between parenting dimensions (ie, warmth and strictness) and the four child adjustment criteria (academic-professional self-concept, self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values) are presented in Table 2. Some statistically significant correlations were found between the parenting dimensions and the four criteria named above.

In general, in both adolescent and middle-aged children, parental warmth was positively related to adjustment scores, giving positive correlations with academic-professional self-concept and self-esteem. On the contrary, parental strictness seems to be related to mixed results in adolescents, with more costs than benefits. Specifically, a high degree of strictness correlated negatively with academic-professional self-concept and positively with greater benevolent sexism. At the same time, more strictness is related to greater stimulation values, even though the value of the correlation is low. Among middle-aged adults, parental strictness did not show any relation to the different criteria of child adjustment.

Additionally, some child adjustment criteria were positively correlated between them. In the case of adolescents, a positive correlation was observed between academic-professional self-concept, self-esteem, and stimulation values. A negative correlation was also observed between benevolent sexism and academic-professional self-concept. In the case of middle-aged adults, it was found that the higher the academic-professional self-concept, the higher the self-esteem, and the lower the benevolent sexism. In addition, benevolent sexism was related to worse scores in academic-professional self-concept and self-esteem.

Relation Between Parenting and Adjustment

The results of the linear multiple regression analysis were similar to those obtained in the correlation analysis. Results for the predictions of the four criteria (academic-professional self-concept, self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values), as a function of parenting dimensions (ie, warmth and strictness) and age and sex are presented in Table 3.

A multiple linear regression model was performed for each dependent variable. In general, the different parenting dimensions predicted the child adjustment criteria. In both the correlation and regression analyses, a common pattern was observed: parental warmth was positively related to child adjustment, while parental strictness was not related to child adjustment and may even be negatively associated with child adjustment.

The four models for regression reached a statistically significant level ($p < 0.05$). Parental warmth and strictness were predictors of adjustment, but in a different direction. Parental warmth was a significant positive predictor of academic-professional self-concept and self-esteem, whereas parental strictness did not reach a statistically significant level in most of the criteria. Greater scores on academic-professional self-concept and self-esteem were predicted by parental warmth. However, strictness alone did not positively predict any criteria and was even a significant predictor of benevolent sexism. Higher scores on benevolent sexism were predicted by parental strictness.

Relation Between Age and Sex with Adjustment

In general, age and sex also predicted child adjustment criteria. On the one hand, age was a statistically significant positive predictor of academic-professional self-concept and self-esteem and a negative predictor of stimulation values. Thus, among middle-aged adults in comparison to adolescents, their scores were higher on academic-professional self-concept and self-esteem, but lower on stimulation values. On the other hand, sex was a statistically significant predictor for academic-professional self-concept, self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values. Men reported higher scores on self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values, while women had greater scores on academic/professional self-concept.

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between parental socialization and the adjustment of adolescent and middle-aged adult children. The results showed that the dimensions of parental socialization were consistently related to children's adjustment. While parental warmth was beneficial to children's adjustment, parental strictness was unrelated to or even detrimental to adjustment.

On the one hand, correlational analyses for adolescent and middle-aged adult children revealed that they showed a similar pattern in the relationship between parental dimensions (ie, warmth and strictness) and adjustment, although more marked in adolescents. On the other hand, regression analyses allowed statistically significant predictions of differences in self-esteem, professional academic self-concept, and benevolent sexism as a function of socialization type. Thus, parental warmth was a positive predictor of self-esteem and academic/professional self-concept. According to this prediction model, the more warmth during socialization, the higher the general self-esteem (self-esteem) and academic/ professional self-perceptions (self-concept). Parental strictness was not a statistically significant predictor, and even benevolent sexism reached statistical significance as a predictor of greater scores. Thus, the higher the levels of strictness, the greater the predisposition to sexism against women. Some studies have examined parental socialization beyond adolescence, mainly with young adults[41,114,115] and, to a lesser extent, middle-aged adults.[83] According to previous studies, parental socialization, even beyond adolescence, shows a pattern consistent with the adjustment of adult children compared to children and adolescents. The present findings confirm some previous studies that the relationship between parenting and adjustment is quite similar for adolescents and adult children of middle-aged, although more marked in adolescents. Additionally, the present study adds new evidence by examining parental socialization in adolescent and middle-aged adult children at the same time and using the same adjustment criteria.

Previous research has linked parenting (which is examined through warmth and strictness) and child and adolescent adjustment. The results of the present study are consistent with a growing body of research, conducted primarily in European and Latin American countries, that identifies the broad benefits of warmth without strictness (the

indulgent parenting).[16,17,44,45,48,90] Consistent with this previous evidence, the results of the present study identify the benefits of parental warmth, which allow the child to obtain good adjustment, in terms of confidence in oneself as a valuable member of the society (ie, self-esteem) and good perception of his or her school and professional performance (ie, academic/professional self-concept). Parental strictness seems unnecessary or even detrimental due to it leads to an increase in prejudice against women in subtle ways (ie, benevolent sexism).

It is important to note that the findings of the present research do not coincide with those mainly from middle-class European-American families. According to these studies, only the combination of high strictness and high warmth is always beneficial for children's adjustment. In this sense, mainly for a good adjustment to social demands, few behavioral problems and good internalization of norms, children from strict families obtain the highest scores.[23,25,28] However, the present study shows that parental strictness positively predicts benevolent sexism, a form of lack of adjustment to norms associated with maladjustment or even aggressive behavior. Given this new evidence that questions classic results, mainly from research with European-American families, it is especially important to analyze parental socialization in different cultural contexts because the combination of warmth and strictness (authoritative parenting) may not always be the most beneficial.[15,33,35]

Likewise, age and sex were included in the regression models. In relation to age, it was a positive predictor of professional self-concept/academic and self-esteem and a negative predictor of stimulation values. Thus, middle-aged adults, compared to adolescents, showed better scores in self (self-esteem and academic/professional self-concept) but also lower priority for stimulation values than adolescents. Sex was a predictor of self-esteem, academic/professional self-concept, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values. Thus, the regression models predicted higher academic/professional self-concept in women, whereas, in men, greater self-esteem, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values.

There comes a time when the adolescent reaches adult age and parental socialization ends. Middle-aged adults probably have developed their professional career, they have a couple and perhaps their own family, being parents. The findings

from this study reveal differences between middle-aged and adolescents given that they are at different life stages, middle-aged adults showing more academic/professional self-concept and self-esteem, and adolescents more priority for stimulation values. Many family studies have studied middle-aged adults in relation to their parents (older adults)[79,82] or their children (probably adolescents),[76,77] although this study focuses on the socialization process when they were raised by their parents. However, according to the present study, adult children even in middle age, like adolescents, benefit from a good self-esteem and academic/professional self-concept, which are key to functioning in society, if their families have been involved (high parental warmth). However, if they have been raised in families characterized by imposition (high parental strictness), they tend to show any benefit and even more mismatch in terms of benevolent sexism. This study shows that, even some time after socialization, there may be differences in adjustment also related to the type of family.

The present study has some important strengths. First, this study examined family socialization using an established theoretical framework: the two-dimensional model.[14] In addition, most studies related to parental socialization have been conducted with samples of adolescents.[4,16,23,29] In contrast, this model allows us to know in detail and in greater depth what are the positive or negative correlates of parental socialization, while it is taking place and once it has ended. In this way, predictions of children's adjustment can be made as follows: parental warmth during the socialization years would always be positive for adjustment, whereas parental severity would be unnecessary or even detrimental. In addition, this study adds new evidence focusing on middle-aged adults. This study is conducted based on four indicators that are relevant to the development of adolescents and middle-aged children: self-esteem, academic/professional self-concept, benevolent sexism, and stimulation values.

However, some limitations should be considered. Due to the long-time from parental socialization in middle-aged children, caution is advised because the study is not based on longitudinal data but is a cross-sectional study. However, a consistent pattern is observed between the dimensions of parental socialization (ie, warmth and strictness) and children's adjustment. Future follow-up studies should analyze the consequences of parental socialization by following the evolution of adult children

during adulthood. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that no experimental methodology was followed in conducting this study.

The results of the present study do not completely coincide with those of classic studies, mainly of European-American families, in which it is found that the combination of high warmth and high strictness has a beneficial impact on adjustment.[23,29] Therefore, when studying the relationship between the parental dimensions, which are warmth and strictness, with adjustment components, the cultural context in which socialization occurs must be considered.[15,17,33] The main question of whether authoritative parenting is associated with universal benefits requires extending the study of parental socialization across the globe; different countries or cultural settings should be compared at the same time to identify optimal parenting using invariant measures so that the results are comparable. Furthermore, within the same society, different contexts, such as poverty and at-risk neighborhood, should be considered, or the correlates of parenting among children with different characteristics, such as school underachievement or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), should be examined. Future studies should conduct longitudinal follow-ups of adult children after parental socialization, despite the difficulties associated with follow-up. In addition, it seems relevant to examine parental socialization beyond adolescence; future research with adult children could use specific features of adjustment outcomes such as romantic relationship quality and identity status in young adulthood, parental stress and marital satisfaction in middle adulthood, and ego integrity and care for grandchildren in late life.

Implications for Practice

The present findings on the relationship between parental socialization and adjustment in adolescence, but also in midlife, have important implications for practice. Any professional practice should be based on previous research. According to the present findings, the use of parental strictness seems unnecessary or even detrimental, despite the fact that it is widely identified as beneficial in previous studies conducted primarily with European-American parents[23] and widely recommended in interventions with families.[116] Current interventions may not be effective, at least in the European context, where, according to some emerging research, children benefit especially when

they have relationships with their parents based on love, affection, and dialogue, but not on strict parenting practices.[117,118]

Interestingly, most interventions with families in professional practice are with adolescent children, partly because that is when they are likely to have the most problems.[119] However, even after the socialization years, in adulthood there is also a relationship between adjustment and maladjustment with the type of family socialization. Therefore, professional practice focused on middle-aged adults may also be possible. Even if they do not have clinical problems, middle-aged adult children who grew up without parental warmth (affection, and involvement) are more likely to have adjustment problems. Especially for middle-aged adults, many of whom are involved in the difficult dual task of raising their children (in many cases, adolescents) and caring for their parents (likely older adults),[120] an intervention based on life review of the socialization years might be especially helpful.[121]

Conclusions

The objective of parental socialization is for children to have maturity and independence when they reach adult age, when they are no longer under the care and supervision of their parents. A theoretical model based on two dimensions, warmth and strictness, has traditionally been used to study parental socialization.[14] The results of the present study seem to suggest that parental socialization is related to children's adjustment, not only while parents are raising their children but also beyond adolescence. Even when socialization is over, a similar pattern is observed in middle-aged children between parental dimensions and adjustment to that found in adolescent children, but less marked, probably because of other variables and adult developmental influences. Thus, when predicting adjustment not only in adolescence but also in adulthood (eg, middle age), the influence of the family during the socialization process should be considered. However, the dimensions of socialization do not predict adjustment in the same direction. According to the present study, parental warmth positively predicts adjustment, the more scores the greater the adjustment of children in terms of self-esteem and academic/professional self-concept. However, strictness was not beneficial and even predicted greater benevolent sexism, the stricter the parents were, the more sexist the children would be.

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Table 1. Participants Characteristics for Age, Sex, and Frequency

	Adolescents		Middle-Aged Adults	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
n	379	249	308	189
Percentage	60.4	39.6	62.0	38.0
M years	16.74	16.22	48.49	48.13
SD years	1.65	1.80	6.17	6.92

Table 2. Correlations Between Parental Dimensions and Child Adjustment[#]

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Parental warmth		−0.268**	0.308**	0.272**	−0.072	0.047
2. Parental strictness	−0.229**		−0.111**	−0.065	0.234**	0.081*
3. Academic-professional self-concept	0.234**	0.015		0.291**	−0.121**	0.107**
4. Self-esteem	0.248**	−0.079	0.407**		−0.017	0.143**
5. Benevolent sexism	−0.025	0.006	−0.118**	−0.123**		−0.022
6. Stimulation values	0.009	−0.070	0.020	0.115*	0.000	

Notes: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$. [#]Correlations for adolescents are shown above the diagonal and for middle-aged adults below the diagonal.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients Between Parenting Dimensions, Sex, and Age and Child Adjustment

Dependent Variable	Predictors	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*	Lower	Upper
Academic-professional self-concept	Parental warmth	0.034	0.004	0.249	8.72***	0.026	0.042
$R^2_{adj} = 0.184$	Parental strictness	−0.003	0.005	−0.016	−0.56	−0.013	0.007
$F(4, 1120) = 64.56$***	Age	0.553	0.043	0.357	12.75***	0.468	0.638
	Sex	−0.519	0.086	−0.164	−6.04***	−0.687	−0.350
Self-esteem	Parental warmth	0.011	0.001	0.268	8.99***	0.009	0.014
$R^2_{adj} = 0.105$	Parental strictness	0.000	0.002	0.007	0.23	−0.003	0.004
$F(4, 1120) = 33.99$***	Age	0.110	0.014	0.235	8.02***	0.083	0.137
	Sex	0.098	0.027	0.103	3.62***	0.045	0.152
Benevolent sexism	Parental warmth	0.000	0.003	0.005	0.18	−0.005	0.006
$R^2_{adj} = 0.069$	Parental strictness	0.019	0.004	0.160	5.20***	0.012	0.027
$F(4, 1120) = 21.87$***	Age	0.010	0.031	0.009	0.32	−0.051	0.070
	Sex	0.489	0.061	0.233	8.01***	0.369	0.609
Stimulation values	Parental warmth	0.007	0.005	0.038	1.28	−0.004	0.017
$R^2_{adj} = 0.108$	Parental strictness	0.006	0.007	0.025	0.84	−0.008	0.019
$F(4, 1120) = 35.10$***	Age	−0.628	0.057	−0.321	−10.96***	−0.741	−0.516
	Sex	0.307	0.113	0.077	2.70**	0.084	0.529

Note: **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

Which is the optimum parenting for adolescents with low vs. high self-efficacy? Self-concept, psychological maladjustment and academic performance of adolescents in the Spanish context

Reyes, M., Garcia, O. F., Perez-Gramaje, A., Serra, E., Melendez, J., **Alcaide, M.**, et al. (2023). Which is the optimum parenting for adolescents with low vs. high self-efficacy? Self-concept, psychological maladjustment and academic performance of adolescents in the Spanish context. *Anales de Psicologia, 39*(3), 446-457. https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.517741 (Impact factor 2023 = **1.4**; 66/92; **Q3**, Psychology; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **20**).

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to establish which parenting style is associated with optimum outcomes among adolescents of Spanish families considering adolescents with low vs. high self-efficacy. Although classical studies identify the authoritative parenting style (based on warmth and strictness) as the best parental strategy, emerging research seriously questions the benefits of parental strictness. Additionally, the impact of parenting on the adolescent's psychosocial competence has been studied for years, but less is known about whether it might vary depending on individual characteristics of the adolescent (e.g., self-efficacy). Participants were 1029 Spanish adolescents, 453 males (44%), aged 12-17 years. Families were classified in one of the parenting styles groups (authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, or neglectful), and adolescents were grouped by low vs. high self-efficacy. Adolescent psychosocial competence was examined through emotional and academic self-concept, psychological maladjustment (hostility/aggression, negative self-esteem, emotional responsivity, instability, and negative view of the world), and academic performance (grade point average and number of failing grades). Main and interaction effects of parenting style and adolescent self-efficacy were tested. Main effect results indicated that adolescents with low self-efficacy were always associated with the worst psychosocial competence. Consistently, the main effect findings indicated that adolescents from indulgent and authoritative families were associated with better results than those from neglectful and authoritarian

families. However, the indulgent parenting style yielded the best results. The impact of parenting might not be the same for adolescents in all cultural contexts. Contrary to findings from classical studies, parental strictness seems to be unnecessary or even detrimental for adolescents with low and high self-efficacy.

Keywords: Family socialization, parenting styles, self-efficacy, self-concept, school performance.

Introduction

Adolescents with low self-efficacy tend to develop a cognitive style characterized by an increased probability of interpreting or processing subsequent events as being out of their control. This tendency may represent a psychological vulnerability to poor psychosocial competence in different domains, including low self-perceptions, emotional maladjustment, or worse school adjustment (Chorpita & Barlow, 1998; Turner et al., 2009). In spite of these difficulties, parents can help their adolescent children, but they can also hinder their psychosocial competence. Many studies have examined the impact of parenting (based on warmth and strictness) on children's competence, but few studies have examined whether these findings are the same for adolescents with low vs. high self-efficacy. The available evidence is inconclusive, and it has been hypothesized that adolescents growing up with more disadvantages and difficulties may especially profit from parenting that is firm and strict (Furstenberg et al., 1999). As explicative mechanism, it is possible that adolescents with low self-efficacy, who have poor coping skills experiencing reduced control over their environment, may benefit from that of firm parenting based on surveillance and monitoring to develop a greater sense of control over events.

Theoretical framework

For many decades, the theoretical framework based on two theoretically orthogonal dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and four parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) has been used in many studies to examine parental socialization and its impact on child and adolescent psychosocial competence (e.g., Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2019). Warmth represents the

degree to which parents show their child and adolescent care and acceptance, support them, and communicate by reasoning with them (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Martinez et al., 2019a; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020). Other labels used in the literature to refer to warmth include love (Schaefer, 1959), acceptance, (Symonds, 1939), assurance (Baldwin, 1955), or responsiveness (Baumrind, 1991a). By contrast, strictness represents the degree to which parents impose standards, use supervision, and tend to have an assertive position of authority over their child and adolescent (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Martínez et al., 2017; Queiroz et al., 2020). Moreover, other labels used in the literature to refer to strictness include domination (Symonds, 1939), control (Schaefer, 1959), restriction (Becker, 1964) or demandingness (Baumrind, 1991b). The four parenting styles are defined by the two parental dimensions: authoritative (warmth and strictness), indulgent (warmth but not strictness), authoritarian (strictness but not warmth), and neglectful (neither warmth nor strictness) (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Research examines the link between parenting and differences in psychosocial competence among children and adolescents to identify the optimal parenting and the harmful parenting. Psychosocial competence has been given different labels by scholars, but with a common meaning to refer to child and adolescent adaptation to the environment (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; Maccoby & Martin, 1983), for example, development (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), developmental outcomes (Gracia et al., 2012), psychosocial adjustment (Beyers & Goossens, 1999), adjustment and competence (Steinberg et al., 1994), or instrumental competence (Baumrind, 1971). So, these attributes of children and adolescents, regardless of the label (e.g., development or competence) are always examined through specific indicators, such as self-perceptions, internal distress, academic performance or aggressive behaviors (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Overall, according to studies mainly conducted with European-American families, the parenting characterized by warmth combined with strictness (the authoritative style) is usually identify as the only parenting style consistently related to the highest psychosocial competence of children (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Nevertheless, the benefits of the authoritative parenting are not always identified in all cultural contexts. The optimal parenting could not be always the same. There are some discrepant findings in the literature about which is the optimal parenting, so it has

been suggested that the relationship between parenting and psychosocial competence of children may vary according to the cultural context in which parental socialization takes place (see Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018).

Traditionally, findings from studies with European-American samples that have examined parenting in middle-class families have widely identified the authoritative style (i.e., warmth and strictness) as the optimal parenting style to promote the adolescent's psychosocial competence and school success (Baumrind, 1991a; Baumrind, 1991b; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Adolescents from authoritative homes tend to report higher self-concept (Baumrind, 1991a), more maturity (Steinberg et al., 1989), less drug use (Baumrind, 1991a) and less internalized stress (Lamborn et al., 1991). Additionally, adolescents with authoritative parents are more likely to do better in school than their peers from the other households (Baumrind, 1991a; Steinberg et al., 1989). They get good grades, are less involved in school misconduct, (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994), and develop optimal achievement strategies, such as using self-enhancing attributions but avoiding task irrelevant behavior (Aunola et al., 2000). Nevertheless, the impact of parenting might not be the same for adolescents in all cultural contexts (Garcia et al., 2019; Lila et al., 2007; Martinez et al., 2020; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Ridao et al., 2021; Yeung, 2021). Parenting research has identified some benefits of authoritarian parenting in studies with ethnic minority samples, such as Chinese-American (Chao, 1994; Chao, 2001) or African-American families (Baumrind, 1972; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996). Along the same lines, other studies with Arab families found that authoritarian parenting might offer some benefits for competence (Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserfe et al., 2006; Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006; Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, Farah, Sakhleh et al., 2006).

Additionally, a growing set of studies reveal that the indulgent style (i.e., warmth but not strictness) is the only parenting style consistently related to the highest psychosocial competence (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2018; Garcia & Serra, 2019; Garcia et al., 2020a; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a; Palacios et al., 2022). Most of them are conducted in South-American countries and Europe, especially in Spain (Garcia et al., 2020b; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; Riquelme et al., 2018). Adolescents from indulgent households (i.e., warmth but not strictness) report equal or even better

scores than their peers from authoritative homes (i.e., warmth and strictness). In contrast, non-warmth parenting styles (i.e., authoritative and authoritarian) are related to worse scores. These findings about the benefits of indulgent parenting for psychosocial competence are obtained by examining self-concept (Riquelme et al., 2018), internalization of social values (Garcia et al., 2018), personal adjustment (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), protection against alcohol and motivations for drinking and non-drinking (Garcia et al., 2020b) and traditional bullying and cyberbullying victimization (Martínez et al., 2019b). Furthermore, adolescents with indulgent parents do well in school, get good grades, are less involved in school misconduct (Garcia & Gracia, 2010), develop self-regulated learning, and are less likely to report academic stress (Fuentes et al., 2019).

Different studies in recent years suggest that the indulgent style has equal or even more benefits than the authoritative style. The Spanish context has served as a testing ground to study the relationship between parental socialization and children's psychosocial competence on different indicators. A seminal study analyzed the consequences of family socialization in Spanish families (Musitu & Garcia, 2004); the findings suggested that the effects of the different parenting styles cannot be directly generalized to different cultures because the authoritative style was related to equal or less scores than the indulgent style. Another study analyzed especially the effect of the family on self-esteem and internalization of values, identifying the benefits of the indulgent parenting (Martínez & Garcia, 2007). In two subsequent studies, one in middle childhood and early adolescence (Garcia & Gracia, 2010) and another during adolescence (Garcia & Gracia, 2009), the benefits parenting characterized by warmth without strictness (indulgent style) were identified using indicators similar to those used in studies with European-American families. Another series of studies extended the analysis of family socialization during adolescence, for example, examining substance abuse (Riquelme et al., 2018) and alcohol use and abuse (Garcia et al., 2020b), as well as school adjustment (Fuentes et al., 2015) and self-regulated learning (Fuentes et al., 2019). The most current studies have continued this same research agenda, extending the evidence to other adolescent problems and challenges such as reactive and proactive violence (Moreno-Ruiz et al., 2018), environmental values (Queiroz et al., 2020) and connectedness with nature (Musitu-Ferrer, León-Moreno et al., 2019), aggressiveness

(Gallarin et al., 2021), dating violence (Muñiz-Rivas et al., 2019), and emotional symptoms (Bully et al., 2019). Additionally, emergent studies have examined parenting beyond adolescence, identifying the benefits of the indulgent parenting (Garcia et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2020a; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022b).

Present study

The impact of parenting styles on adolescent adjustment has not been thoroughly examined in adolescents who are at greater risk for problematic development due to their poor self-efficacy. For years, scholars have implicitly assumed that the impact of parenting on child and adolescent competence would always be the same, regardless of the individual characteristics of the child. Some studies have empirically tested whether the correlates of parenting styles (authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) are the same in normative adolescents as they are in those with serious conduct problems, including serious juvenile offenders (Steinberg et al., 2006), adolescents with antisocial tendencies (Garcia et al., 2021) or aggressive adolescents (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). Nevertheless, these studies with non-normative adolescents have not focused on the increasingly frequent situation of having a child who has not developed good self-efficacy.

Only a few studies have examined whether the impact of parenting and its correlates depends on the child's self-efficacy, and the evidence is inconclusive (Niditch & Varela, 2012; Turner et al., 2009). A study conducted by Turner and colleagues (2009) tested whether the impact of parenting styles on school outcomes (academic performance and academic motivation) is the same or different depending on the adolescent's academic self-efficacy. The findings revealed that the impact of parenting styles is the same regardless of the adolescent's academic self-efficacy. However, most of the empirical evidence seems to suggest a different impact of parenting on adolescent outcomes depending on the child's level of self-efficacy (Llorca et al., 2017; Niditch & Varela, 2012; Yap & Baharudin, 2016).

For example, Niditch and Varela (2012) examined whether the impact of two practices (over-control and rejection) used by parents (mothers or fathers) has the same or a different impact on social anxiety depending on the adolescent's self-efficacy. The results revealed that the impact of rejection on social anxiety was different depending

on the adolescent's emotional self-efficacy. In addition, rejection (by mothers, but not by fathers) has a more negative impact on adolescents with low self-efficacy than on those with high self-efficacy. By contrast, the impact of the parental practices of rejection (used by fathers) and over-control (used by both fathers and mothers) was always just as negative for social anxiety, regardless of the levels of adolescent self-efficacy. In general, as noted by the researchers who find these mixed results (Llorca et al., 2017; Niditch & Varela, 2012), it is not clear what underlying mechanism could explain why the impact of parenting on psychosocial competence might be different depending on adolescent self-efficacy for some parental practices but not for others, or depending on whether the parental practices are applied by mothers or fathers.

The present study examines whether parenting styles (i.e., indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful) and their impact on self-concept, psychological maladjustment, and academic performance might be the same or different depending on adolescents' self-efficacy (low vs. high). The global dimension of self-efficacy has received less attention in parenting studies, compared to studies on multidimensional domains (e.g., emotional or academic), even though it is also quite relevant for adolescents to be successful in school or develop good psychosocial competence (Chen et al., 2001; Frank et al., 2010; Scholz et al., 2002). According to previous research, it is expected that adolescents with low self-efficacy will report the poorest scores in self-concept, psychological maladjustment, and academic performance. Additionally, the indulgent and authoritative parenting styles will be related to greater self-concept and academic performance, and less psychological maladjustment, whereas the neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles will be related to lower scores.

Method

Sample and procedure

An a priori estimate of the statistical power was made to determine the sample-size necessary for to have a statistical power of .95, setting the statistical error rates for statistical inference in the conventional limits ($\alpha = \beta = .05$), to detecting a medium-low effect size (i.e., $f = .13$) in the univariate F tests among the four parenting styles

(Lamborn et al., 1991). The results of a priori power analysis showed that the sample-size would have a minimum of 1020 participants (Faul et al., 2009; Garcia et al., 2008; Pérez et al., 1999). From a complete list of secondary schools from a Spanish largest metropolitan area, twelve schools were randomly selected. The heads of the twelve public and private secondary schools were contacted (only one refused to participate), parental permission was obtained (98% participation), and the instruments were administered during class time with an online form. Only teenagers with four Spanish grandparents were included in the study sample. Finally study sample were 1029 Spanish adolescents, 453 men (44.0%) and 576 women (56.0%), with ages ranging from 12 to 17 years (M = 14.90 years old, SD = 1.75 years old). With the final sample-size of 1029 adolescents, the sensitivity power analysis indicated that we could detect an effect size close to 0.13 (i.e., f = .129; α = .05; 1 - β = .95).

Anonymity and confidentiality of participants and ethical approval of the research were ensured, and research ethics approvals. The research project was approved by College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) of the Nottingham Trent University for studies involving humans.

Statistical power was calculated with G-power 3.1. The IBM SPSS 28.0.1.1 statistical program was used for the MANOVAs, ANOVAs and differences between pairs of means with Bonferroni correction for rate of Type I error. Reliability was calculated with JASP 0.16.4.0.

Measures

Parenting styles

Parental warmth was captured through the 20-item Warmth/Affection Scale (Rohner et al., 1978). The WAS scale has been used in near 500 studies over the past five decades on all continents. A meta-analysis has been published based on 66 studies reviewing worldwide research and including European (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). Additionally, the Spanish version have been applied in numerous studies (Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Villarejo et al., 2020). The Warmth/Affection Scale measures parents' tendencies to be loving, responsive, and involved. Sample items are "Let me know they love me" and

"Treat me gently and with kindness". Adolescents are asked to rate on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (always). Greater scores represent higher levels of parental warmth. Cronbach's alpha was .918 (95% CI .910 - .925) and McDonald's omega was .919 (95% CI .911 - .926). Parental strictness was captured through the 13-item Parental Control Scale (Rohner et al., 1978). The Parental Control Scale assesses parents' tendencies toward strict parental control of their children's behaviour. The PCS Scale has been applied in five culturally distinct contexts (Rohner & Khaleque, 2003), in different European countries (Calafat et al., 2014) and with numerous Spanish samples (Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022b; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Villarejo et al., 2020). Sample items are "Give me certain jobs to do and will not let me do anything else until I am done" and "Are always telling me how I should behave". Adolescents are asked to rate on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (always). Greater scores represent higher levels of parental strictness. Cronbach's alpha was .803 (95% CI .785 - .821) and McDonald's omega was .803 (95% CI .785 - .821).

The four parenting households were defined with a median split (50th percentile), examining each family parenting dimension (i.e., warmth and strictness) at the same time (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Authoritative parents were those who had scores above the median on both measures of warmth and strictness, whereas neglectful parents had scores below the median on both parenting dimensions. Authoritarian parents reported scores above the median on strictness, but below the median on warmth, whereas indulgent parents scored above the median on warmth, but below the median on strictness.

Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy was captured with the six items on negative self-adequacy included in the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Rohner, 1978). PAQ subscales assesses contrasted indices of psychological maladjustment among children, adolescents, and adults regardless of sample differences in gender, race, geography, language, or culture (Ali et al., 2015; Khaleque & Rohner, 2002). Numerous Spanish studies have applied the PAQ subscales (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Garcia & Gracia, 2010; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). Sample items are: "I feel I cannot do things well" and "I feel I cannot do many of the things I try to do". Cronbach's alpha was .576 (95%

CI .534 - .615) and McDonald's omega was .592 (95% CI .554 - .630). Although higher scores in negative self-adequacy scale represent worse self-efficacy, the scores were reversed so that higher scores represent greater self-efficacy. Adolescents were grouped by the median split (50th percentile) into low vs. high self-efficacy (Garcia et al., 2021).

Self-concept

Self-concept was captured through two 6-item subscales of the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale (Form 5) (Chen et al., 2020; Garcia & Musitu, 1999; Garcia et al., 2018). The AF5 factorial structure is invariant for sex and age (Fuentes et al., 2020), and it has been validated in different cultural contexts, such as Portugal and Brazil (Garcia et al., 2018) or, more recently, in China (Chen et al., 2020). An example of a reverse-scored academic self-concept item is "I work very hard in class (at work)", and an emotional self-concept reverse-scored item is, "I am a happy person". Adolescents are asked to rate on a 99-point scale ranging from 1 (complete disagreement) to 99 (complete agreement). Higher scale scores represent a greater sense of the self-concept in its respective dimension. Cronbach's alpha was .884 in academic self-concept (95% CI .873 - .895) and .697 in emotional self-concept (95% CI .667 - .725). McDonald's omega was .886 in academic self-concept (95% CI .876 - .897) and .698 in emotional self-concept (95% CI .669 - .726).

Psychological maladjustment

Psychological maladjustment was captured through five 6-item subscales of the PAQ (Personality Assessment Questionnaire) (Rohner, 1978). A sample item for Hostility/aggression is "I make fun of people who do dumb things"; a sample item for negative self-esteem is "I get unhappy with myself"; an emotional irresponsiveness item is "It is easy to show my friends that I really like them"; an emotional instability item is "I easily get upset when I encounter difficult problems"; and a negative worldview item is "I see the world as a dangerous place". Adolescents are asked to rate on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (always). Higher scale scores represent a greater sense of psychological maladjustment in its respective dimension. Cronbach's alpha was .586 in hostility/aggression (95% CI .545 - .623), .729 in negative self-esteem (95% CI .703 - .754), .628 in emotional irresponsiveness (95% CI .591 - .662), .627 in emotional instability (95% CI .591 - .661), and .720 in negative worldview (95% CI .692 -.746).

McDonald's omega was .578 in hostility/aggression (95% CI .539 -.617), .733 in negative self-esteem (95% CI .708 - .758), .608 in emotional irresponsiveness (95% CI .572 - .643), .629 in emotional instability (95% CI .594 - .664), and .709 in negative worldview (95% CI .682 - .736).

Academic performance

Academic performance was measured with two indices, overall grade point average and number of failing grades (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Steinberg et al., 1994). Respondents provided information about their current high school grades in a range from 0 (all *F*'s) to 4 (all *A*'s). The number of failing grades was calculated from the participant's birth date, test date, and adolescent grade.

Data analysis

A MANOVA was applied. The dependent variables were the outcomes of self-concept (academic and emotional), those of psychological maladjustment (hostility/aggression, negative self-esteem, negative self-efficacy, emotional irresponsibility, emotional instability, and negative worldview), and those academic performance (grade point average and number of failing grades). Independent variables shaped a factorial design in form 4 × 2 × 2 × 2. Specifically, the factors were parenting styles (indulgent, authoritarian, neglectful and authoritative), self-efficacy (low vs. high), sex (female vs. male), and age (12-15 vs. 16-17 years). Then, it was applied several univariate *F*-tests to examine the sources of variation that were significant in the MANOVA. Finally, a post-hoc Bonferroni procedure was applied to control the rate of Type I errors (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004).

Results

Parenting style groups

The distribution of participants by parenting styles can be found in Table 1, which provides complete information about the size of each of the four parenting households and the statistics (mean and standard deviation) for each of the four parenting households on the two main parental dimension measures (i.e., warmth and strictness). Furthermore, results revealed that, in line with the assumptions of parenting

model, the two measures of parental dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) were modestly correlated, r = -.066, R^2 = .004, p = .034, the distribution of families by parenting styles was quite similar, $\chi 2(3) = 5.40$, p = .145, and the interaction between parenting style and sex not reached statistical significance, $\chi 2(3) = .28$, p = .963.

Multivariate analyses

None of the interactions in the four-way MANOVA were significant: the main effect of parenting styles, $\Lambda = .845$, $F(30.0, 2900.6) = 5.70$, $p < .001$, self-efficacy, $\Lambda = .387$, $F(8.0, 988.0) = 156.30$, $p < .001$, sex, $\Lambda = .836$, $F(8.0, 988,0) = 19.44$, $p < .001$, age, $\Lambda = .919$, $F(8.0, 988.0) = 8.73$, $p < .001$ (see Table 2).

Main univariate effects for self-efficacy

Adolescents with low self-efficacy were associated with the worst scores (see Table 3). Adolescents with low self-efficacy reported less emotional and family self-concept, and they scored lower on all the psychological maladjustment problems (more hostility/aggression, negative self-esteem, emotional irresponsiveness, emotional instability, and more negative worldview problems) and had worse academic performance (low grade point average, but a higher number of failing grades) than the adolescents with high self-efficacy.

Main univariate effects for parenting styles

Overall, results showed that parenting styles based on warmth (i.e., indulgent and authoritative) were related to better self-concept and academic performance and less psychological maladjustment than non-warmth parenting styles (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). However, indulgent parenting (warmth without strictness) was the only parenting style consistently associated with the highest scores (see Table 3).

Self-concept

On the academic dimension of self-concept, adolescents with indulgent and authoritative parents had the greatest scores, whereas their peers from neglectful and authoritarian homes obtained the lowest scores. On the emotional dimension of

self-concept, adolescents from indulgent homes indicated higher scores than their counterparts from authoritarian and authoritative households. Additionally, adolescents from neglectful homes reported higher scores than their counterparts from authoritarian and authoritative families.

Psychological maladjustment

Adolescents from authoritarian and neglectful households reported the highest scores on hostility/aggression maladjustment. Although adolescents from an authoritative parenting style scored close to those from an indulgent parenting style, the indulgent style had better scores. On negative self-esteem, only the indulgent parenting style was associated with the lowest scores. Adolescents from authoritative homes reported less optimal scores than their peers from indulgent homes, but better than those from authoritarian and neglectful families. On emotional irresponsiveness problems, adolescents from authoritative and indulgent households obtained better scores than their counterparts from authoritarian and neglectful homes; additionally, adolescents with neglectful parents had even worse scores than their counterparts with authoritarian parents. On negative worldview problems, adolescents from authoritative and indulgent households obtained better scores than their counterparts from authoritarian and neglectful households.

Academic performance

Only the grade point average showed significant differences between the parenting styles ($p < .05$). Specifically, the grade point average of adolescents from authoritative and indulgent homes was higher than that of their peers from authoritarian and neglectful families.

Main univariate effects for sex and age

Despite sex and age differences in the outcomes are considered not central to the topic of parenting studies, the results indicate that different sex-and-age related differences reached statistical significance (see Table 4). On self-concept measures, the results showed that academic self-concept were greater among females, while males reported higher emotional self-concept. Additionally,

academic self-concept scores were greater for the youngest adolescents from 12-15 years old. On the psychological maladjustment measures, boys reported more negative self-esteem and emotional irresponsiveness, but less emotional instability. Hostility/aggression, negative self-esteem, emotional irresponsiveness, and emotional instability scores were always higher for the oldest adolescents from 16-17 years old. With regard to the academic performance measures, females reported higher grade point averages and fewer failing grades, and the youngest adolescents ranged 12-15-year-old, reported the highest-grade point averages and the fewest failing grades.

Discussion

In this study is tested whether the relationships between parenting styles (based on warmth and strictness) and socialization outcomes are different depending on adolescents' self-efficacy. Overall, the results revealed that the impact of the parenting style (i.e., indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful) on the socialization outcomes (self-concept, psychological maladjustment, and school performance) is the same in adolescents with low and high self-efficacy. Nevertheless, the impact of the parenting style can be consistently related to self-concept, psychological maladjustment, and academic performance in adolescents. Overall, indulgent and authoritative parenting (warmth households) were related to better scores than authoritarian and neglectful (non-warmth households) parenting, but indulgent parenting (warmth without strictness) was the only parenting style consistently associated with optimal scores.

The results of the present study revealed that adolescents consistently benefit from having parents who are warm and responsive, whereas parental strictness seems to be unnecessary or even detrimental. Adolescents from indulgent homes reported greater academic self-concept and higher-grade point averages, as well as less emotional irresponsiveness and a less negative worldview (the same pattern found in their peers from authoritative homes). Additionally, examining the warmth parenting profiles (authoritative and indulgent), adolescents from indulgent families (non-strictness) had the highest emotional self-concept and the lowest hostility/aggression and negative self-esteem, whereas their peers from

authoritative homes (strictness) failed on these indicators. By contrast, parenting based on lack of warmth (authoritarian and neglectful) tended to be related to lower self-concept and school performance and greater psychological maladjustment.

The results from the present study confirmed those from other studies, mostly conducted in European and South-American countries (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2018; Martínez et al., 2021), where optimal parenting is based on warmth without strictness (i.e., indulgent style) (Fuentes et al., 2022; Riquelme et al., 2018). However, these studies have assumed that the impact of parenting on child and adolescent competence would always be the same, regardless of the individual characteristics of the child (e.g., level of self-efficacy). Thus, the present study also offers crucial evidence by testing this implicit assumption and finding that the impact of the parenting style does not vary depending on adolescent self-efficacy. Nevertheless, results of the present study clearly contradict those from studies with middle-class European American families (Baumrind, 1991a). The findings from these studies revealed that only parental warmth combined with parental strictness (i.e., authoritative style) helped adolescents to achieve the highest psychosocial competence and success in school (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1989). Therefore, the impact of parenting on psychosocial competence might not be equal for children from all cultural contexts (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). For example, previous literature has identified some benefits related to authoritarian parenting in studies with ethnic minorities in the United States, such as Chinese-Americans (Chao, 2001) or African-Americans (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996), or in studies in Arab societies (Dwairy & Achoui, 2006; Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserfe et al., 2006). Hence, it seems important to consider the cultural context where parenting socialization takes place in order to identify the best parenting because the impact of parenting styles on adolescents' competence might not be the same in all cultures.

Along with the question of the best parenting for adolescents, few studies have also considered whether the impact of parental socialization is the same or different depending on adolescent self-efficacy. The assumption that adolescents

growing up with more disadvantages and difficulties may especially profit from parenting that is firm and strict (Furstenberg et al., 1999) is not supported by the present data. According to the multivariate analysis, non-interaction effect was found on parenting style by self-efficacy. Even for adolescents with low self-efficacy benefit to parenting characterized by warmth, but without strictness. It seems that parents raising children with low self-efficacy should be nurturing and involved with them, so that they can gain the resources and confidence to develop a sense of control over situations. On the contrary, if adolescents have low self-efficacy and their parents are strict or even non-warm, they may develop even less confidence in their abilities because their parents do not encourage their psychological autonomy.

The results of the present study agree with the study conducted by Turner and colleagues (2009), in which the impact of parenting styles on psychosocial competence was the same, regardless of adolescent self-efficacy. However, most of the few studies carried out, contrary to our findings, found that the impact of parenting changes depending on adolescent self-efficacy (Llorca et al., 2017; Niditch & Varela, 2012; Yap & Baharudin, 2016). Specifically, according to their results, the impact of parenting is not the same for adolescents with high and low self-efficacy, although this pattern is only found for some parental practices, but not for others, or even when the parental practice is used by fathers or mothers (Llorca et al., 2017; Niditch & Varela, 2012). These parental practices are studied in isolation, rather than in a more general context where parental practices are grouped by their degree of warmth and strictness, the two main dimensions (identified as theoretically unrelated or independent). By contrast, the present study offers new findings that could clarify the previous inconsistent results. The relationship between parenting and adolescent self-concept, psycho-logical maladjustment, and school performance is theoretically consistent for adolescents from indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful homes, regardless of whether adolescents have better or worse self-efficacy.

Another important finding of the present study is that, although the impact of parenting styles on self-concept, psychological maladjustment, and school

performance shares the same pattern in adolescents with low and high self-efficacy, self-efficacy in adolescence could be more important than previously considered. Adolescence represents a transitional period into healthy adulthood that is not guaranteed for all adolescents (Candel, 2022; Hernandez-Serrano et al., 2021). Adolescents who are influenced by family (Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022), peers (Steinberg et al., 1989), and the cultural context (Sacca et al., 2021), might experience some degree of psychosocial vulnerability just in a time when school success become more salient (Eccles et al., 1993; Garcia & Serra, 2019). Previous research has identified the positive impact of different dimensions of self-efficacy (e.g., emotional, social, and academic) on school performance (Caprara et al., 2011; Juang & Silbereisen, 2002; Suldo & Shaffer, 2007). For example, greater academic self-efficacy has been positively related to adolescents' grades in school (Caprara et al., 2011). However, as the present findings suggest, general self-efficacy seems to be as important as the specific domains, not only for school success (adolescents with greater self-efficacy have higher grade point averages and fewer failing grades than their peers with poor self-efficacy), but also for psychosocial competence, because differences depending on self-efficacy were also found for psychological adjustment (in the six indicators) and self-concept (in the two indicators). Therefore, global self-efficacy could be an essential component of healthy development and school success in secondary school and high school (Eccles et al., 1993; Veiga et al., 2021), especially because adolescents are influenced by peer standards that sometimes deviate from social norms (Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019; Veiga et al., 2015).

Additionally, the sex- and age-related differences found in self-concept, psychological maladjustment, and school performance agree with the evidence reported in some previous studies (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). Sex-related differences showed that females reported greater academic self-concept, but less emotional self-concept, than males. In terms of psychological maladjustment, negative self-esteem and emotional irresponsiveness were higher among males, whereas emotional instability was greater among females. On academic performance, females had higher grade point averages and fewer failing grades than males. Age-related differences indicated more academic self-concept in

adolescents aged 12-15 years than in those aged 16-17 years. The greatest psychological maladjustment (hostility/aggression, negative self-esteem, emotional irresponsiveness, and emotional instability) was found in adolescents aged 16-17 years. On academic performance, adolescents aged 16-17 years reported a higher-grade point average and fewer failing grades than their peers aged 16-17 years.

The findings of the present study have important implications for parenting science and practice. First, parental warmth is beneficial for adolescent self-concept, low psychological maladjustment, and greater academic performance, only if it is combined with low parental strictness (i.e., indulgent parenting). These findings of the present study contrast clearly with those obtained in those with European-American samples (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994) in which the benefits of parental warmth are associated with the combination of high parental strictness (i.e., authoritative style). Second, parental strictness, widely used in prevention science with families (e.g., Triple P–Positive Parenting Program, (Sanders et al., 2022), especially during adolescence, may be unnecessary and even detrimental. In line with the results of the present study and others from European countries (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2020b), prevention with families should be based on programs that promote the use of warmth, but without being accompanied by the use of parental strictness (e.g., the frequent use of punishment as a form of correction). Third, in working with families, it should be considered that those with difficult children (e.g., low self-efficacy) will have more problems (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). Differences in children's self-efficacy, less studied compared to that of parents, should also be considered due to its relevance for families and adolescents. Adolescents with low self-efficacy are more likely to have difficulties in terms of lower self-concept, greater psychological maladjustment, and worse school performance. However, and contrary to some previous evidence (Niditch & Varela, 2012; Yap & Baharudin, 2016), parents should not act in a different way when they are raising children with low self-efficacy compared to raising those with high self-efficacy. Remarkably, the benefits of parental warmth transcend children's individual differences in self-efficacy (high and low self-efficacy), as well as parental strictness is unnecessary and even detrimental regardless of differences in children's degree of self-efficacy.

Finally, as an important implication for research and intervention with families, parental socialization in each cultural context should be specifically considered (Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Findings based on European-American families may not be generalizable to all cultural contexts (Garcia & Gracia, 2009).

Some strong and weak points of the present study should be kept in mind. This study captures parenting using a theoretical framework based on two orthogonal dimensions (warmth and strictness) and four parenting styles (i.e., indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful), which makes it fairly easy for future research to replicate the results in a variety of cultural contexts to identify the best parenting. However, some cautions in the interpretation of present findings should be consider. The evidence from this study about optimal parenting is obtained from rates offered by adolescents rather than by parents, although previous research on parenting showed that the results tend to be quite similar despite the use of different collection methods (e.g., external observer or self-report). Additionally, the cross-sectional design does not allow us to determine causal directions in the relationships between variables. The findings should be considered preliminary due to they are not based on evidence from longitudinal or experimental design.

Finally, the present study offers crucial evidence that contributes to advancing parenting science. The findings seriously question that parenting strictness (one of the main components of authoritative parenting) always helps adolescents to achieve the best competence in terms of greater self-concept and school performance and less psychological maladjustment. Instead, only the parental strategy based on the use of warmth without strictness (i.e., indulgent parenting) was consistently related to the highest self-concept and school performance and the lowest psychological maladjustment, even in adolescents with low self-efficacy. Future research should continue to test whether parenting and its impact could change as a function of adolescents' individual characteristics, such as self-efficacy, extending the evidence to other indicators.

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Table 1. Distribution of Adolescents by Parenting Style Groups and Statistics (Mean Scores and Standard Deviations) on Measures of Parental Dimensions (N = 1029)

		Indulgent	Authoritarian	Neglectful	Authoritative
Frequency		285	263	244	237
Percent		27.7	25.6	23.7	23.0
Warmth					
	Mean	72.62	56.35	54.45	72.63
	SD	3.93	8.90	9.18	3.60
Strictness					
	Mean	29.50	39.95	29.34	38.95
	SD	4.23	3.90	4.71	3.90

Table 2. Four-way MANOVA Factorial 4 × 2 × 2 × 2 for Outcome Measures of Self-concept, Psychological Maladjustment, and Academic Performance

Source of variation	Λ	*F*	*df* between	*df* error	*p*
Parenting Styles (A)	.845	5.698	30.0	2900.651	<.001
Self-Efficacy (B)	.387	156.30	8.0	988.000	<.001
Sex (C)	.836	19.440	8.0	988.000	<.001
Age (D)	.919	8.728	8.0	988.000	<.001
A × B	.970	1.008	24.0	2900.651	.455
A × C	.967	1.119	24.0	2900.651	.300
A × D	.977	.773	24.0	2900.651	.806
B × C	.988	1.200	8.00	988.000	.287
B × D	.991	.903	8.00	988.000	.530
C × D	.991	.882	8.00	988.000	.550
A × B × C	.977	.770	24.0	2900.651	.810
A × B × D	.966	1.133	24.0	2900.651	.283
A × C × D	.965	1.166	24.0	2900.651	.245
B × C × D	.997	.866	8.00	988.000	.565
A × B × C × D	.958	1.4515	24.0	2900.651	.067

[a] a_1, indulgent, a_2, authoritarian, a_3, neglectful, a_4, authoritative. [b] b_1, low, b_2, high. [c] c_1, male, c_2, female. [d] d_1, 12-15 years, d_2, 16-17 years

Table 3. Means and (Standard Deviations), Main Univariate *F* Values, Probabilities of Type I Error, and Bonferroni Test[#] for Outcome Measures of Self-concept, Psychological Maladjustment, and Academic Performance among four Parenting Styles, Self-Efficacy, Sex, and Age groups

	Parenting style					Self-Efficacy		
	Neglectful	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Authoritative	*F*(3, 1013)	Low	High	*F*(1, 1013)
Self-concept								
Academic	5.95[2] (2.07)	7.02[1] (1.82)	5.93[2] (1.99)	6.94[1] (1.81)	17.62 ***	6.94 (2.00)	7.02 (1.82)	61.37 ***
Emotional	5.84[1] (1.74)	5.87[1] (1.87)	5.48[2] (1.77)	5.30[2] (1.90)	4.49 **	5.25 (1.80)	6.02 (1.79)	45.28 ***
Psychological maladjustment								
Hostility/ Aggression	11.33[1] (3.00)	10.30[2] (2.52)	11.86[1a] (3.05)	10.70[b] (2.55)	9.35 ***	11.56 (2,89)	11.47 (2.70)	26.14 ***
Negative self-esteem	11.32[1] (3.06)	9.61[3] (2.82)	11.87[1] (3.34)	10.29[2] (2.78)	14.66 ***	12.33 (3.11)	9.09 (2.15)	317.03 ***
Emotional irresponsiveness	15. 37[1] (3.26)	11.43[3] (3.06)	14.06[2] (3.24)	11.85[3] (3.01)	23.73 ***	13.48 (3.26)	11.94 (3.20)	36.52 ***
Emotional Instability	12.20 (3.30)	15.16 (3.25)	16.02 (3.10)	15.60 (2.90)	1.01 n.s.	16.15 (3.09)	14.88 (3.09)	41.21 ***
Negative Worldview	12.29[1] (3.30)	10.84[2] (3.03)	12.80[1] (3.32)	11.27[2] (3.12)	10.84 ***	12.76 (3.27)	10.71 (2.94)	82.27 ***
Academic Performance								
Grade point average	1.97[2] (1.17)	2.56[1] (1.13)	2.05[2] (1.12)	2.41[1] (1.17)	11.42 ***	2.04 (1.17)	2.48 (1.13)	26.91 ***
Number of failing grades	0.29 (0.80)	0.24 (0.80)	0.36 (0.74)	0.25 (0.64)	0.57 n.s.	0.35 (0.79)	0.22 (0.69)	8.98 **

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$; n. s. $p > .05$

[#] $\alpha = .05$; 1 > 2 > 3 > 4; a > b

Table 4. Means and (Standard Deviations), Main Univariate F Values, for Outcome Measures of Self-concept, Psychological Maladjustment, and Academic Performance among four Parenting Styles, Self-Efficacy, Sex, and Age groups.

	Sex			Age		
	Female	Male	*F*(1, 1013)	12-15 years	16-17 years	*F*(1, 1013)
Self-concept						
Academic	6.75 (1.96)	6.11 (1.98)	28.10 ***	6.61 (1.99)	6.31 (1.97)	7.99 **
Emotional	5.25 (1.87)	6.10 (1.69)	62.12 ***	5.68 (1.82)	5.56 (1.85)	3.34 n.s.
Psychological maladjustment						
Hostility/ Aggression	10.90 (2.75)	11.22 (2.97)	2.52 n.s.	10.86 (2.91)	11.22 (2.78)	5.01 *
Negative self-esteem	11.00 (3.20)	11.22 (2.97)	11.07 ***	10. 68 (3.10)	10.82 (3.20)	4.01 *
Emotional irresponsiveness	12.41 (3.35)	13.13 (3.23)	12.41 ***	12.50 (3.30)	13.00 (3.32)	6.45 *
Emotional Instability	16.08 (3.10)	14.83 (3.09)	41.71 ***	15.30 (3.25)	15.81 (3.01)	13.06 ***
Negative Worldview	11.84 (3.31)	11.66 (3.23)	0.74 n.s.	11.67 (3.30)	11.86 (3.25)	1.06 n.s
Academic Performance						
Grade point average	2.37 (1.13)	2.11 (1.21)	10.98 **	2.39 (1.17)	2.11 (1.16)	14.58 ***
Number of failing grades	0.22 (0.66)	0.37 (0.84)	5.43 *	2.11 (1.16)	2.26 (1.17)	62.43 ***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$; n. s. $p > .05$

Early Family Experiences, Drug Use, and Psychosocial Adjustment across the Life Span: Is Parental Strictness Always a Protective Factor?

Villarejo, S., Garcia, O., **Alcaide, M.**, Gonzalez, M. E., and Garcia, F. (2024). Early family experiences, drug use, and psychosocial adjustment across the life span: is parental strictness always a protective factor? *Psychosocial Intervention, 33*(1), 15-27. https://doi.org/10.5093/pi2023a16 (Impact factor 2024 = **4.4**; 22/221; **Q1**, Psychology, Multidisciplinary; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **18**).

Abstract

Objective: This study analyzes whether parental strictness, which is shared by authoritative parenting (strictness and warmth) and authoritarian parenting (strictness without warmth) styles, always acts as a main protective factor against drug use and psychosocial maladjustment in children. This conclusion has already been stated in numerous classic studies, though emergent research suggests that there are benefits to parental warmth regardless of whether strictness is present or not. Method: Sample were 2,095 Spanish participants (1,227 females, 58.6%), 581 adolescent children (aged 12-18 years, 27.7%) and 1,514 adult children (72.3%). The measures were the main parenting style dimensions (warmth and strictness), drug use, and a set of indicators of psychosocial adjustment. A 4 × 2 × 4 MANOVA was applied for all outcomes with parenting style, sex, and age as independent variables. Results: Indulgent parenting (warmth without strictness) was related to less drug use than parenting without warmth (authoritarian and neglectful). Additionally, indulgent and authoritative parenting styles were related to better scores on psychosocial adjustment than authoritarian and neglectful styles, although the indulgent parenting was the only style related to the optimal scores being equal or even more effective than the authoritative style. Conclusion: Contrary to classical studies, present findings suggest that it is the parental warmth instead of the parental strictness that seems to be effective in protecting against drug use and psychosocial maladjustment.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Drug use, Psychosocial adjustment, Adolescent children, Adult children

Drug use is a major global risk factor for disability and premature loss of life (Peacock et al., 2018). Drug use seriously harms correct functioning and is related to problems and difficulties (Mauro et al., 2018; Newcomb & Bentler, 1988; Shao et al., 2023; Spear, 2018). For example, drug use has been associated with low well-being, poor family relationships and emotional regulation, low confidence in one's abilities (Fuentes et al., 2020), weak performance at school or work (Lehman & Simpson, 1992; Mounts & Steinberg, 1995), poor interpersonal relationships (Newcomb, 1994), and increased likelihood of deviant activities and even delinquency (Farrell et al., 2000).

Despite the efforts of public authorities to reduce drug use rates among the population, global statistics on alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use revealed the highest prevalence, particularly in United States and Europe (Peacock et al., 2018). Drug use is likely to begin in adolescence, mainly alcohol and tobacco, even though in adulthood, especially among young adults, the rates seem to remain equal or even higher than in adolescents (Evans-Polce et al., 2015; Peacock et al., 2018; Schulenberg & Maggs, 2002). Individual differences identified in drug use, personal functioning, and psychosocial deviance are related to multiple protective or risk factors. Even though family is one of the most important, due to their influence, it can be beneficial and protective, but also harmful and risky.

Parenting Styles and Psychosocial Adjustment

For years, the study of parental socialization has been carried out through a theoretical model of two non-related dimensions and four parenting styles (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). The warmth dimension, also called involvement, love and responsiveness, refers to the capacity to get involved in the upbringing of their children, by showing support and affection, being receptive and available to any type of problem, using open and bidirectional communication, based on understanding and reasoning (Baumrind, 1991a; Gimenez-Serrano, Alcaide et al., 2022; Martínez et al., 2017). The strictness dimension, also called imposition, control, severity or demandingness, refers to the control and surveillance over the children, as well as the way in which parents impose rules in a punitive and rigid manner (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Martinez et al.,

2019; Riquelme et al., 2018). From the combination of both dimensions, four parenting styles are obtained: authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful. Authoritative parents are characterized by using warmth with strictness; indulgent parents use warmth without strictness; authoritarian parents are characterized by using strictness without warmth, whereas neglectful parents do not use warmth nor strictness (Fuentes et al., 2022; Lamborn et al., 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Palacios et al., 2022).

Overall, most classical studies mainly conducted with European-American families identify the use of high parental strictness as a protective factor against drug use and other problems such as school misconduct and poor school engagement (Bahr & Hoffmann, 2010; Im-Bolter et al., 2013; Lamborn et al., 1991; Stephenson & Helme, 2006). However, only the combination of high strictness and high warmth (i.e., authoritative parenting) seems to be associated with optimal scores in terms of psychosocial adjustment (e.g., self-confidence and self-concept) and protection against behavioral problems (e.g., school misconduct and delinquency) (Baumrind, 1991a; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1992; Steinberg et al., 1994). Adolescents with authoritarian parents benefit from the strictness component (common to authoritative parents) by scoring reasonably well on measures of obedience and conformity to adult standards, which offers protection against drug use and behavioral problems. However, lack of parental warmth seems to negatively affect self-confidence in their abilities, reporting poor self-concept (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg et al., 2006). On the contrary, adolescents with indulgent parents (characterized by lack of strictness) are those who have greater problems at school, drug use and even delinquency, although they benefit from the warmth component (common with authoritative parents) reporting greater self-confidence and self-concept. Finally, adolescents from families lacking strictness and warmth (neglectful parents) consistently obtain the most negative scores (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994; Steinberg et al., 2006).

Despite parental socialization being always conducted by parents through warmth and strictness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), positive parenting aiming to foster a healthy development is not always the same (Palacios et al., 2022). Some research seriously questions the universal benefits of the authoritative parenting for all cultural contexts (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018).

Studies conducted with ethnic minorities in the United States, such as African-American (Baumrind, 1972; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996) or Chinese-American (Chao, 1994; Chao, 2001), reveal that authoritarian parenting might be related to some benefits. Especially in dangerous and poor communities, in which disobeying family rules (e.g., initiation with drugs or school misconduct) might be related to more damaging consequences for child development than in middle-class neighborhoods (Gracia et al., 1995; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2022), parental strictness even without warmth might provide the family protection and security that the neighborhood does not offer (Baldwin et al., 1990; Baumrind, 1972; Clark et al., 2015; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996). In a similar line, some psychosocial gains associated with authoritarian parenting have been identified in studies conducted with families from Arab or Asian countries (Dwairy & Achoui, 2006; Dwairy et al., 2006; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003).

Additionally, some recent research from studies mostly conducted in European and Latin American countries indicate that the indulgent parenting is related to equal or even more optimal scores compared to the authoritative parenting, whereas authoritarian and neglectful parenting tend to be related to the lowest optimal scores (Alcaide et al., 2023; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; Reyes et al., 2023). Overall, parental warmth might offer broad benefits (Lila et al., 2007; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023), while parental strictness seems to be unnecessary or even detrimental (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2019). For example, a European study with adolescents conducted in six countries (Sweden, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Portugal) indicated that parenting styles characterized by warmth (i.e., authoritative and indulgent styles) offer more protection against drug use and personal disturbances than parenting based on lack of warmth with strictness (authoritarian style) and without strictness (neglectful style). Furthermore, adolescents from indulgent homes reported greater self-esteem and school performance than their peers from authoritative homes (poor scores were reported again by those from authoritarian and neglectful families) (Calafat et al., 2014).

Similar results about the benefits of indulgent parenting were found on the internalization of social and environmental values (Martinez et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020), empathy (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020), and school adjustment (Fuentes et al., 2015). In the same way, parenting characterized by warmth without strictness (i.e., the

indulgent style) has also been related to lower drug use (Garcia, Serra et al., 2020; Riquelme et al., 2018) and criminal behaviors (Martínez et al., 2013). Additionally, some other studies conducted with adult children revealed the benefits of indulgent parenting beyond adolescence. Interestingly, adult children who were raised in warm but not strict homes reported high psychological maturity, less emotional maladjustment (Garcia & Serra, 2019), greater internalization of social values (Garcia et al., 2018), and more well-being (Garcia, Fuentes et al., 2020).

Family and Extrafamilial Influences during Adolescence and Adulthood

The family is not an exclusive and isolated context where socialization takes place; there are other intra-and extra-familial influences such as school, peers, or mass media which positively or negatively affect healthy development, especially in adolescents (Garcia, Serra et al., 2020; Steinberg & Morris, 2001; Veiga et al., 2021). Adolescence seems to be a critical time related to some degree of psychosocial vulnerability or difficulties compared to childhood and adulthood (Arnett, 1999; Riquelme et al., 2018; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Adolescents spend more time with their peers without adult supervision (Veiga et al., 2015). Parents have an important influence in adolescence, although this tends to diminish (Steinberg & Morris, 2001; Veiga et al., 2021) at the same time that peer influence increases (Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019). Some problems can appear in adolescence such as drug use (Riquelme et al., 2018), less self-concept (Harter, 1988), poor academic achievement and school misconduct (Lamborn et al., 1991), aggression (Gallarin et al., 2021), and even delinquency (Garcia & Gracia, 2009).

Adolescents are more likely to explore psychological characteristics of the self to discover who they really are, and how they fit in the social world in which they live (Harter, 1988; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Peers can positively help adolescents to achieve autonomy, independence and identity, although peers could also influence adolescents in a negative way. Social norms transmitted in the socialization process by different agents, including the family, are not always followed by adolescents. Peer approval may be based less on social standards and more on conformity to peer standards that sometimes deviate from social norms (Eccles et al., 1993; Fuentes et al., 2015). For example, school success may be devalued by peers and negatively associated

with students' social standing, increasing the likelihood of school misconduct or lower academic engagement (Baumrind, 1991b; Preckel et al., 2013). Fear of rejection may also lead the adolescent to engage in deviant activities within the peer group, such as using drugs in their free time, mainly alcohol and marijuana (Peacock et al., 2018), or even delinquency (Steinberg et al., 2006). On the contrary, an effective socialization is achieved when adolescents develop confidence in oneself and others, good social abilities, and emotional regulation and can reject peer pressure toward standards that deviate from the social norm (Baumrind, 1991a; Garcia, Fuentes et al., 2020; Steinberg & Morris, 2001).

Adulthood represents the end of parental socialization, even though the relationship between parents and adult children tends to continue. Parents can no longer use parental practices with their adult children (e.g., monitoring or behavioral control). Adults throughout their lives face different challenges, such as university studies and job search (mainly in young adulthood), consolidation of professional career and family life (in middle age) and retirement and perhaps grandparenthood (later life) (Alcaide et al., 2023). Far from some problems that may arise during adolescence being reduced upon reaching adulthood, findings suggest that they seem to continue. For example, drug use; rates appear to be the same or even higher during young adulthood, as identified for alcohol (Barry & Blow, 2016; Merrill & Carey, 2016; Windle, 2016) and others such as tobacco and marijuana (Evans-Polce et al., 2015; Mauro et al., 2018; Webb et al., 1996). Family studies have focused on examining parenting correlates when parental socialization is in process (i.e., childhood and adolescence) (Baumrind, 1971; Baumrind, 1972; Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994), but less is known about whether differences in adjustment and competence among adult children might depend on parental socialization (Garcia, Martínez et al., 2018; Gimenez-Serrano, Garcia et al., 2022; Villarejo et al., 2020).

The Present Study

There are important individual differences in drug use and psychosocial adjustment. Some adolescents and adults tend to use drugs and have worse psychosocial adjustment than their age peers. Despite several intrafamilial and extrafamilial influences on development, differences between lower and higher scores on drug use

and psychosocial adjustment can be related to parental socialization. For years, family studies have focused on the assessment of parental socialization based on a theoretical model of two non-related dimensions and four parenting styles (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

The strictness dimension has been identified to offer greater benefits when combined with warmth (i.e., the authoritative style) and even without it (i.e., the authoritarian style) in protecting against deviance, including drug use and some behavioral problems (Lamborn et al., 1991; Stephenson & Helme, 2006). However, the so-called positive parenting (i.e., authoritative parenting), the family style that has been found to be protective not only against drugs, but also for fostering psychosocial adjustment, may not always be effective. Some recent studies revealed that the optimal scores might be related to parental warmth, even without strictness (indulgent parenting) (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019). Additionally, some previous research has focused primarily on the association between parenting and drug use (Garcia, Serra et al., 2020a; Stephenson & Helme, 2006), without considering different indicators of psychosocial adjustment, or have examined parental socialization considering parental practices without the general context of the parenting styles (Martins et al., 2008; Montgomery et al., 2008). Furthermore, family studies tend to be examined only in a single developmental time period, mainly when parental socialization is in process (e.g., adolescence) (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Lamborn et al., 1991), but without considering adulthood (i.e., when parental socialization is over).

The present study examined if parenting styles (i.e., indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful) are associated with differences in drug use, and in different indicators of psychosocial adjustment across adolescence and adulthood (young adulthood, middle-age and later life): self (emotional and family self-concept and self-esteem), social competence, externalizing problems during adolescence (school misconduct and delinquency), and behavioral and psychological problems (aggression, emotional unresponsiveness, and nervousness). Considering some recent studies, we hypothesized that indulgent parenting would be related to equal and even more positive scores than authoritative parenting, whereas parenting characterized by lack of warmth (authoritarian and neglectful styles) would be associated with worse scores.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of 2,095 participants from Spain, 1,227 females (58.6 %) and 868 males (41.4 %), with adolescents and adult children (M = 36.19, SD = 20.34, ranged from 12 to 91 years) from four age groups: adolescents (n = 581, 348 females, 59.9 %), aged 12 to 18 years (M = 16.67, SD = 1.63); young adults (n = 616, 362 females, 58.8 %) aged 19 to 35 years (M = 23.70, SD = 3.76); middle-aged adults (n = 505, 319 females, 63.2 %) aged 36 to 59 years (M = 48.44, SD = 6.26); and older adults (n = 393, 198 females, 50.4 %) aged 60 years or older (M = 68.86, SD = 7.77). Following the a priori power analysis, a minimum sample of 1,020 participants was determined as necessary to reach detection with a statistical power of .95 (α = .05; 1 – β = .95) of the low effect size, f = 0.13. The total sample of this study goes beyond the minimal sample size required (Faul et al., 2007; Pérez et al., 1999). A sensitivity power analysis showed that for the study sample (N = 2095, $\alpha = \beta$ = .05) it is possible to detect a statistically significant main effect among the four parenting styles for a very small effect size (f = 0.091; Alcaide et al., 2023; Faul et al., 2009; Garcia & Gracia, 2010). G-power 3.1 software was applied to estimate the statistical power (Faul et al., 2009).

The data collection procedure followed in this study was similar to previous studies on socialization with adolescent and adult children (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Garcia et al., 2021; Villarejo et al., 2020). Specifically, adolescents were enrolled through the complete list of high schools. First, the heads of all the high schools invited to participate were contacted. If a head declined to be part of the research, another school from the complete list was selected until achieving the sample size needed (Garcia et al., 2018; Martínez et al., 2021). Young adults were recruited from university courses (Candel, 2022; Manzeske & Stright, 2009). Middle-aged adults came from city council neighborhoods (Alcaide et al., 2023; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). Older adults were recruited using a complete list of senior citizen centers. If a senior citizen center rejected to participate, an alternative center from the complete list was selected until achieving the sample size required (Garcia et al., 2018; Gimenez-Serrano, Garcia et al., 2022). The study was approved by the ethics committee of the country in which the research was carried out. Participants met these requirements: a) they were Spanish, as

well as their parents and grandparents; b) they participated voluntarily; c) parental consent was mandatory for adolescents; d) informed consent was required; and e) anonymity of responses was guaranteed.

Measures

Parental Socialization

The warmth dimension was measured with the 20 items of the Warmth/Affection Scale (Rohner et al., 1978). It assesses the extent to which adolescent and adult children perceive their parents as affectionate, responsive, and involved. A sample item is "Make me feel wanted and needed". For the three adult groups, there is an adult version that includes the same statements in past tense. A sample item is "Made me feel wanted and needed". The alpha value was .903. The strictness dimension was measured with the 13 items of the Parental Control Scale (Rohner et al., 1978). It assesses the extent to which adolescent and adult children perceive control, firmness, demand, severity, and imposition by their parents. A sample item is "Want to control whatever I do". For the three adult groups, there is an adult version that includes the same statements in past tense. A sample item is "Wanted to control whatever I did". The alpha value was .900. Both scales are 4-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 = *almost never is/was true* to 4 = *almost always is/was true.* High scores on both scales represent greater warmth and parental strictness. Overall, parenting questionnaires for adult children have the same items as for adolescents, but are written in past tense (Arrindell et al., 1999; Buri, 1991; Rohner et al., 1978). Both the Warmth/Affection Scale and the Parental Control Scale are frequently used in studies across the world and have good psychometric properties (Gomez & Rohner, 2011; Khaleque & Rohner, 2002a, 2002b; Rohner & Khaleque, 2003; Senese et al., 2016).

The four parenting styles were defined based on the median split procedure (50th percentile) in both parental dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) by sex and age of the participants (Garcia, Fuentes et al., 2020; Lamborn et al., 1991; Queiroz et al., 2020). Authoritative families scored above the median on warmth and strictness, whereas neglectful families were below the median on both parental dimensions. Authoritarian families scored above the median on strictness and below the median on

warmth, whereas indulgent families scored above the median on warmth, but below the median on strictness.

Drug Use

Drug use in adolescents and in the three adult age groups was examined (Sanjuan & Langenbucher, 1999). It was measured by four indices (items), each one assesses a different substance (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Lamborn et al., 1991). The measure of current drug use taps the frequency of involvement with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other illicit drugs. The alpha value was .680. Its response scale is a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *nothing* to 4 = *much.* Greater scores indicate higher drug use.

Psychosocial Adjustment

Self. It was captured through three indicators: emotional self-concept, family self-concept, and self-esteem. Emotional self-concept was measured with the 6 items of the emotional scale from the AF5 Self-Concept Form 5 (Chen et al., 2020; Garcia & Musitu, 1999). This scale evaluates the general self-perception of the emotional state and its response to specific situations of daily life that require a certain degree of commitment and involvement (Fuentes et al., 2020; Gracia, Martinez et al., 2018). A sample item is “I am afraid of some things” (reversed item). The alpha value was .768. Family self-concept was measured with the 6 items of the family scale from the AF5 Self-Concept Form 5 (Chen et al., 2020; Garcia & Musitu, 1999). This scale assesses the perception that individuals have of their involvement, participation, and integration in the family. A sample item is “My family would help me with any type of problem”. The alpha value was .822. The response scale of the emotional and family self-concept measures is a 99-point scale, ranging from 1 = *very little agreement* to 99 = *very much agreement.* Self-esteem was measured with the 10 items of the Rosenberg questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965). This instrument evaluates feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and self-acceptance. A sample item is “I am able to do things as well as most other people”. The alpha value was .854. Its response scale is a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree.* Higher scores correspond to higher emotional self-concept, family self-concept, and self-esteem.

Social Competence. Social competence was measured with the 8 items of the social competence scale of the Psychosocial Maturity Questionnaire (CRPM3) (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Greenberger et al., 1975; Zacares & Serra, 1996). It assesses the development of effective interpersonal relationships with peers and adults (Baumrind, 1978; Greenberger et al., 1975). A sample item is "I adapt successfully to different people and social situations". The alpha value was .832. Its response scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *very inadequate to describe me* to 5 = *very suitable to describe me.* A high score on social competence represents greater personal adjustment.

Externalizing Problems during Adolescence. It includes self-reports of all participants regarding two indices, their school misconduct and delinquency during adolescence (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Lamborn et al., 1991). The measure of school misconduct assesses the frequency of such behaviors as cheating, copying homework, and tardiness. A sample item is "Misrepresenting a classmate in homework or assignments on purpose". The alpha value was .613. The measure of delinquency assesses the frequency of behaviors such as carrying a weapon, theft, and getting into trouble with the police. A sample item is "Taking goods from supermarkets (or department stores)". The alpha value was .657. Its response scale is a 3-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 3 = *two or more times*. Higher scores in school misconduct and delinquency represent higher externalizing problems during adolescence.

Behavioral and Psychological Problems. It was captured through three indicators: aggression, emotional unresponsiveness, and nervousness. Aggression was measured with the 6 items of the Hostility/Aggression Scale of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) (Rohner, 1978). It evaluates personality self-perception and behavioral traits linked to hostile and aggressive tendencies (Ali et al., 2015). A sample item is "I have trouble controlling my temper". The alpha value was .652. Emotional unresponsiveness was measured with the 6 items of the emotional unresponsiveness scale of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) (Rohner, 1978). It assesses the inability to express emotions freely and openly and is manifested by a lack of spontaneity and difficulty in responding emotionally to other's demands (Gracia et al., 2005). A sample item is "I have trouble showing people how I feel". The

alpha value was .723. The response scale of the aggression and emotional unresponsiveness measures is a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *almost never true* to 4 = *almost always true.* Nervousness was measured with the 8 items of the nervousness scale of the Psychosocial Maturity Questionnaire (CRPM3) (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Garcia et al., 2021; Greenberger et al., 1975; Zacares & Serra, 1996). It evaluates the lack of emotional stability and anxiety in situations in everyday life (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020). A sample item is "I am usually tense, nervous, and anxious". The alpha value was .769. Its response scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *very inadequate to describe me* to 5 = *very suitable to describe me*. Higher scores on aggression, emotional unresponsiveness and nervousness represent higher personal maladjustment.

Data Analysis

First, a factorial multivariate analysis of variance (4 × 2 × 4 MANOVA) was performed for drug use, self (emotional self-concept, family self-concept, and self-esteem), social competence, externalizing problems during adolescence (school misconduct and delinquency), and behavioral and psychological problems (aggression, emotional unresponsiveness, and nervousness). Independent variables were parenting style (i.e., indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian and neglectful), sex (i.e., female and male), and age group (i.e., adolescents, aged 12 to 18 years; young adults, aged 19 to 35 years; middle-aged adults, aged 36 to 59 years; and older adults, aged 60 years or more). Second, a univariate analysis (ANOVA) was applied in those multivariate sources of significance. Finally, maintaining the alpha per study at 5%, post-hoc Bonferroni tests were applied to those univariate sources of significance.

Results

Parenting Style Groups

Participants were distributed in the four parenting styles (see Table 1). Regarding parental warmth, children from indulgent (M = 73.73, SD = 4.37) and authoritative (M = 72.7, SD = 4.13) families scored higher than those from authoritarian (M = 54.96, SD = 10.05) and neglectful (M = 57.22, SD = 9.27) families. In terms of parental strictness, children from authoritative (M = 39.89, SD = 4.93) and authoritarian

(*M* = 41.93, *SD* = 5.47) families scored higher than their peers from indulgent (*M* = 28.47, *SD* = 5.43) and neglectful (*M* = 28.59, *SD* = 5.78) families.

Multivariate Analyses

The results of the multivariate analyses (see Table 2) showed statistically significant differences in the main effects of parenting style, $\Lambda = .707$, $F(30.0, 6029.6) = 25.21$, $p < .001$, sex, $\Lambda = .812$, $F(10.0, 2054.0) = 47.53$, $p < .001$, and age, $\Lambda = .834$, $F(30.0, 6029.6) = 12.78$, $p < .001$, and in the interaction effects of parenting style by age, $\Lambda = .930$, $F(90.0, 13941.2) = 1.67$, $p < .001$, and sex by age, $\Lambda = .964$, $F(30.0, 6029.6) = 2.52$, $p < .001$.

Parenting Styles

The results of the univariate analyses showed statistically significant differences of the parenting styles in all criteria, $p < .05$ (see Table 3). Parenting styles characterized by warmth (i.e., indulgent and authoritative) were related to more positive scores than families not characterized by warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). However, indulgent parenting was the only parenting style constantly related to low drug use and greater psychosocial adjustment in both adolescent and adult children.

In terms of drug use, the lowest scores corresponded to adolescents and adult children from indulgent families (i.e., warmth without strictness), whereas the highest rates were obtained by those from non-warmth families (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). Additionally, no differences were found between authoritative style and the other parenting styles.

With regard to self-concept and self-esteem, adolescents and adult children who characterized their parents as indulgent obtained the most positive scores. In terms of emotional self-concept, adolescents and adult children from indulgent families scored higher than those raised in authoritarian and neglectful families, whereas those from authoritative families did not differ significantly from their peers of other family profiles. Again, regarding family self-concept, indulgent parenting was related to the greatest scores followed by authoritative, neglectful and authoritarian parenting. Additionally, a statistically significant interaction effect between parenting style and age

was found on family self-concept, $F(9, 2063) = 6{,}179$, $p < .001$. Examining the family profiles by age in family self-concept (see Figure 1), a common pattern can be observed for adolescents and adult children: parenting characterized by warmth (i.e., indulgent and authoritative) was associated with higher family self-concept than parenting not characterized by warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). Within households characterized by warmth, family age profile showed that indulgent parenting was related to higher scores than authoritative parenting in adolescence and young adulthood but tend to be equal in middle age and later life. Within homes characterized by non-warmth, family age profiles showed that neglectful parenting was related to higher scores in family self-concept than authoritarian parenting in adolescence, young adulthood and middle age but in later life the scores were lower than in authoritarian. Regarding self-esteem, indulgent and authoritative parenting were related to higher scores compared to authoritarian and neglectful parenting.

In terms of social competence, adolescents and adult children from families characterized by warmth (i.e., indulgent and authoritative parenting) reported higher scores than those from neglectful and authoritarian families. Additionally, within parenting not characterized by warmth, those with neglectful parents reported lower social competence than their peers from authoritarian homes. With regard to externalizing problems during adolescence, warm parenting was associated to lower scores compared to non-warm parenting. Specifically, the lowest scores on school misconduct corresponded to the indulgent parenting and the highest to the authoritarian and neglectful parenting. Additionally, adolescents and adult children from authoritative parenting scored better than their peers from authoritarian parenting. Similarly, with regard to the other indicator of externalizing problems during adolescence, indulgent and authoritative parenting were associated with lower

delinquency than authoritarian and neglectful parenting.

In terms of behavioral and psychological problems, the indulgent parenting was also the only parenting style related to the lowest scores. Differences on aggression showed that the less aggressive adolescents and adult children were from indulgent families, those from authoritarian and neglectful homes were the most aggressive, and in a middle position were children from authoritative households. In terms of emotional

unresponsiveness, indulgent and authoritative parenting were associated with lower scores than authoritarian and neglectful parenting. In the same way, children

from indulgent and authoritative homes reported less nervousness than their peers from authoritarian and neglectful homes.

Sex and Age Differences

Although not central to the objective of this study, several univariate main effects for sex and age reached significance (see Table 4 and Table 5).

Regarding sex-related differences, drug use was higher in males than among females. Males scored higher on emotional self-concept and self-esteem scores, but less on family self-concept scores. Females reported greater social competence than males. In terms of externalizing problems during adolescence, males reported higher school misconduct and delinquency than females. Males also reported more aggression and emotional unresponsiveness than females, whereas females scored higher in nervousness.

Regarding age-related differences, young adults reported higher drug use than adolescents and middle-aged adults, whereas the lowest scores were reported by older adults. Middled-aged and older adults had higher emotional self-concept than adolescents and young adults, while older adults reported the lowest scores on family self-concept (there were no differences between the other age groups). Middle aged adults scored higher on self-esteem than young adults, who reported greater scores than adolescents (older adults scored higher than adolescents). In terms of social competence, adolescents and young adults had better scores than older adults. For school misconduct, young adults reported higher rates than adolescents who scored higher than middle-aged adults, while the lowest scores were reported by older adults. In a similar way, the lowest scores on delinquency corresponded to older adults, but the highest to young adults (adolescents and middle-aged adults scored in a middle position). Aggression was greater in adolescents followed by young adults, whereas the lowest scores corresponded to middle-aged and older adults. Regarding emotional unresponsiveness, adolescents and adolescents and young adults scored higher than middle-aged adults. Finally, adolescents and young adults scored higher than middle-

aged adults on nervousness, whereas older adults reported lower scores than adolescents.

Additionally, statistically significant effects between sex and age were found in family self-concept, $F(3, 2063) = 3.456$, $p = .016$ and emotional unresponsiveness, $F(3, 2063) = 4.100$, $p = .007$.

Examining the sex profiles by age in family self-concept (see Figure 2a), females were found to score higher than males throughout life with the exception of middle-aged adults. Throughout the life cycle, males and females have an increasing tendency and then a decreasing tendency but the point in the life cycle at which this change occurs is different for males and females: young adulthood for females and middle age for males. Due to the fact that females have higher family self-concept scores than males in almost the entire life cycle and the point in the life cycle at which the decreasing tendency starts is earlier than in males, the declining tendency is more abrupt in females than in males.

Examining the sex profiles by age in emotional unresponsiveness (see Figure 2b), a common pattern was found: males scored higher than females in almost the entire life cycle with the exception of male adolescents, who scored similar to their female counterpart. In addition, there was a decreasing tendency from young adulthood to middle age, but only in females. Males did not present this decreasing tendency, being related to similar levels of emotional unresponsiveness throughout life.

Discussion

Based on the two-dimensional model (i.e., warmth and strictness), the study examines the relationship between the four parenting styles (indulgent, authoritative, authoritarian and neglectful) and drug use, self (emotional self-concept, family self-concept, self-esteem), social competence, externalizing problems during adolescence (school misconduct and delinquency), and behavioral and psychological problems (aggression, emotional irresponsibility, nervousness) among adolescent and adult children. Differences in the ten criteria examined were found depending on parenting style. For adolescents and adult children, non-warm parenting (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful) was related to poor scores, whereas parenting characterized by warmth,

indulgent parenting (i.e., without strictness) was associated with equal or even better positive scores than authoritative parenting (i.e., with strictness).

Results from the present study disagree with those obtained from European-American families, in which parental strictness combined with warmth (i.e., the authoritative style) is constantly beneficial for healthy development. However, according to the present data, parental warmth offers the highest protection, not only against drug use, but also against psychosocial maladjustment. Parental strictness seems unnecessary or even detrimental. Interestingly, differences in drug use and psychosocial adjustment depending on parenting styles share the same pattern during adolescence and beyond.

In terms of drug use, only adolescents and adult children raised by indulgent families reported the lowest scores, whereas their peers from authoritarian and neglectful homes obtained the highest rates. The present findings seriously contradict those from European-American families in which parental strictness without warmth (i.e., the authoritarian style) and combined with warmth (i.e., the authoritative style) offers protection against drug use, whereas the highest rates corresponded to adolescents with non-strict families (i.e., indulgent and neglectful parenting) (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). However, the present findings seem to suggest that parental warmth is associated with protection, regardless of parental strictness. The greatest drug use corresponds to families characterized by lack of warmth, including those without strictness (neglectful parents) and those families characterized by strictness (authoritarian parents). Parenting based on warmth without strictness (indulgent style) is related to the lowest drug use, whereas parenting characterized by warmth and strictness (authoritative style) is related to relative low scores that do not reach statistically significant levels compared to the other families. These results confirm the protection of indulgent parenting against drug use identified in some emergent research mainly conducted in Spain (Garcia, Serra et al., 2020) and other European countries (Calafat et al., 2014).

Drug use seriously harms the correct personal functioning and is related to problems and difficulties. However, some previous studies have only considered the relationship between family and drug use in adolescence (Garcia, Serra et al., 2020;

Stephenson & Helme, 2006). The present study extends the research of family beyond drug use to the broader aspects of psychosocial adjustment, which are quite relevant for the health and well-being, not only during adolescence (as most previous family studies focus on) but also across adulthood (young, middle-aged and older adult children). According to the present study, differences in psychosocial adjustment depending on parenting style also show a similar pattern as in drug use.

In terms of the self and social competence, the highest scores were only associated to parental warmth without strictness. Within families characterized by warmth, indulgent parenting is related to equal scores (on self-esteem and social competence) or better rates (on family self-concept) than the authoritative parenting. In terms of emotional self-concept, the greatest scores correspond to the indulgent parenting style, the lowest to the authoritarian and neglectful, and authoritative parenting was in a middle position, although differences did not reach a significant level and, therefore, did not differ from the other families. The results do not agree with most research conducted with European-American families in which the greatest adjustment (e.g., self-concept) corresponded to the authoritative parenting (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994), while it confirms some emergent research mainly conducted in European and South American countries about the benefits of the indulgent parenting style (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2019). Also, the lowest externalizing problems during adolescence (school misconduct and delinquency) and the lowest behavioral and psychological problems (aggression, emotional unresponsiveness, and nervousness) were only associated with the indulgent parenting. Within parenting characterized by warmth, the indulgent style was related to the highest protection, being related to less aggression than the authoritative style. Also, strictness without warmth (i.e., authoritarian parenting) does not offer protection against psychosocial maladjustment, being as ineffective as the other parenting style without strictness (i.e., the neglectful). Parental warmth seems to be more effective at achieving adolescents and adult children that are guided by social standards which include taking care of oneself and others, whereas strictness seems unnecessary or even harmful. These results confirm some previous evidence, mainly from families of Europe and South America (Calafat et al., 2014; Martinez et al., 2020; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), but seriously contradict findings from research with European-American families (Lamborn et al.,

1991; Steinberg et al., 1994) and some US ethnic minority families and Eastern Societies in which protection might be associated to strictness even without warmth (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Dwairy & Achoui, 2006).

Important differences in child and adolescent adjustment and competence have long been related to parental socialization. Although parental socialization is always based on warmth and strictness, the cultural context in which it takes place is very different and could explain some discrepant research findings on the optimal parenting styles (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Warmth seems to be a protective factor against drug use, which could support children making social standards and norms their own by rejecting peer pressure when it is oriented towards socially deviant standards. Drug use is especially harmful not only because of its toxic effects, but also because it leads the human being to feel separated from the community, unable to find a shared interest and a consensual way to contribute to society (Baumrind, 1987). Warmth, but not strictness, also benefits psychosocial adjustment. Involvement, trust, and closeness in the family could favor adolescents and adult children by developing confidence to regulate emotions (emotional self-concept) and trusting their family (family self-concept), having a good view of oneself as a valuable person for society (self-esteem), and through skills needed to interact in the social world (social competence). According to the present findings, warm but not strict parents are more likely to help their children adequately develop their life within social norms, being equal or even more effective than parents that are also warm but strict.

An important limitation of some previous studies is that they relate parenting to a certain component of adolescent adjustment (e.g., school adjustment) (Glasgow et al., 1997), but do not consider the different adjustment components through various indicators (the present study uses 10 indicators). Despite multiple intra-and extrafamilial influences (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2022; Gomez-Ortiz & Sanchez-Sanchez, 2022), parenting affects (positively or negatively) very different components of adjustment (see Baumrind, 1993). Parenting styles allow defining families according to the degree of warmth and strictness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). An important question is to identify the positive parenting style (the parenting style that is related to the optimal scores on different adjustment components). Based on research with mainly European-American families, parenting styles characterized by a lack of one of the two dimensions (i.e.,

authoritarian and indulgent parenting) are associated with a mixture of positive and negative outcomes (Baumrind, 1991a; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). For example, adolescents with authoritarian parents show obedience and conformity to adult standards and low levels of drug use (benefit of high strictness), but also poor self-confidence (cost of lack of warmth). However, according to classical findings from mainly European-American families, only the combination of high strictness and warmth (i.e., the authoritative style) is related to the optimal developmental scores. Thus, adolescents with authoritative parents would show the highest psychosocial adjustment and the lowest drug use (Baumrind, 1991a; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994).

The main findings from the present study seriously question the combination of strictness and warmth (i.e., the authoritative style) as the only parenting style related to the most positive scores on drug use, social competence, externalizing problems during adolescence, and behavioral and psychological problems. The traditional so-called positive parenting style (i.e., authoritative parenting) seems to not be the most beneficial according to the present findings. By contrast, the benefits of the indulgent style have been identified in some previous emergent research mainly conducted in Europe and Latin America. For example, the indulgent parenting was related to equal or even more optimal scores in studies conducted in Spain (Garcia & Gracia, 2009, 2010; Reyes et al., 2023), Portugal (Rodrigues et al., 2013; Martinez et al., 2020), Germany (Garcia et al., 2019), Sweden, United Kingdom, Slovenia, the Czech Republic (Calafat et al., 2014), Norway (Lund & Scheffels, 2019), Brazil (Martinez & Garcia, 2008; Martinez et al., 2020), or more recently United States (Garcia et al., 2019; Milevsky, 2022). Additionally, similar results from South Africa revealed the benefits of parental warmth regardless of strictness (Dakers & Guse, 2020). However, the optimal parenting is a pressing issue, and more studies are needed. Classical and more recent research findings reveal variations in optimal parenting as a function of cultural context (Baumrind, 1972, Chao, 2001; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019). Whether optimal parenting is based on strictness without warmth (the so-called first stage or authoritarian parenting), strictness with warmth (the so-called second stage or authoritative parenting), or warmth without strictness (the so-called third stage or

indulgent parenting) continues to be analyzed in different contexts and settings throughout the world (Garcia et al., 2019).

Although not central to the study, sex and age-related differences were found. Sex-related differences were in full line with some previous studies (Garcia et al., 2021; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). Drug use was higher among males than females. Males also reported greater self-esteem, and less family and emotional self-concept than females, whereas social competence was higher among females than males. Externalizing problems during adolescence and behavioral and psychological problems were greater among males on all indicators, except in nervousness. Also age-related differences were in line with some previous studies (Alcaide et al., 2023; Garcia, Fuentes et al., 2020; Reyes et al., 2023). Adolescents reported some negative scores, for example, in self-esteem, aggression and nervousness. Interestingly, it was observed that the highest drug use was not only in adolescents, a stage related to special psychosocial vulnerability, but in adulthood, specifically among young adults. Some problems that usually begin in adolescence may continue into adulthood, such as drug use, but family experiences during the socialization years seem to have a key influence (as protective or risk factor).

Finally, this paper has strengths and limitations. The two-dimensional theoretical framework of four parenting styles used in this study is widely used throughout the world (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Drug use and the contribution (positive or negative) of the family has also been studied for years, although this study includes the study of drugs along with a broad set of indicators of psychosocial adjustment. The new evidence is crucial because the so-called positive parenting (i.e., the authoritative style), mainly identified in studies with European-American families, may not be the most beneficial (Lamborn et al., 1991; Stephenson & Helme, 2006). However, warm but non-strict parenting (i.e., the indulgent style) is the only one that is associated with the best scores, not only with drug use, but also with psychosocial adjustment. Currently implemented psychosocial intervention strategies, mainly based on studies with European-Americans, may be ineffective or even harmful in some cases. Also, another strength of the present study is the inclusion of not only adolescent children, but also adult children. Nevertheless, some cautions should be considered when interpreting the findings. The two-dimensional theoretical model

identifies parenting styles (defined based on the two dimensions) as well as specific parental practices (defined by their degree of parental warmth and strictness) and its impact on child and adolescent developmental outcomes (see Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Martínez-Escudero et al., 2020; Schaefer, 1959). The present study examined parental socialization through parenting styles, but not specific parenting practices (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2018; Tur-Porcar et al., 2019) or clusters (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2019, 2015). Some previous research has examined parenting practices such as psychological control (Barber, 1996; Schaefer, 1965), monitoring (Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Steinberg & Fletcher, 1994), or autonomy granting (Bumpus, 2001; Silk et al., 2003). Future work should examine parenting practices according to its degree of parental warmth and strictness as well as its relationship with child and adolescent developmental outcomes. The methodology of the study is non-experimental. Also, the design is cross-sectional and not longitudinal, so causal relationships associated with the passage of time cannot be established. Early experiences in adult children (in the present study, parental socialization, and problems during adolescence) have been frequently examined through cross-sectional designs, a limitation compared to longitudinal studies. Although it is a frequent strategy in the literature on adult children and is generally considered to be reliable and valid (Ali et al., 2015; Brewin et al., 1993), longitudinal designs are necessary to confirm the present findings. Finally, the data are reported in all cases by the children and not by the parents, although children seem to offer more accurate measures than parents (Barry et al., 2008; Garcia & Gracia, 2009, 2010; F. Garcia et al., 2019; Gonzales et al., 1996).

Drug use has been related to multiple protective and risk factors, one of which is the family. Traditionally, studies mainly with European-American families have identified the benefits of parental strictness (as opposed to indulgent and neglectful homes) as a protective factor against drug use and deviant behaviors (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Adolescents from authoritative families, characterized by strictness in combination with warmth, are the only ones who show the highest levels of well-being and health (children from authoritarian families have internal problems such as low self-concept and self-confidence due to low parental warmth). Many of the psychosocial programs and interventions are aimed at parents (Arruabarrena et al., 2022; Sanders et al., 2022), especially when they have very young children (Linhares et

al., 2022; Callejas et al., 2020), but also at adolescents (Cutrin et al., 2021). Mainly on the basis of this research with European-American families, psychosocial intervention policies and programs have been based on teaching and promoting strategies characterized by the use of parental strictness in combination with parental warmth to help educators, parents, and children (e.g., the Triple P program; see Sanders et al., 2022).

However, the widely recommended strategy based on parental strictness, according to the current study and in line with emerging studies conducted mainly in Europe and Latin America, seriously questions whether it is always beneficial (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Martinez et al., 2020; Garcia et al., 2019). The use of parental strictness to protect against drugs and related problems may be unnecessary or even detrimental, whereas warmth appears to be beneficial (children from indulgent families score as well or better than their peers from authoritative families). Parental strictness could be a risk factor for drug use and psychosocial maladjustment in some cultural contexts, especially during the period of greatest psychosocial vulnerability (adolescence), even negatively affecting the health of adults (when parental socialization has been completed). It is important to note that the so-called positive parenting (i.e., the authoritative style) could not be associated with universal benefits in all cultural contexts (Palacios et al., 2022). Future research should especially consider the cultural context to comprehensively identify protective and risk family factors based on the two-dimensional model (parental warmth and strictness) with four parenting styles.

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Table 1. Distribution of Participants according to Parenting Style, and Mean Score and Standard Deviation on Parenting Dimensions

	Total	Indulgent	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Neglectful
Frequency	2,095	605	454	587	449
Percentage	100	28.9	21.7	28.0	21.4
Parental Warmth					
Mean	64.71	73.73	72.7	54.96	57.22
SD	11.48	4.37	4.13	10.05	9.27
Parental Strictness					
Mean	34.74	28.47	39.89	41.93	28.59
SD	8.31	5.43	4.93	5.47	5.78

Table 2. MANOVA Factorial ($4^a \times 2^b \times 4^c$) for Drug Use, Self (emotional and family self-concept, and self-esteem), Social Competence, Externalizing Problems during Adolescence (school misconduct and delinquency), and Behavioral and Psychological Problems (aggression, emotional unresponsiveness, nervousness)

Sources of Variation	Λ	*F*	*df*numerator	*df*denominator	*p*
(A) Parenting Styles	.707	25.21	30.0	6029.6	< .001
(B) Sex	.812	47.53	10.0	2054.0	< .001
(C) Age	.834	12.78	30.0	6029.6	< .001
Parenting Styles x Sex	.980	1.40	30.0	6029.6	.072
Parenting Styles x Age	.930	1.67	90.0	13941.2	< .001
Sex x Age	.964	2.52	30.0	6029.6	< .001
Parenting Styles x Sex x Age	.947	1.25	90.0	13941.2	.056

Note. (A) Parenting styles = a_1 indulgent, a_2 authoritative, a_3 authoritarian, a_4 neglectful; (B) sex = b_1 female, b_2 male; (C) age = c_1 adolescents (12-18 years), c_2 young adults (19-35 years), c_3 middle-aged adults (36-59 years), and c_4 older adults (60 years and older).

Table 3. Means (standard deviations), Univariate *F*-values, (Cohen *f*) and Bonferroni test# for Parenting Styles on Drug Use, Self, Social Competence, Externalizing Problems during Adolescence and Behavioral and Psychological Problems

Parenting style	Indulgent	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Neglectful	*F*(3, 2063) (*f*)	*p*
Drug use	1.30[2] (0.36)	1.35 (0.34)	1.39[1] (0.44)	1.38[1] (0.40)	4.73 (0.08)	.003
Self						
Emotional self-concept	5.90[1] (1.80)	5.67 (1.78)	5.40[2] (1.73)	5.60[2] (1.74)	8.82 (0.11)	< .001
Family self-concept	8.73[1] (0.97)	8.49[2] (1.02)	7.03[4] (1.65)	7.48[3] (1.48)	196.57 (0.53)	< .001
Self-esteem	3.36[1] (0.45)	3.35[1] (0.40)	3.10[2] (0.50)	3.17[2] (0.45)	43.60 (0.25)	< .001
Social competence	4.01[1] (0.63)	4.03[1] (0.61)	3.76[2] (0.69)	3.64[3] (0.67)	46.18 (0.26)	< .001
Externalizing problems during adolescence						
School misconduct	1.21[2] (0.31)	1.26[b] (0.35)	1.32[1, a] (0.39)	1.28[1] (0.36)	10.03 (0.12)	< .001
Delinquency	1.20[2,b] (0.24)	1.22[2] (0.28)	1.29[1] (0.33)	1.27[a] (0.31)	13.03 (0.14)	< .001
Behavioral and psychological problems						
Aggression	1.66[3] (0.40)	1.78[2] (0.46)	1.94[1] (0.53)	1.90[1] (0.50)	35.58 (0.23)	< .001
Emotional unresponsiveness	1.95[2] (0.56)	1.95[2] (0.54)	2.34[1] (0.58)	2.40[1] (0.56)	100.58 (0.38)	< .001
Nervousness	2.19[2] (0.61)	2.27[2] (0.60)	2.54[1] (0.64)	2.50[1] (0.61)	40.45 (0.24)	< .001

Note. #Bonferroni test $\alpha = .05$; 1 > 2 > 3 > 4; a > b.

Table 4. Means (standard deviations), Univariate *F*-values and (Cohen *f)* for Sex on Drug Use, Self, Social Competence, Externalizing problems during adolescence and behavioral and psychological problems

Sex	Female	Male	*F*(1, 2063) (*f*)	*p*
Drug use	1.33 (0.36)	1.39 (0.41)	20.58 (0.10)	< .001
Self				
Emotional self-concept	5.27 (1.75)	6.18 (1.66)	138.86 (0.26)	< .001
Family self-concept	8.07 (1.47)	7.75 (1.53)	17.64 (0.09)	< .001
Self-esteem	3.21 (0.48)	3.29 (0.46)	17.18 (0.09)	< .001
Social competence	3.93 (0.66)	3.77 (0.68)	22.66 (0.10)	< .001
Externalizing problems during adolescence				
School misconduct	1.18 (0.29)	1.39 (0.41)	183.10 (0.30)	< .001
Delinquency	1.18 (0.22)	1.33 (0.35)	164.04 (0.28)	< .001
Behavioral and psychological problems				
Aggression	1.78 (0.47)	1.86 (0.51)	13.83 (0.08)	< .001
Emotional	2.09 (0.61)	2.25 (0.58)	38.65 (0.14)	< .001
Unresponsiveness				
Nervousness	2.43 (0.65)	2.30 (0.61)	23.60 (0.11)	< .001

Table 5. Means (standard deviations), Univariate *F*-values, (*f* Cohen) and Bonferroni Test[#] according to Age Group for Drug Use, Self, Social Competence, Externalizing Problems during Adolescence and Behavioral and Psychological Problems

Age group	Adolescents (12-18 years old)	Young adults (19-35 years old)	Middle-aged adults (36-59 years old)	Older adults (> 60 years old)	*F*(3, 2063) (*f*)	*p*
Drug use	1.35[2]	1.44[1]	1.36[2]	1.24[3]	21.69	<.001
	(0.40)	(0.44)	(0.34)	(0.29)	(0.18)	
Self						
Emotional self-concept	5.32[2]	5.58[2]	5.87[1]	5.93[1]	11.64	<.001
	(1.70)	(1.78)	(1.78)	(1.78)	(0.13)	
Family self-concept	7.95[1]	8.11[1]	7.93[1]	7.65[2]	8.75	<.001
	(1.58)	(1.49)	(1.41)	(1.47)	(0.11)	
Self-esteem	3.14[3,b]	3.26[2]	3.34[1]	3.26[a]	15.74	<.001
	(0.48)	(0.51)	(0.41)	(0.44)	(0.15)	
Social competence	3.89[1]	3.91[1]	3.87	3.76[2]	2.93	.033
	(0.68)	(0.66)	(0.63)	(0.71)	(0.07)	
Externalizing problems during adolescence						
School misconduct	1.30[2]	1.36[1]	1.21[3]	1.15[4]	44.06	<.001
	(0.37)	(0.40)	(0.31)	(0.26)	(0.25)	
Delinquency	1.24[2]	1.32[1]	1.22[2]	1.15[3]	40.84	<.001
	(0.29)	(0.34)	(0.25)	(0.21)	(0.24)	
Behavioral and psychological problems						
Aggression	1.93[1]	1.82[2]	1.73[3]	1.74[3]	18.90	<.001
	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.44)	(0.50)	(0,17)	
Emotional	2.22[1]	2.19[1]	2.05[2]	2.14	7.08	<.001
irresponsiveness	(0.59)	(0.63)	(0.56)	(0.59)	(0.10)	
Nervousness	2.45[1,a]	2.39[1]	2.29[2]	2.34[b]	6.46	<.001
	(0.64)	(0.63)	(0.62)	(0.63)	(0.10)	

[#] Bonferroni test $\alpha = 0.05$; 1 > 2 > 3 > 4; a > b

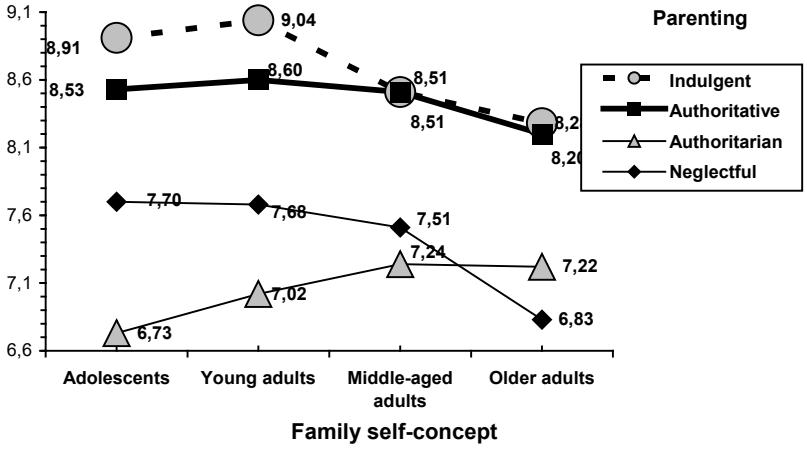

Figure 1. A structural Model Relating Father's and Mother's Parenting Styles and Interaction of Parenting Style by Age on Family Self-concept.

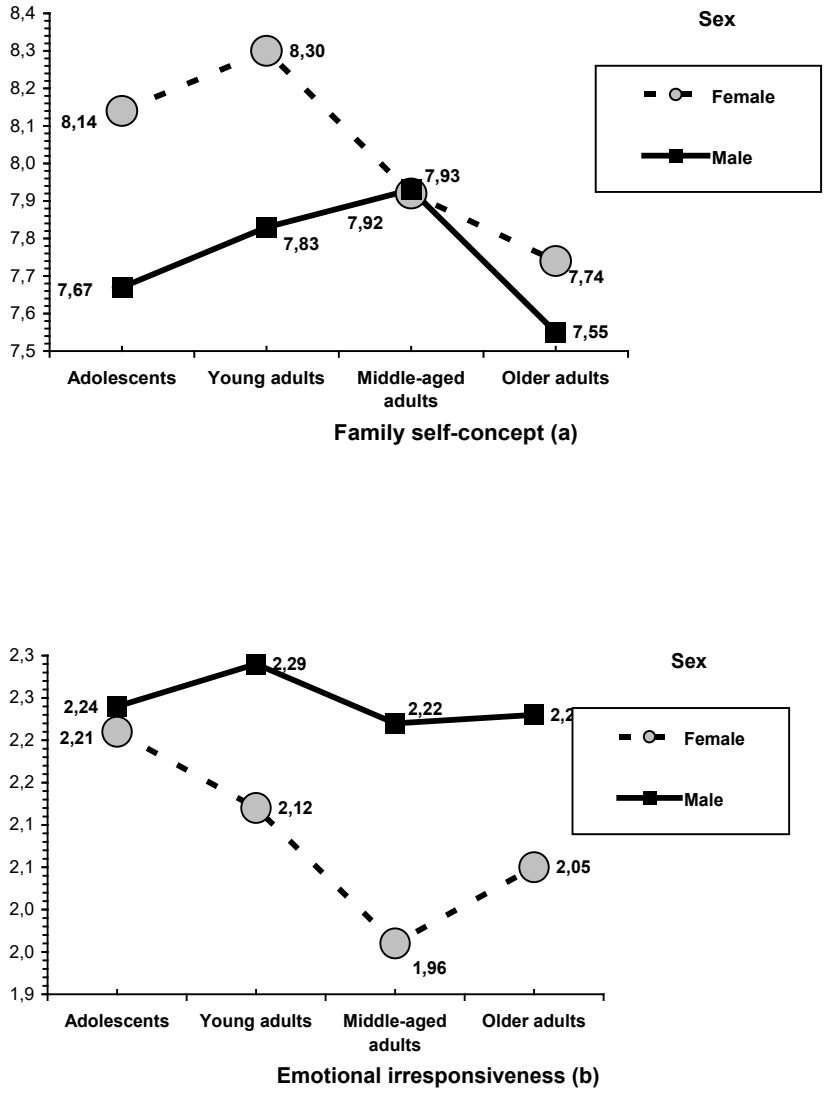

Figure 2. Interaction of Sex by Age on the Family Self-concept (a) and Emotional unresponsiveness (b).

Do We Know Enough about Negative Parenting? Recent Evidence on Parenting Styles and Child Maladjustment

Chen, F., Garcia, O. F., **Alcaide, M.**, Garcia-Ros, R., and Garcia, F. (2024). Do we know enough about negative parenting? Recent evidence on parenting styles and child maladjustment. *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context, 16*(1), 37-48. https://doi.org/10.5093/ejpalc2024a4 (Impact factor 2024 = **5.5**; 16/221; **Q1**, Psychology, Multidisciplinary; 1/434; **Q1**, Law; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **21**).

Abstract

Background: There are serious doubts as to whether parental strictness, one of the two main dimensions of parental style, can be a negative or positive component of parenting in traditional societies. Method: Parenting style (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful) was captured from strictness and warmth dimensions and child maladjustment was assessed with problems of self-esteem and self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical) studied worldwide. The sample was composed of 1,282 Chinese participants (676 females, 52.7%), 581 adolescent children (age ranging from 12-18 years, 45.3%), and 701 young adult children (age ranging from 19-31 years, 54.7%). A 4 × 2 × 2 factorial MANOVA was applied for all outcomes using parenting style, sex, and age as the independent variables. Results: The statistical analysis plainly indicated that authoritarian (strictness but not warmth) and neglectful (neither strictness nor warmth) parenting styles were associated with higher maladjustment in terms of lower self-esteem and self-concept scores. Indulgent (not strictness but warmth) and authoritative (strictness and warmth) parenting were positive parenting styles acting as protective factors against self-esteem and self-concept problems. The authoritative style (strictness and warmth), but not the authoritarian parenting style (strictness but not warmth), was the most positive parenting for academic self-concept, but only among adolescents. Conclusions: Interestingly, completely contrary to expectations that authoritarian parenting might be a positive parenting in traditional societies, present findings suggest that the authoritarian style might be a negative parenting related to child maladjustment.

Keywords: Parenting styles, Warmth and strictness, Authoritarian parenting, Chinese traditional society, Self-esteem problems, Self-concept problems

One of the main objectives of the family is to help children develop confidence and acceptance of themselves as valuable person in different areas of life. Studying parental socialization based on a theoretical model characterized by two dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and four parental styles (i.e., authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful) allows identifying the optimal parental style for child development across the world. However, much of the research on parenting is based on studies conducted in Western societies, primarily in the United States (Brown et al., 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991) and Europe (Calafat et al., 2014; Fuentes et al., 2019), and the optimal parenting style may not necessarily be the same across all cultures (Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). This means that benefits of parenting style that combine strictness and warmth (the authoritative style) which have been identified from studies conducted with European-American parents (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994) may not be applicable to Eastern societies. The present study aims to examine the relationship between parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful) and both the self-esteem and self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical) of adolescents and young adult children from a relatively unexplored culture of Asia: Chinese families from the People's Republic of China.

Two-dimensional Theoretical Model with Four Parenting Styles

For decades, the study of parental socialization has been conducted using a theoretical framework with two orthogonal or unrelated dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and four parenting styles (i.e., authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful) (Lamborn et al., 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Warmth refers to the extent to which parents show affection or warmth, and the level of involvement with their children (Gimenez-Serrano, Alcaide et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2019). Other labels that share the meaning of warmth include responsiveness (Baumrind, 1983), acceptance (Symonds, 1939), love (Schaefer, 1959), care (Orlansky, 1949; Watson, 1928), nurturance (Freud, 1933), or acceptance/ involvement (Steinberg et al., 1994). Strictness refers to the extent to which parents use strict rules and limits, tend to apply physical and/or verbal corrections, as well as demanding practices (Dakers & Guse,

2020; Martinez et al., 2017). Other labels that share the meaning of strictness include demandingness (Baumrind, 1991), hostility (Baldwin, 1955), domination (Symonds, 1939), inflexibility (Sears et al., 1957), supervision (Steinberg et al., 1994), control (Schaefer, 1959; Watson, 1928), or firm control (Steinberg et al., 1989). Four parenting styles were defined by examining the combined effects of warmth and strictness: authoritarian (characterized by strictness without warmth), authoritative (characterized by strictness and warmth), indulgent (characterized by warmth without strictness), and neglectful (characterized by a lack of strictness and warmth).

The Optimal Parenting Style

Much research, mainly conducted in the US with European-American families, reveals the benefits of strictness when accompanied by warmth (i.e., authoritative parenting) (Baumrind, 1967; Baumrind, 1971; Lamborn et al., 1991; Mounts & Steinberg, 1995; Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg, Lamborn, et al., 1992). Authoritative parenting is related to some benefits such as good school grades (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg, Lamborn, et al., 1992), greater maturity and development (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg et al., 1989), less behavioral problems (Fletcher et al., 1995; Steinberg et al., 1991), and decreased drug use (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg et al., 1991). However, the benefits of the authoritative parenting style may not be common to all contexts and settings (Palacios et al., 2022; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). Some research conducted in the United States with ethnic minorities, such as African American (Baumrind, 1972; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996), Hispanic American (Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Zayas & Solari, 1994), and Asian-American (Chao, 1994, 2001) has revealed certain benefits of parental strictness without warmth (authoritarian parenting). For example, authoritarian parenting has detrimental consequences on European-American children, but not on African American children (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996), who even report advantages such as assertiveness and independence (Baumrind, 1972).

Asian-American families have received special attention given how they tend to prioritize preserving their culture of origin, which can be different from that of the host country (i.e., US) in certain aspects (Chao, 1994, 2001). In this context, authoritarian parenting seems to not be related to harmful consequences in Asian-American

individuals and even adolescents raised in authoritarian families do very well in school (Chao, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2001), especially those from China, Japan, and South Korea (Chao, 2000). As Chao (2000) points out, Asian-American adolescents from authoritarian families tend to maintain the highest grades. In the same line, some research conducted in poor and risky neighborhoods also identified some benefits associated with authoritarian parenting (Baldwin et al., 1990; Furstenberg et al., 1999).

In addition, results on the optimal parenting style reveal inconsistent empirical findings; authoritative parenting is not always related to universal benefits (Chao, 2001; Palacios et al., 2022). To explain these discrepant findings on optimal parenting styles, some studies suggest the importance of social and cultural context (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). It is speculated that, despite having the same parents, there may be variations in the degree to which children feel loved, valued, and strongly connected to their family (i.e., the so-called family self-perceptions) depending on the specific background (Baumrind, 1972; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Martinez et al., 2021). For instance, among ethnic minorities, who are more likely to live in more dangerous neighborhoods with fewer opportunities, the use of strictness, despite the lack of warmth, could make children find in their parents the security and protection that the community does not offer (Baldwin et al., 1990; Furstenberg et al., 1999). It is argued that in authoritarian homes (characterized by less warmth and more strictness), European-American children may feel that their parents are intrusive, unloving, and uncaring, while African-American children may feel loved, valued, and recognized by their family (Baumrind, 1972; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996).

Chinese Culture: Limited Research and Mixed Results on Optimal Parenting

In any part of the world it is possible to study parenting based on warmth and strictness and its relation to child adjustment. However, optimal parenting, mainly studied in Western countries (e.g., United States and Europe), may not be the same for Eastern countries. Families in Eastern societies, including Asian and Arab cultures, are raising children within a cultural context that is typically characterized by collectivist and vertical values (Rudy & Grusec, 2001; Triandis, 1989). The individual (e.g., the child) might be a part of a collective (e.g., the family) in which the relationships

between the members (e.g., parents and child) are hierarchical and non-egalitarian (Chen et al., 1997; Dwairy et al., 2006; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). Traditional societies (e.g., Turkey or China) seem to have especially delimited social roles. Relationships tend to be lower on egalitarianism, but higher on power distance, which could be related in the context of the family to a higher frequency of the use of strictness, but less of warmth. However, unlike in Western countries, the relationship with parents based on authority and discipline could be accepted by the children (Kisbu et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

Within Asian societies, China has been studied for decades in part due to its cultural characteristics especially influenced by Confucianism (Chao, 1994; Leung et al., 1998) and the pursuit of jen as the core virtue of life (Chen et al., 2020). According to the principles of Confucian thought, an individual is defined by his or her relationships with others, relationships are organized hierarchically, and social order and harmony are preserved if each party fulfills the responsibilities and requirements of role relationships (Chao, 1994; Ho, 1986; Leung et al., 1998). In the Chinese culture, parents and children are expected to assume certain roles to keep the home running smoothly and to foster family harmony (Ho, 1986; Leung et al., 1998; Yang, 1986). Parents are required to govern, teach, and discipline their children (e.g., chiao shun and guan) (Chao, 1994; Nelson et al., 2006), whereas children are required obey, honor, and respect their parents (e.g., filial piety) (Leung et al., 1998; Wu & Chao, 2011). Because of family interdependence, child adhering to socially desirable and culturally approved behavior directly affects the family as a whole (Ho, 1986; K. Yang, 1986). For example, academic success is especially valued in Chinese families (Chen & Uttal, 1988; Sue & Okazaki, 1990). If children perform poorly academically, they will have disappointed their parents, but also parents will have failed in socialization by being inadequate rulers and caretakers of their family (Chao, 1994, 2000). It has been suggested that parenting based on parental strictness and authority, without making use of involvement and warmth, fits very well with Chinese cultural traits (Ho, 1986). However, empirical findings about the optimal parenting style among Chinese families offer mixed results.

On the one hand, some evidence seems to suggest benefits associated with a parenting style characterized by strictness without warmth (i.e., the authoritarian style) (Chao, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2001). In this sense, studies with immigrant families in the

United States (the so-called Chinese-American homes) have revealed that authoritarian parenting is associated with important benefits, especially academically (Chao, 1994, 2001). However, for their counterparts from European-American families, authoritarian parenting is related to poor developmental outcomes (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Other scholars, who have examined ethnic differences in adolescent achievement in the United States, indicate that Chinese-American and other Asian students had the highest grades regardless of family type (maybe due to the cultural repercussions of doing well in school) (Steinberg, Dornbusch, et al., 1992).

The benefits of authoritarian parenting are also found in some studies conducted in China (Ekblad, 1986; Leung et al., 1998; Li et al., 2010; Quoss & Zhao, 1995). Compared to children from Western countries, it is possible that children from the People's Republic of China (PRC) might feel loved, valued, and protected by their family (the collective) even though their parents tend to be stricter and show less warmth (e.g., praising, hugging, and kissing the child) (Chao, 2000). In this sense, the authoritarian style appears to have no detrimental consequences and is even associated with positive outcomes, such as family satisfaction (Quoss & Zhao, 1995), less depression (Li et al., 2010), and good school adjustment (Ekblad, 1986; Leung et al., 1998; Li et al., 2010). However, benefits related to authoritarian parenting practices have been identified (e.g., using shame to correct sons), without considering the relationship of parental practices with the two dimensions (Ekblad, 1986). Another limitation is that parenting styles are based on global measures for each style (mainly authoritative and authoritarian), but without considering the two main dimensions and the four types of families (Leung et al., 1998; Li et al., 2010; Quoss & Zhao, 1995).

On the other hand, emergent research from China, mainly focused on parenting practices, also seems to suggest the benefits of parental strictness accompanied by high warmth (i.e., authoritative parenting) (Chen et al., 1997; Chen et al., 2000; Xia et al., 2015). According to these studies, parenting practices that define the authoritative parenting (i.e., the authoritative style), such as those found in European-American families, seem to also be positive in the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Wang et al., 2007; Xu et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2004). However, comparisons are mainly limited to some parenting practices corresponding to authoritative or authoritarian parenting styles without considering the two dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) to define the four

parenting styles (Chen et al., 1997; Zhou et al., 2004). Additionally, some inconsistent results have been described when the effect of authoritarian practices are examined. For example, monitoring and involvement (common to authoritative parents) were related to more school adjustment and less behavioral problems, but parental support (a parental practice based on greater warmth) was surprisingly related to more behavioral problems (see Xia et al., 2015). The limited emergent evidence seems to detect the positive effect of discipline and surveillance (parental strictness), but within a relationship based on dialogue, affection, and trust between parents and children (parental warmth) (Xia et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2017).

Toward a Cross-cultural Paradigm Based on Three Parenting Stages

Optimal parenting may not be the same all over the world (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). Currently, a new paradigm of optimal parenting has been suggested based on three historical stages, extending the traditional paradigm of only two stages (i.e., authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles) to include the indulgent parenting style (for a review, see Garcia et al., 2019). According to the old paradigm, two optimal stages of optimal parenting (i.e., authoritative and the authoritarian parenting) have been suggested over the past century. The first historical stage corresponded to the benefits of parenting characterized by strictness without warmth (i.e., the authoritarian style). At the beginning of the last century, John B. Watson (Watson, 1928) advised parents about the risk of spoiling their children with unnecessary displays of warmth, while proposing strict parenting to get children to develop regular habits and self-discipline. Laurence Steinberg (Steinberg, 2001) supports the idea that, for contemporary industrialized societies, parenting based on strictness is effective only when combined with warm parenting (i.e., the authoritative style or second stage). Furthermore, current emergent research in the digital era seriously questions if parenting based on strictness is still needed to achieve the highest child and adolescents' personal and social well-being. The three stages occur simultaneously in different contexts, settings, and cultures, so for each specific context the optimal one must be analyzed.

Specifically, the so-called third stage of optimal parental socialization (i.e., the indulgent style) seems to have empirical support based on a growing body of research

mainly conducted in European and Latin American countries (Calafat et al., 2014; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Garcia & Serra, 2019; Martinez & Garcia, 2007, 2008; Martinez et al., 2020; Rodrigues et al., 2013; Villarejo et al., 2020). In contrast to the main findings from studies with European-American families, parenting based on warmth without strictness (i.e., the indulgent style) is associated with optimal scores in different indicators of adjustment and competence such as self-concept and self-esteem (Martinez & Garcia, 2007; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), cognitive and affective empathy (Fuentes et al., 2022), less drug use (Riquelme et al., 2018; Villarejo et al., 2023), including motivations for drinking and non-drinking (Garcia, Serra, et al., 2020), greater internalization of social values and environmental values (Queiroz et al., 2020), school achievement, and other academic outcomes (Fuentes et al., 2019; Reyes et al., 2023). In this sense, it seems that the indulgent style might be associated with equal or even more positive scores than the authoritative style. It is possible that adolescents might especially benefit from close relationships with their parents based on warmth, without strictness (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023). Some emergent results extend the benefits of the third emerging stage (i.e., warmth without strictness) beyond adolescence (Garcia, Serra, et al., 2018; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023). Indulgent parenting seems to be associated with positive scores once parenting socialization is over, throughout adulthood (Alcaide et al., 2023; Palacios et al., 2022). As in adolescence, adult children who were raised by warm but not strict parents during the socialization years exhibit good adjustment and competence according to different indicators (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Garcia, Fuentes, et al., 2020; Gimenez-Serrano, Garcia, et al., 2022).

The Present Study

Regardless of the cultural and country context, it is important to detect optimal parenting styles, especially in Eastern societies, which are based on different cultural norms and values than Western ones. Contemporary China has undergone significant social, cultural, and economic changes that might affect families (Li, 2020). As Li (2020) summarized in her review, Chinese parents traditionally were expected to act as emotionally distant educators and disciplinarians of their children, but the role of parents has evolved during modern social transformations from the Confucian

hierarchical ideal based on parental authority and child obedience to more egalitarian relationships between family members. Today, in Chinese societies, parents are more involved in child-rearing and warmer with their children than their predecessors. However, the optimal Chinese parenting based on warmth and strictness (i.e., authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful) still remains unclear. Additionally, family studies in People's Republic of China (PRC) have serious methodological shortcomings, and even discrepant and contradictory empirical findings.

One of the most important goals of parental socialization is for children to achieve self-confidence as competent members of their society (Baumrind, 1978; Maccoby, 1992; Veiga et al., 2023). Self-esteem arises from an overall appraisal of oneself as a valuable person with good qualities (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2003; Rosenberg, 1965) and is associated with important benefits for health and well-being as well as protection against emotional and behavioral problems (Coopersmith, 1967; Ybrandt & Armelius, 2010). However, not all children develop a good confidence in themselves and in their abilities. Low self-esteem is related to broad aspects of maladjustment. The lower the self-esteem, the higher the likelihood of aggressive behaviors, including proactive and reactive aggression (Yang et al., 2023). Meta-analytic evidence suggests that low self-esteem may have a significant potential negative impact on realworld life experiences, rather than merely being an epiphenomenon of failure in relevant life domains (Orth et al., 2012). Low self-esteem is related to high levels of negative affect, health problems, poor satisfaction with life, depression, and anxiety (Orth & Robins, 2013; Orth et al., 2012; Sowislo & Orth, 2013).

But global self-worth is formed from appraisal in different relevant personal areas (i.e., self-concept) (Chen et al., 2020; Garcia, Martinez, et al., 2018; Marsh & Martin, 2011; Shavelson et al., 1976). Self-perceptions as a competent student who is able to adapt to school demands (the so-called academic self-concept) are positively related to school performance (Marsh & Martin, 2011; Veiga et al., 2015), as well as being processes conducive to learning (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985; Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019). However, lower academic self-concept is associated with higher likelihood of problems in school and low academic achievement (Marsh & Martin, 2011). Additionally, the correct adjustment of the individual to society also requires other

dimensions of self-concept which are quite relevant (Esnaola et al., 2020). The non-academic components of self-concept (social, emotional, family, and physical) have also been positively associated with well-being and psychosocial adjustment (Fuentes et al., 2020; Fuentes et al., 2011). By contrast, low social self-concept is a risk factor for drug use (Fuentes et al., 2020) and low levels of emotional self-concept are associated with likelihood of anxious insecure attachment (Cornella-Font et al., 2020), whereas low family and physical self-concept are associated with increased risk of childhood trauma (Cornella-Font et al., 2020) and eating disorders (Maiz & Balluerka, 2018), respectively.

The present study analyzes the relationship between parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful) and scores among adolescent and young adult children based on one unidimensional (self-esteem) but also multidimensional approach which includes the academic dimension (academic self-concept) and other non-academic but highly relevant dimensions for personal and social adjustment (social, emotional, family, and physical self-concept). Low self-esteem and self-concept are not only explained by parenting, but also by broad intrafamily and extrafamily influences, as well as multiple biological, personal, social, and cultural factors (Harter et al., 1993; Orth et al., 2012; Shavelson et al., 1976). However, despite the multiple influences, parenting has consistently been identified as a protective or risk factor for self-concept and self-esteem problems (Fuentes et al., 2020; Lamborn et al., 1991; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Probably due to the importance of academic achievement in Asian culture, many studies in Chinese families have focused on academic outcomes (e.g., grade point average), without considering other relevant adjustment criteria. Another limitation of previous studies is examining the effect of parental socialization only while it is occurring (e.g., in adolescents), but not beyond, once parental socialization has ended (in adult children). It is expected that parenting styles characterized by high warmth (authoritative and indulgent) would be related to more self-esteem and self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical) than those parental styles without warmth (authoritarian and neglectful).

Method

Participants and Procedure

The sample was composed of 1,282 participants ranging from 12 to 31 years of age (M = 17.68, SD = 3.37), 676 females (52.7%) and 606 males (47.3%). Participants included 581 adolescents (45.3%) ranging from 12 to 18 years (M = 15.08, SD = 3.14) and 701 young adults (54.7%) ranging from 19 to 31 years (M = 19.84, SD = 1.53). The software G-power 3.1 was used to estimate the statistical power (Faul et al., 2009). The a priori power analysis revealed that a lowest sample of 1,200 participants was needed to identify the medium-low effect size usually described for parenting styles, f = . 12 (Cohen, 1977; Garcia et al., 2008; Lamborn et al., 1991) based on a statistical power of .95 (Type I and Type II errors, α = .05; 1 - β = .95). Considering the study's sample size (N = 1,282, $\alpha = \beta$ = .05), a sensitivity power analysis indicated that statistically significant differences with a slightly lower small effect size can be detected in the main effects between the four parenting styles (f = .116) (Cohen, 1977; Garcia, Martinez, et al., 2018; Lamborn et al., 1991).

The adolescent participants were recruited from high schools. The heads of all potential participating high schools were invited to participate. When a high school declined the invitation, another school was selected until completing the sample size required (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Riquelme et al., 2018). Young adults were recruited in undergraduate education courses (Garcia et al., 2021; Manzeske & Stright, 2009). This study follows ethic principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Data were compiled by using an online survey. The survey consisted of mandatory questions. To guarantee data protection measures, identifiers of participants, as well as survey data, were gathered in different and separate archives; sensitive files were protected and passwords to web directories were stored in an encryption-protected system (Garcia et al., 2021). The questionnaires were studied for doubtful response patterns, such as describing implausible inconsistencies between responses in positively and negatively worded items (Garcia et al., 2011; Garcia et al., 2021; Tomás & Oliver, 2004). All participants in the present study were Chinese-speaking, as were their parents and four grandparents, had received approval from their parents (in the case of adolescents), had given written consent, and anonymity of their responses was assured.

Measures

Parenting Styles

Parental Warmth was assessed with the 20 items included in the Warmth/Affection Scale (WAS) of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (Rohner et al., 1978). The WAS scale evaluates the degree to which children perceive their parents as loving, responsive, and involved. Example of items are "Let me know they love me" and "Talk to me in a warm and loving way" ["**他**们会向我展示他们爱我" and "**他**们用亲密的方式与我交流"]. The alpha value was .922. Parental strictness was assessed with the 13 items included in the Warmth/Affection Scale (WAS) of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (Rohner et al., 1978). The PCS scale evaluates the degree to which children perceive their parents are strict and exert control over their behavior. Example of items are "Tell me exactly how to do my work" ["**他**们会清楚地告诉我该如何做事"] and "Insist that I do exactly as I am told" ["**他**们坚持要我按照他们要求的方式做事"]. The alpha value was .769.

Young adults answered the adult version of the WAS and PCS. Both the WAS and PCS have a 4-point response scale ranging from 1 = *almost never is/was true* to 4 = *almost always is/was true*. Previous research has shown that the WAS and PCS for adolescent and adult children are measures with very good psychometric properties that have been used in over 60 cultures worldwide, including China (Khaleque & Ali, 2017; Khaleque & Rohner, 2002; Khaleque & Rohner, 2012; Rohner, 2005). Higher scores on both WAS and PCS scales express higher parental warmth and strictness.

Parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful) were defined by splitting the sample on parental warmth and parental strictness by median-split procedure (i.e., 50th percentile) based on sex and analyzing the two parenting variables simultaneously (Alcaide et al., 2023; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Authoritarian families scored above the median on strictness, but below on parental warmth. Authoritative families scored over the median on both warmth and strictness. Indulgent families scored above the median on warmth, but below on strictness. Neglectful families scored below the median on both parental variables.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). It consists of 10 statements that evaluate overall feelings of self-worth and self-acceptance. Example of items are "I am able to do things as well as most other people" ["**我有能力和**别人做的一样好"] and "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" ["**通常来**讲，我对自己很满意"]. It follows a 4-point response scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree.* Higher rates in the scale express higher self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha value for this scale was .788.

Self-concept

Self-concept based on academic and non-academic dimensions (social, emotional, family, and physical) was measured with the Chinese AF5 Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale (Chen et al., 2020). The AF5 scale was designed to evaluate self-concept based on five dimensions: academic, social, emotional, family, and physical (Garcia & Musitu, 1999; Garcia, Martinez, et al., 2018). The academic subscale evaluates how one perceives their role performance as a good student (or worker). An example of an item is "I do my homework well (professional works)" ["**我的工作**（**学**业）很出色"]. The social subscale evaluates how one perceives their performance in social and interpersonal relationships. An example of an item is "I make friends easily" ["**我很容易交到朋友**"]. The emotional subscale evaluates how one perceives their emotional state and their responses to specific situations. An example of an item is "Many things make me nervous" ["**很多事情**让我感到很紧张"]. The family subscale evaluates how one perceives their participation, integration, and involvement in the family. An example of an item is "My family is disappointed with me" ["**我的家人**对我感到失望"] (reversed item). The physical subscale evaluates how one perceives their own appearance and physical condition. An example of an item is "I take good care of my physical health" ["**我照**顾我的外型"]. The AF5 has good psychometric properties (Chen et al., 2020; Fuentes et al., 2011; Garcia, Martinez et al., 2018; Murgui et al.,

2012; Tomás & Oliver, 2004). Both exploratory factorial (Garcia & Musitu, 1999), as well as confirmatory factorial analyses (Fuentes et al., 2011; Murgui et al., 2012; Tomás & Oliver, 2004) tested and confirmed its factorial structure based on five different but related dimensions. Additionally, the AF5 scale showed an invariant factorial structure by sex, age, and different languages such as Portuguese (Garcia et al., 2006), Brazilian-Portuguese (Garcia, Martinez, et al., 2018), English (Garcia et al., 2013), and Chinese (Chen et al., 2020). The AF5 has not shown method effects related to its negatively worded items (Garcia et al., 2011; Tomás & Oliver, 2004). The AF5 scale has 30 items (six for each dimension) and a 99-point response scale ranging from 1 = *complete disagreement* to 99 = *complete agreement.* Greater scores on AF5 subscales represent a higher self-concept. Cronbach's alphas for the AF5 subscales were: academic subscale = .867, social subscale = .781, emotional subscale = .729, family subscale = .748, and physical subscale = .671.

Data Analyses

A 4 × 2 × 2 multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted for self-esteem and self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical) with the independent variables being parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful), sex (females vs. males), and age group (adolescents vs. young adults). Follow-up univariate *F* tests were applied in each source in which multivariate statistically significant differences were found. Statistical results on the univariate tests were also followed up by post hoc comparisons (Bonferroni) among all possible pairs of means.

Results

Parenting Style Groups

The participants were distributed by parenting styles according to their levels of both parental warmth and strictness (see Table 1). The authoritative parenting (*M* = 68.74*, SD* = 5.21) and indulgent parenting (*M* = 68.78, *SD* = 5.27) styles were associated to higher levels of warmth than the authoritarian parenting (*M* = 52.32, *SD* = 8.33) and neglectful parenting (*M* = 53.08, *SD* = 6.62). Furthermore, authoritative (*M* = 38.14, *SD* = 2.47) and authoritarian parenting (*M* = 38.76, *SD* = 3.30) were associated

with greater levels of strictness than indulgent (M = 31.56, SD = 3.10) and neglectful parenting (M = 30.94, SD = 3.68).

Multivariate Analyses

Differences reached the statistically significant differences for the main effects of parenting style, $\Lambda = .743$, $F(18, 3567.1) = 21.90$, $p < .001$; sex, $\Lambda = .957$, $F(6, 1261.0) = 9.43$, $p < .001$; and age, $\Lambda = .977$, $F(6, 1261.0) = 5.00$, $p < .001$, and for the interaction effects between parenting and age, $\Lambda = .965$, $F(18, 3567.1) = 2.55$, $p < .001$ (see Table 2).

Sex and Age-related Differences

Although not the focus of the study, some sex-and age-related differences reached statistically significant level (see Table 3). Regarding sex-related differences, male individuals reported greater self-esteem than female individuals. On the contrary, female individuals showed greater social and family self-concept, but lower emotional self-concept, than male individuals. Regarding age-related differences, adolescents reported higher self-esteem and social self-concept than young adults, whereas young adults had higher physical self-concept than adolescents.

Parenting Styles

Overall, parenting styles characterized by greater warmth were associated with greater scores on self-esteem and self-concept than parenting without warmth (see Table 4). Additionally, the interaction between parenting style and age was statically significant on self-esteem, $F(3, 1266) = 6.61$, $p < .001$, academic self-concept, $F(3, 1266) = 5.85$, $p < .001$, emotional self-concept, $F(3, 1266) = 3.69$, $p = .012$, and family self-concept, $F(3, 1266) = 4.92$, $p = .002$.

With regard to self-esteem, authoritative and indulgent parenting were related to higher scores in self-esteem than the authoritarian and neglectful styles. The family profile by age revealed higher differences between parenting styles in adolescence than in young adults. Overall, an age-related decrease in self-esteem was found in warm families, but the highest scores for both adolescents and young adults corresponded to those raised in authoritative and indulgent homes (see Figure 1, section A). Parenting

characterized by a lack of warmth was related to poor self-esteem. However, the lowest scores among adolescents were associated with authoritarian parenting, while among young adults the lowest scores were associated with neglectful parenting.

A similar pattern as in self-esteem was found in self-concept dimensions. The highest scores on the academic dimension were associated with the authoritative style, the lowest corresponded to authoritarian and neglectful styles, and the indulgent parenting was in a middle position. The family profile by age revealed an interesting trend among warm families and the authoritative parenting was associated to higher academic self-concept in adolescence, but not in young adulthood (see Figure 1, section B). Fewer scores related to age were found among authoritative families, and it was observed that young adults raised by authoritative parents scored equally as their peers from indulgent homes. Again, poor academic self-concept was related to non-warm parenting in the adolescent and young adult groups.

Individuals with authoritative and indulgent parents reported higher social self-concept than their peers from authoritarian and neglectful families. Regarding emotional self-concept, warm parenting (i.e., authoritative and indulgent styles) was associated with higher scores than non-warm parenting (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful styles). This general pattern was more pronounced among adolescents than in young adults (see Figure 1, section C). Although relatively lower scores related to age were observed among authoritative and indulgent homes (the opposite seems to appear among authoritarian families), young adults raised in warm parenting families also tend to report the highest emotional self-concept.

Differences in family self-concept revealed that individuals with authoritative and indulgent parents scored more positively than their peers from authoritarian and neglectful homes (within non-warmth styles, authoritarian were related to lower scores than neglectful parenting). The family age profile revealed an interesting pattern in adolescence and young adulthood. Adolescents from indulgent homes tend to score more similarly than peers from authoritative homes, whereas young adults tend to report better scores when raised by indulgent parents compared to those from authoritative homes (see Figure 1, section D). Conversely, authoritarian and neglectful parenting were associated with low family self-concept. In adolescence the lowest scores

corresponded to the authoritarian parenting whereas in young adulthood both authoritarian and neglectful parenting were associated with the lowest scores. Finally, regarding differences in physical self-concept, authoritative and indulgent parenting were related to higher scores compared to authoritarian and neglectful parenting.

Discussion

The present study examined optimal parenting styles among both adolescents and young adult children from the People's Republic of China. Parenting was examined using the classical theoretical framework based on two dimensions (warmth and strictness) and four parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful) whereas socialization outcomes were examined using self-esteem and self-concept based on five dimensions. The results showed a relatively common pattern in the association of parenting styles with self-esteem and self-concept in China, although with some different nuances in adolescence and young adulthood. Overall, parenting styles characterized by warmth were more beneficial for adolescents and young adults to develop good confidence both in themselves (self-esteem) and in their abilities in different areas required for good personal and social adjustment (self-concept).

Authoritative and indulgent parenting were associated with better scores in self-esteem compared to authoritarian and neglectful parenting. Like self-esteem, parenting styles based on warmth (i.e., authoritative and indulgent) were related to higher self-concept than parenting without warmth (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful). The highest academic self-concept corresponded to the authoritative parenting, the lowest to parenting without warmth (authoritarian and neglectful), and the indulgent style was in a middle position. In the social and emotional self-concept, authoritative and indulgent parenting were also related to better scores than authoritarian and neglectful parenting. In family self-concept, the authoritative and indulgent styles were related to high scores, while the authoritarian and neglectful parenting were associated with low scores (the lowest scores correspond to the authoritarian style). Finally, in terms of physical self-concept, individuals raised by authoritative and indulgent parents reported higher scores than their peers from authoritarian and neglectful parents.

Parenting-related differences revealed a relatively common but not equal age-profile among adolescents and young adults in self-esteem and academic, emotional,

and family self-concept. Interestingly, the highest academic self-concept was related to the authoritative style, but only in adolescence. Young adults raised by authoritative parents showed the same levels of academic self-concept as their peers from indulgent parents. Also, the differences observed between the highest and lowest scores in self-esteem and academic, emotional, and family self-concept tended to be greater in adolescence compared to young adulthood. However, adolescents and young adults who grew up in indulgent homes scored more optimally than their peers with authoritarian and neglectful parents. Finally, adolescents from authoritarian families had the lowest scores, while young adults raised by authoritarian and neglectful parents obtained similar and the most negative scores, except in self-esteem (the lowest scores corresponded to neglectful parenting).

According to some research with Chinese families conducted in the United States (Chao, 1994, 2001) and the People's Republic of China (Leung et al., 1998; Quoss & Zhao, 1995), the authoritarian style would be effective in favoring healthy development, but the present findings seriously contradict previous evidence. One of the main goals of socialization is for children to become autonomous and independent adults in their society. Self-esteem (i.e., feeling appreciated and as valuable as other members of society) is a socialization outcome (Baumrind, 1978; Rosenberg, 1965). However, according to the present findings, Chinese adolescents and young adults raised by authoritarian parents do not seem to develop confidence in their abilities to function in society. The global evaluation as a valuable person with good qualities (self-esteem) arises from the subjective appraisal in academic and non-academic domains (i.e., multidimensional self-concept) (Esnaola et al., 2023; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985). Interestingly, the present study revealed that negative correlates of authoritarian style in self-esteem seem to extend to self-concept as well.

Academic success is important in any society, but especially in China (Ho, 1986). Influenced by Chinese cultural values, performance in school represents the success (or failure) of the child, but above that it also represents the degree of success of his or her parents because they have the obligation to care for and protect the family (Chao, 2000). According to previous evidence, adolescents would benefit from strict parenting without warmth especially at school (Chao, 2001; Quoss & Zhao, 1995). However, the present study shows that adolescents and young adults raised in strict and

non-warm homes (authoritarian) appear to be unsuccessful in school (culturally, their parents are also unsuccessful), at least in terms of valuing their learning qualities (academic self-concept). Therefore, findings from the present study seriously question previous empirical evidence about the benefits of the Chinese authoritarian style especially in terms of school adjustment (Chao, 1994, 2001). But school is only one of the important aspects of the psychosocial adaptation of the individual to society (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985). Non-academic self-concept profiles (social, emotional, family, and physical dimensions) also provide important new evidence on the detrimental consequences associated with the authoritarian style.

Previous studies detect benefits associated with strict but not warm parenting (authoritarian style), whereas parental warmth (i.e., when parents tend to express love verbally, give approval and praise, and be there for children if needed) was associated with behavioral and emotional problems in Chinese adolescents (Xia et al., 2015). It would be expected that the authoritarian style would also be associated with good self-perception in psychosocial adjustment (non-academic dimensions of self-concept) (Leung et al., 1998; Quoss & Zhao, 1995). However, the present study shows that adolescents and young adults raised in authoritarian households rate their abilities to relate to peers and make friends (social self-concept), to regulate emotions in difficult situations (emotional self-concept), and their appearance and physical abilities (physical self-concept) very negatively. Additionally, the findings on the relationship of authoritarian style in another of the non-academic dimensions of self-concept, the family dimension, provide crucial new evidence to the literature.

The data from the present study seriously contradict an idea widely supported to explain some benefits associated with authoritarian parenting: that children raised in authoritarian homes develop a good self-perception of their family (Chao, 1994; Ho, 1986). Some scholars argue that family practices based on discipline and strictness fit very well with the Chinese cultural principle of parental authority and rule and that of obedience and loyalty on the part of children, so that warmth and involvement would be unnecessary, as strict parental guidance could be understood as a sign of love and care (Chao, 2000; Quoss & Zhao, 1995). As some students have pointed out, Chinese children with authoritarian parents would feel loved and appreciated by their family (Chao, 1996). However, according to the present study, adolescents and young adults

raised in homes characterized by discipline and strictness, but without involvement and warmth (the authoritarians), do not seem to feel appreciated and valued by their family, at least in terms of family self-concept (they obtained the lowest scores).

On the contrary, the present findings revealed that parenting styles characterized by parental warmth are associated with more positive scores than non-warm parenting styles. The authoritative style seems to be as effective as the indulgent style for self-esteem and non-academic self-concept, and even better than indulgent parenting for academic self-concept (in adolescents, but not in young adults). Some previous emerging studies conducted in China found that the authoritative style was beneficial while the authoritarian style was detrimental (Chen et al., 1997; Zhou et al., 2004), but without analyzing the effects associated with the other two parenting styles (i.e., indulgent and neglectful) because they did not classify parenting practices according to the two dimensions of the model (i.e., warmth and strictness) that defines the four parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful). However, parenting research based on the two-dimensional theoretical model with four parenting styles, which has been widely tested in Western societies (e.g., Europe and United States) (Calafat et al., 2014; Lamborn et al., 1991), has been little used in Eastern societies, such as China. Therefore, the present study extends the study of parenting based on the two-dimensional model with four parenting styles from the Western to the Eastern societies making it possible to detect the positive parenting style across the world with the same theoretical framework (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2019; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Martinez & Garcia, 2007; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). The present study revealed differences in self-concept and self-esteem not only between the two parenting styles characterized by strictness (authoritarian and authoritative) but also between the four parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful).

In the ancient Chinese society, and perhaps when there is a risk of acculturation and loss of identity (Chinese families in foreign countries), hierarchical relationships based on ruling and teaching (by parents) and obedience and loyalty (by children) can guide children and strongly bond family members, which may explain the developmental benefits identified in classical studies (Ho, 1986). By contrast, in contemporary China there seems to be an evolution of the role of parents from

traditional forms based on hierarchy and order to more egalitarian relationships between parents and children, although families today continue to be strongly influenced by collectivism (Xia et al., 2015). In this sense, it is possible that the optimal parenting style could be affected by contemporary Chinese culture. Parental warmth (common to indulgent and authoritative parenting) seems to be beneficial for positive development, probably because of more egalitarian relationships among family members, whereas strictness seems to be unnecessary (in terms of self-esteem and non-academic self-concept), except for academic self-concept (but only in adolescence, not in young adulthood). The results of the present study partially coincide with other previous emerging research focused on parenting practices and their consequences on the emotional and academic development of Chinese adolescents: warm practices were positively related to emotional and academic development, while strict practices were also beneficial but only for academic development (Wang et al., 2007).

Although perhaps to a lesser extent than before, academic achievement is still highly valued socially in contemporary China and therefore seems to affect not only children, but the family as a whole (especially the parents). Chinese adolescents may succeed in secondary and high school and pursue university studies (being the pride of their family), but also fail in their academic goals (bringing shame on the family) (Li, 2020). The greatest benefits of authoritative compared to indulgent parenting were found in the adolescent group (but not in young adults) in academic self-concept, an important indicator of academic adjustment, probably because in the Chinese society school adjustment is one of the most socially valued areas of psychosocial adjustment. The present results suggest that higher academic outcomes (e.g., academic self-concept) may require parental strictness but in combination with warmth (i.e., authoritative parenting), especially in adolescence which is a period of higher vulnerability and difficulties. By contrast, in the young adult group (once socialization is complete), those who were raised in authoritative households (warmth and strictness) scored equally as their peers from indulgent homes (warmth without strictness), which seems to suggest that the benefits of strictness might be especially good in adolescence, but unnecessary once parental socialization is over (adulthood). It is possible that for young adults, who are not under the supervision and care of parents and are more mature than in adolescence, the greatest benefits related to academic outcomes (e.g., self-concept)

could be related to parental warmth regardless of strictness (i.e., authoritative and indulgent).

Although not the central focus, sex-and age-related differences were found. Adolescents scored higher than young adults on self-esteem and social self-concept, but lower on physical self-concept. Additionally, male individuals reported higher self-esteem than female individuals. In terms of self-concept, female individuals had higher social and family self-concept than male individuals, whereas male individuals scored higher than female individuals in emotional self-concept. Sex-and age-related differences in self-esteem and self-concept do not seem to be the same as in Eastern countries, but the main effects of sex and age align with previous research conducted in China (Bleidorn et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2020).

The present study extends the analysis of differences in socialization outcomes as a function of parenting styles based on warmth and strictness to China, although some cautions should be noted. We cannot determine a causal relationship between parenting and socialization outcomes (self-esteem and self-concept) because the methodology is not experimental. However, differences in self-esteem and self-concept related to parenting styles have a similar pattern (main benefits related to parental warmth) to that of studies conducted in the United States and Europe. In addition, the present study examines parenting during adolescence and beyond (among young adults, once parental socialization has ended) based on a cross-sectional rather than longitudinal design. Although we cannot draw conclusions about the evolution of self-esteem and self-concept throughout adolescence among the individuals of the four households (i.e., authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful), the strategy followed in the present study is often used in research with adult children. Therefore, findings based on a cross-sectional design are preliminary and should be confirmed in longitudinal studies. In addition, the respondents were adolescents and young adults rather than their parents, but some evidence highlights that children are more reliable than parents.

Optimal parenting has been examined for decades. The two-dimensional theoretical model, widely used in Western societies (e.g., United States and Europe), considers the combined effects of warmth and strictness, but has been scarcely used in

Eastern societies, especially in China. Contrary to some evidence on the benefits of strictness without parental warmth, especially for academic performance, the present results showed the poor results in self-esteem, non-academic self-concept (social, emotional, family, and physical) and academic self-concept associated with the authoritarian style. Future studies should continue to examine optimal parenting worldwide and, particularly, in China, based on the two-dimensional theoretical model (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) to identify if positive parenting is based on strictness without warmth (the authoritarian style or first stage), strictness with warmth (the authoritative style or second stage), or warmth without strictness (the indulgent style or third stage) (Garcia et al., 2019). The results of the present study provide clear evidence of differences in self-concept and self-esteem in China depending on parenting styles. Although broad benefits of warmth without strictness in self-esteem and non-academic self-concept are observed (indulgent parenting), optimal parental socialization in China seems to be based on warmth and strictness (authoritative parenting or second stage), especially for academic success but only during adolescence (in terms of academic self-concept). Future studies should examine Chinese parenting styles in adolescence and beyond with longitudinal studies to identify optimal parenting in broad indicators of psychosocial development, particularly academic adjustment.

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Table 1. Distribution of Participants by Parenting Styles and Descriptives on Measures of Parental Dimensions

	Total	Authoritative	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Neglectful
Frequency	1282	332	298	320	332
Percentage	100	25.90	23.20	25.00	25.90
Parental Warmth					
Mean	60.59	68.74	68.78	52.32	53.08
SD	10.32	5.21	5.27	8.33	6.62
Parental Strictness					
Mean	34.90	38.14	31.56	38.76	30.94
SD	4.81	2.47	3.10	3.30	3.68

Table 2. Multivariate Factorial MANOVA 4 × 2 × 4 for Developmental Outcomes Based on Self-esteem and Self-concept (academic, social, emotional, family, and physical)

Source	Λ	*F*	$df_{between}$	df_{error}	*p*
(A) Parenting styles	.743	21.90	18	3567.1	<.001
(B) Sex	.957	9.43	6	1261.0	<.001
(C) Age	.977	5.00	6	1261.0	<.001
A × B	.984	1.16	18	3567.1	.291
A × C	.965	2.55	18	3567.1	<.001
B × C	.994	1.25	6	1261.0	.280
A × B × C	.982	1.31	18	3567.1	.169

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Based on Mean and Standard Deviations (in parenthesis) for Sex and Age, and Univariate *F*-values on Developmental Outcomes Based on Self-esteem and Self-concept

Developmental Outcomes	Females	Males	*F*(1, 1266)	Adolescents	Young Adults	*F*(1, 1266)
Self-esteem - *M* (*SD*)	27.75(3.80)	28.22 (4.06)	4.14*	28.35(4.19)	27.66 (3.67)	7.85**
Self-concept						
Academic - *M* (*SD*)	6.68 (1.86)	6.59 (1.89)	2.18	6.71 (1.98)	6.59 (1.78)	0.38
Social - *M* (*SD*)	7.38 (1.72)	7.16 (1.69)	6.82**	7.40 (1.77)	7.17 (1.65)	4.27*
Emotional - *M* (*SD*)	5.03 (1.91)	5.34 (1.82)	8.34**	5.24 (1.97)	5.13 (1.79)	0.55
Family - *M* (*SD*)	7.79 (1.66)	7.54 (1.58)	9.41**	7.74 (1.73)	7.61 (1.54)	0.36
Physical - *M* (*SD*)	5.96(1.67)	6.16 (1.78)	3.68	5.96(1.80)	6.14 (1.65)	5.23*

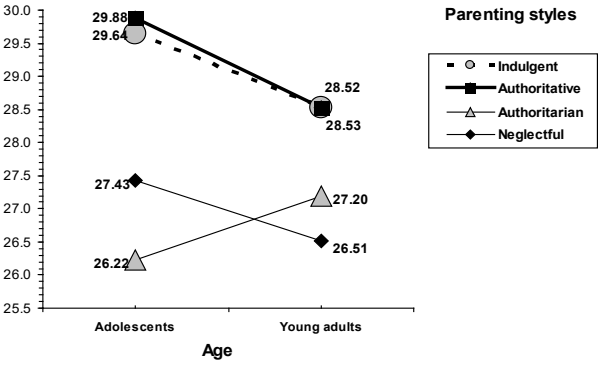
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics Mean and Standard Deviations (in parenthesis) for Parenting Style and Univariate *F*-values on Developmental Outcomes Based on Self-esteem and Self-Concept

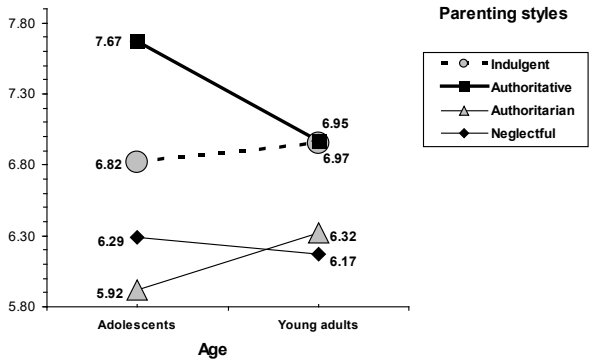
Developmental Outcomes	Authoritative	Indulgent	Authoritarian	Neglectful	*F*(3, 1266)
Self-esteem	29.16[1] (3.74)	29.05[1] (3.80)	26.81[2] (3.81)	26.94[2] (3.74)	40.74***
Self-concept					
Academic	7.29[1] (1.71)	6.89[2] (1.98)	6.16[3] (1.87)	6.23[3] (1.70)	31.90***
Social	7.72[1] (1.59)	7.74[1] (1.62)	6.89[2] (1.78)	6.79[2] (1.61)	32.27***
Emotional	5.42[1] (1.94)	5.60[1] (1.92)	4.73[2] (1.78)	4.97[2] (1.75)	15.90***
Family	8.34[1] (1.18)	8.54[1] (1.13)	6.74[3] (1.73)	7.12[2] (1.61)	122.16***
Physical	6.53[1] (1.67)	6.38[1] (1.72)	5.75[2] (1.72)	5.59[2] (1.61)	25.63***

Note. 1 > 2 > 3.

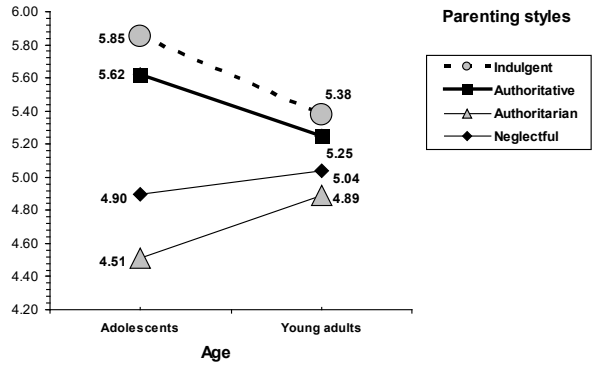
***$p < .001$.



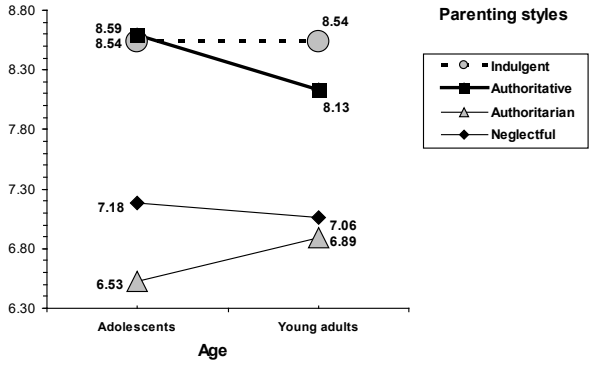
(a) Self-esteem



(b) Academic self-concept



(c) Emotional self-concept



(d) Family self-concept

Figure 1. Interaction of Parenting Styles by Age. (a) Self-esteem, (b) academic self-concept, (c) emotional self-concept, and (d) family self-concept.

Parental socialization based on warmth and strictness among adolescents and young adults: Which parenting dimension is related to greater adjustment?

Garcia, O. F., **Alcaide, M.**, Musitu-Ferrer, D., Pons-Benavent, L., and Garcia, F. (2024). Parental socialization based on warmth and strictness among adolescents and young adults: which parenting dimension is related to greater adjustment? *SAGE Open, 14*(4), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241289684 (Impact factor 2024 = **2**; 56/271; **Q1**, Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **7**).

Abstract

The present study aims to examine parental socialization and adjustment in adolescents and adult children. Participants included 610 adolescents aged 12 to 18 years (M = 16.56; SD = 1.69) and 608 young adults aged 19 to 35 years (M = 23.60; SD = 3.72) from Spain. Parental socialization was assessed through warmth and strictness. Child adjustment was assessed though self-esteem, emotional self-concept, nervousness, and achievement values. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted. Results from predictive models revealed that warmth and strictness were significant predictors of child adjustment, although they showed different directionality. Parental warmth was always identified as a significant predictor: the higher the parental warmth, the higher the emotional self-concept, self-esteem, and achievement, and the lower the nervousness. On the contrary, parental strictness did not predict adjustment and was even a significantly negative predictor of self-esteem and emotional self-concept. In addition and contrary to classical findings from mostly European-American samples, the present findings seem to suggest that parental strictness is unnecessary or even detrimental, while parental warmth offers a significant and beneficial contribution to adjustment. Our findings suggest that even though family is considered less important in young adulthood because parenting has ended, the years of socialization may also explain the adjustment of the adult child.

Keywords: parental warmth, parental strictness, adolescents, young adults, adjustment

Parental socialization refers to the process by which adults (e.g., parents or primary caregivers) transmit cultural habits and values to their children so that they can function adequately within their culture (Baumrind, 1978; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Maccoby, 1992). Parental socialization has a beginning, but also an end (Baumrind, 1978; Buri, 1991; Garcia, Fuentes et al., 2020; Maccoby, 1992). Parents, as agents of socialization whose main responsibility is the care and protection of their children, can use different strategies during their children's upbringing. These strategies are based on warmth (e.g., reasoning with the children when their behavior has been incorrect so that they understand the consequences) (Martínez et al., 2019) and/or strictness (e.g., punishing the children when they misbehave) (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020).

The main objective of parental socialization is for the child to become an autonomous and mature adult, capable of adapting to social demands (Baumrind, 1978; Grusec & Hastings, 2007; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) It ends when the child reaches adult age although not all children achieve these goals and go on to become responsible adult members of their society (Baumrind, 1978; Gimenez-Serrano, Garcia, & Garcia, 2022). Conversely, just like in adolescence, there are important differences in adjustment and competence among young adult children (Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Garcia et al., 2021) However, there is limited knowledge about the association between parenting and adjustment beyond adolescence.

The relationship between young adults and their family is likely to continue after adolescence (when parental socialization is over) (Lambert et al., 2010), but during this stage of life, parents and their adult children share the same status: they are both adults (Baumrind, 1991; Garcia & Serra, 2019). In this sense, the practices used by parents when they were raising children and adolescents can no longer be used with the adult child (Baumrind, 1991; Garcia & Serra, 2019). Once the stage of socialization is over, young adulthood signifies a period of change and challenges, influenced by a variety of developmental factors (Aquilino, 1997; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Mañez et al., 2024). Developmental theorists have hypothesized over the strong influence of early experiences (e.g., family) on adult development (Bowlby, 1969; Freud, 1933), but this has not been extensively tested. The present study aims to examine whether the relationship between differences in adjustment among young adult children and both parental warmth and strictness follows a similar or different pattern to that observed in

adolescents. In addition, parental warmth and strictness will be evaluated to confirm if they are predictors of child adjustment.

Theoretical Two-Dimensional Parenting Model

For years, different parental strategies have been studied based on two dimensions: warmth and strictness (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). These two dimensions have been defined as theoretically orthogonal or unrelated (Garcia et al., 2019; García & Gracia, 2009; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Warmth refers to the level of parental involvement and concern during their children's upbringing (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia, Fuentes et al., 2020; Martínez et al., 2017) while strictness refers to the degree to which parents exercise authority, set strict limits, and impose themselves on their children (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Gimenez-Serrano, Alcaide et al., 2022; Villarejo et al., 2020). The dimensions have been given different names, but they always share a common meaning (Steinberg, 2005). The warmth dimension has been referred to with terms such as responsiveness (Baumrind, 1991), love (Schaefer, 1959), assurance (Symonds, 1939), involvement (Chao, 2001) and acceptance (Martinez et al., 2012). The strictness dimension has been referred to with terms such as demandingness (Baumrind, 1991), control (Sears et al., 1957), domination (Symonds, 1939), imposition (Martínez et al., 2017), or supervision (Lamborn et al., 1991).

When studied together, theoretically orthogonal dimensions allow the categorization of parents (i.e., the so-called parenting styles) (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; García & Gracia, 2009; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). On the one hand, parents characterized by high scores on the warmth dimension are involved parents who express love toward their children and use reasoning with them (i.e., authoritative and indulgent styles). However, authoritative parents use imposition and punishment as a form of correction (high strictness) while indulgent parents do not resort to these types of imposition (low strictness) (Riquelme et al., 2018; Steinberg, 2001). On the other hand, parents characterized by low scores on the warmth dimension are those who are not very involved, do not use reasoning and dialog, and invest little time in getting to know their children (i.e., authoritarian and neglectful styles).

Authoritarian parents, unlike neglectful parents, do discipline their children when they misbehave in a strict and harsh manner (Queiroz et al., 2020; Steinberg et al., 1994).

The Optimal Parenting

Parental socialization has broad consequences (beneficial in some cases, but also detrimental in others) on the psychosocial development of children. For decades, the degree of parental warmth and strictness has been consistently related to differences in the psychosocial adjustment of children (Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1992, 1994). Classical studies, mainly conducted with middle-class European-American families, identify that the combination of high strictness and high warmth (i.e., authoritative style) is related to higher scores in children's psychosocial adjustment (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Conversely, when one of these two dimensions has low scores, children's psychosocial adjustment is linked to a mixed profile: some benefits, but also costs (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Thus, children from authoritarian families (high scores on strictness, but low on warmth) tend to score well on obedience and academic and social adjustment but fail in their self-perceptions. By contrast, children from indulgent families (high scores on warmth, but low on strictness) show good self-perceptions, but fail in their social adjustment, have behavioral problems, high somatic stress, and low school performance. Finally, lower adjustment is associated with low scores on both warmth and strictness dimensions (i.e., children from neglectful families) (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994).

Cross-Cultural Variations in Optimal Parenting

It appears that the combination of high strictness and high warmth is not always associated with higher psychosocial adjustment scores in all cultural contexts (Baumrind, 1972; Chen et al., 2024; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; García & Gracia, 2009; Palacios et al., 2022). For example, research conducted in the United States, but with ethnic minority families such as Chinese-Americans (Chao, 2001) and African-Americans (Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997), shows that parenting characterized by high strictness and low warmth (i.e., authoritarian families) is related to some psychosocial benefits. Additionally, some benefits related to the authoritarian parenting

style have also been found in studies with adolescents from Arab Societies (Dwairy et al., 2006; Dwairy & Menshar, 2006). Thus, the relationship between parental socialization and adjustment may not always be the same in all contexts and cultural environments (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 1994; Sandoval-Obando et al., 2021; Valente et al., 2017). It is widely recognized that the cultural context in which parents are raising their children might affect the impact of parenting on child adjustment (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; García & Gracia, 2009; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018).

A growing set of emergent studies conducted mainly in Latin American and European countries did not find the same results as research conducted with European-American families (Calafat et al., 2014; García & Gracia, 2009; Martinez et al., 2020; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2019; Riquelme et al., 2018). Warmth seems to be beneficial, but strictness could be unnecessary or even detrimental (Gallarin et al., 2021; Martínez et al., 2021; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023). The combination of high warmth and low strictness (characteristics of indulgent families) is related to equal or even better results than the combination of high warmth and high strictness (characteristics of authoritative families) (Alcaide et al., 2023; Musitu-Ferrer, León-Moreno et al., 2019; Queiroz et al., 2020). These results are observed in different criteria of psychosocial adjustment indicators, such as academic performance (Fuentes et al., 2019; Fuentes, Alarcón, Gracia, & Garcia, 2015), internalization of social values (Martinez et al., 2020; Martínez & García, 2007), empathy (Fuentes et al., 2022), drug use (Calafat et al., 2014; Riquelme et al., 2018) including alcohol consumption (Fuentes, Alarcón, Garcia & Gracia, 2015; Garcia, Serra et al., 2020), and delinquency (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022).

Culture and Optimal Parenting

Overall, classical studies identify benefits associated with parenting styles characterized by high strictness, mostly combined with high warmth (authoritative parenting) but, in some cases, even with low warmth (authoritarian parenting). On the contrary, in the so-called Digital Society, there is emergent research, mainly based on studies conducted in Europe and South America, in which benefits of high warmth and low strictness (indulgent parenting) have been identified (Garcia et al., 2019; Hung, 2022; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Discrepant results about the optimal parenting style

have been explained by the cultural context in which parental socialization takes place (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; García & Gracia, 2009; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019). In any part of the word, families can always be defined by the extent to which they use parental warmth and strictness within the same cultural context. However, family is part of a context based on particular social and cultural values.

According to findings from studies with middle-class European-American families, parenting based on strictness could help children to assume and internalize social norms, but when combined with parental warmth it could foster the child's individuality and self-confidence (Baumrind, 1983; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). However, it seems that parental strictness without warmth is also beneficial in ethnic minorities in the United States (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 2001). This type of parenting style (i.e., authoritarian) could have detrimental consequences on children who could perceive their family as unloving and intrusive (i.e., European Americans), but in a context of risk and few opportunities (e.g., African Americans) children could perceive that, through strictness without warmth, their family is giving them the security and confidence that the neighborhood does not offer (Baumrind, 1996; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996). Furthermore, it has been hypothesized that in ancient societies (e.g., Arab and Asian societies) the benefits of parental strictness without warmth could be related to the social value of families (collectivism), in which the relationships between members (e.g., parents and children) are based on hierarchy (Dwairy et al., 2006; Triandis, 1989). It is possible that strictness without warmth could be beneficial, partly because of the cultural assumption that children need to be trained and disciplined and that children are expected to fulfill a family obligation to behave well (so as not to dishonor the family, which is what defines their identity) (Chao, 1994; Ho, 1986). On the contrary, findings with families in Europe and Latin America, seem to suggest that warmth is enough even without strictness, maybe because family is especially valued (collectivism), but the relationships between members are more horizontal and egalitarian (Garcia et al., 2019; Reyes et al., 2023). Children might internalize the social and cultural values transmitted by parents when they feel loved and appreciated by their family, without the need for parents to be intrusive and surveillant (Martínez et al., 2021; Martínez & García, 2007).

Parenting and Psychosocial Adjustment

Among the goals of parental socialization, it is necessary that children develop self-confidence, as well as good emotional regulation together with good social adjustment, represented by the internalization of social norms and values (Baumrind, 1978; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Grusec & Hastings, 2007; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Regardless of the stage of life, benefits related to high self-esteem and self-concept have been widely described (Fuentes et al., 2020; Garcia, Martinez et al., 2018). Based on a multidimensional approach of the self (i.e., self-concept), emotional self-concept includes the self-perceptions about one's own emotional state and the ability to cope with the correct responses in specific situations (Fuentes et al., 2020; Garcia, Martinez et al., 2018). Emotional self-concept is positively related to emotional intelligence (Herrera et al., 2019), well-being and academic success (García-Martínez et al., 2023), as well as to less maladjustment (Maiz & Balluerka, 2018) and problems (Cornella` - Font et al., 2020; Malo-Cerrato et al., 2018). By contrast, nervousness represents a degree of instability and emotional maladjustment associated with personal and adjustment problems (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Greenberger et al., 1975). The internalization of social values is related to prosocial behaviors and is a protective factor against aggressive behaviors (Grusec & Hastings, 2007; Martinez et al., 2020). Among the social values identified, achievement values can help adolescents and adults reach their goals by offering guidance and energy during the process, especially when faced with obstacles and difficulties (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Schwartz, 1992).

Parenting Beyond Adolescence

Most studies have examined the influence of parenting on development during adolescence, but few have focused on young adulthood, a stage of life when adult children are no longer under the supervision and care of their parents (Aquilino, 1997; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Lambert et al., 2010). Entry into the adult world (when children reach adulthood) marks the end of parental socialization, but little is known about the influence of the experiences during the socialization years. It may be especially important to identify whether parenting matters beyond adolescence, when children become adults because they reach legal age (Baumrind, 1978; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Maccoby, 1992). If there were no relationship (either positive or

negative) between parenting and the psychosocial adjustment of young adults, the task of parental socialization would be irrelevant once it is completed.

A few studies have examined the consequences of parenting on adult children beyond adolescence. However, some of the studies did not analyze the two parental dimensions. They only focused on parenting during the socialization years based on a model of three parenting styles including the authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles (Buri, 1991; Turner et al., 2009; Waterman & Lefkowitz, 2017). Other studies focused only on adult children (Candel, 2022; Gimenez-Serrano, Alcaide et al., 2022; Manzeske & Stright, 2009; Parish & McCluskey, 1992), without comparing them with the socialization of those still being raised by their parents. Another limitation of past studies has been the use of different criteria for adjustment for adult children and others, according to age (Stafford et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important to examine both children who are being raised by their parents (e.g., adolescents) and children whose parenting process has ended (e.g., young adults) with a theoretically consolidated model based on the two main dimensions (warmth and strictness). Comparing these two groups with the same criteria can provide relevant evidence on the parenting correlates. It is also particularly relevant to identify whether optimal parenting is based on warmth and strictness, as suggested by the classical studies mainly from European-American families (Darling & Steinberg, 1993), or just on warmth regardless of strictness, as suggested by some recent studies (Garcia et al., 2019).

The Present Study

During adolescence, the influence of family decreases as the influence of peers increases. Peers are beneficial and provide a sense of belonging and support in developing identity, but are also sometimes ruled by group standards which could be socially inadequate (Eccles et al., 1993; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Martínez & García, 2007) Adolescence has been identified as a developmental stage which is related to some degree of psychosocial vulnerability or difficulties (Arnett, 1999; Riquelme et al., 2018). For example, compared to childhood or adulthood, adolescents are more likely to report lower rates of self-perception (Harter, 1988; Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005), as well as greater difficulties at school (Veiga et al., 2015, 2023) and externalizing problems (Hernández-Serrano et al., 2021; Pedersen et al., 2013). Young adults show

greater maturity than adolescents, which is associated with some developmental gains (e.g., in self-esteem) and new positive challenges such as entering university, living outside the family home, or more stable romantic relationships (Aquilino, 1997; Orth et al., 2010; Steinberg, 2007). However, some problems that arise in adolescence, far from diminishing in adulthood, seem to continue and even increase (Evans-Polce et al., 2015; Schulenberg & Maggs, 2002). For example, alcohol consumption tends to start in adolescence and appears to be higher during young adulthood (Garcia, Serra et al., 2020; Schulenberg & Maggs, 2002). It is possible that young adults who did not internalize the socializing message of their parents during the socialization years, now that they are adults, without parental supervision and monitoring, do not have adequate self-regulation (Garcia, Serra et al., 2020; Villarejo et al., 2024).

Entering the adult world is particularly complex, given that young people must face new challenges as adults and responsible members of society. All of this without being under the required responsibility of parents or teachers (Aquilino, 1997; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Lambert et al., 2010). There are important differences in adaptation and competence among young adults, especially at a stage associated with major changes that come with entering the adult world, such as the start of university studies, first jobs, relatively stable relationships, or experiences of independence (Aquilino, 1997; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Lambert et al., 2010).

Particularly in the family context, parental socialization is over (e.g., parents can no longer punish their adult children if they do not conform to family norms). However, the relationship between parents and adult children tends to continue, but in a more egalitarian form. Some adult children maintain closer contact with their parents than others probably in part because they voluntarily develop a sense of obligation to support, help and respect their family (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). Transitions to marriage, cohabitation, and full-time employment have been associated with closer, more supportive, and less conflicted relationships between parents and their adult children (Aquilino, 1997). However, adult life is especially marked by diverse and multiple influences, so an important question is whether there is a relationship between young adult development and parenting during the socialization years similar to those in adolescence. Additionally, another important question is whether the optimal parenting

style is based on greater warmth accompanied by greater strictness or based on greater warmth without strictness.

This present study examined whether the relationship between adjustment and both parental warmth and strictness among young adult children follows a similar or different pattern to that observed in adolescents. In addition, it tested whether parental warmth and strictness are predictors of child adjustment. Adjustment in adolescents and young adults was assessed through emotional self-concept, self-esteem, nervousness, and achievement. Likewise, although not the focus of the study, age and sex differences were analyzed to confirm if the findings in adjustment variables are in line with multiple previous findings. It was expected that there would be a relationship between parenting and child adjustment not only in adolescence, but also in young adulthood, with a similar, though not identical pattern. Additionally, warmth was expected to contribute beneficially to child adjustment, whereas strictness was expected to be unnecessary or even detrimental.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The present study was conducted with Spanish participants. Spain has been characterized as a society in which family has a special relevance (influenced by collectivism), although relationships among family members tend to be relatively egalitarian (Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020; Martínez & García, 2007). Spain is one of the European countries in which an indulgent parenting style (warmth, but not strictness) has been associated with good outcomes (Calafat et al., 2014; Reyes et al., 2023), although the relationship between each parental dimension (i.e., warmth and strictness) and child adjustment has been less specifically studied.

The sample of this study consisted of a total of 1,218 Spanish participants, of whom 719 (59%) were female and 499 (41%) were male (M = 20.07; SD = 4.55). This sample was divided into two age groups, in one group the process of parental socialization had not yet been completed (adolescents) and in the other group it had (young adults). The group of adolescents had 610 participants aged between 12 and 18 years (M = 16.56; SD = 1.69), of whom 364 (59.7%) were female and 246 (40.3%) were

male. A total of 608 participants were young adults aged 19 to 35 years (M = 23.60; SD = 3.72) of whom 355 (58.4%) were women and 253 (41.6%) were men.

The statistical power was calculated with the G*Power program to establish the sample size needed to ensure adequate statistical power, as well as to calculate the sensitivity for the final sample size (Faul et al., 2009). The a priori power analysis showed that a sample of 1,302 observations was required to find statistically significant differences for a small effect size (R^2 = .010, R = .100), adjusting by type I error probability of .05 and a power of .95, (Faul et al., 2009; Pérez et al., 1999). Additionally, the sensitivity analysis revealed that with the sample size of the study (N = 1,218) by adjusting a probability of type I error of .05 and a power of .95, statistically significant differences could be found with a small effect size (R^2 = .011, R = .103) (Cohen, 1977; Garcı´a et al., 2008).

The research project was approved by the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) of the Nottingham Trent University for studies involving humans. In the case of adolescents, they were recruited from the entire list of high schools. To reach the planned sample size, heads of every high school invited to participate were contacted. If the high school declined to participate, a replacement high school was chosen from the entire list until the required sample size was achieved. Young adult participants were recruited in undergraduate education courses. They received some course credit for their participation (Garcia et al., 2021; Garcia & Serra, 2019; Manzeske & Stright, 2009).

Participants met the following requirements (a) they were Spanish, as well as their parents and grandparents; (b) they lived in two-parent nuclear families with a female mother or primary caregiver and a male father or primary caregiver; and (c) in the case of adolescents, parental consent was mandatory. All respondents provided the required information voluntarily and provided informed consent. In addition, the anonymity of the information provided for the study was guaranteed. To ensure the anonymity of responses, identifiers and survey data were stored in separate records, directory passwords were protected, and sensitive files were encrypted (Garcia et al., 2021; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023).

Participants were given an informed consent document. Participants read and, if they agreed to participate in the research, signed an informed consent form in which

they showed their approval to participate in the study knowing that the data would remain anonymous and that the research would not harm them. Moreover, the informed consent document informed participants about the study following the Helsinki principles. Participants were informed that contribution was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the procedure and no longer take part in the study if they desired to do so (Garcia et al., 2021; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2023).

All participants completed an online survey previously prepared with the different items of interest for the study. The questionnaires were examined for questionable response patterns (García et al., 2011; Toma´s & Oliver, 2004) and those participants whose responses were questionable were removed from the sample due to implausible inconsistencies between negatively and positively formulated responses (i.e., subjects who respond with greater or lower scores on items written in the direction of the scale, but also on those in the opposite direction of the scale) (Garcia et al., 2021). For this reason, about 1% (n = 12) of the participants were eliminated from the sample.

Measures

Parental Warmth and Strictness. Parental warmth was measured with the 20 items from the Warmth/Affection scale (WAS) (Rohner, 2005). The WAS scale is widely used in parenting studies and offers a reliable measure of the degree to which children perceive their parents as loving, responsive, and involved. In this sense, the WAS scale is a measure with good psychometric properties which is frequently used across the world to evaluate children's and adults' perceptions of parental warmth (i.e., the extent of affection, love, care, comfort, support, or nurturance that parents can feel or express toward their children, p. 297) (Khaleque, 2013). A sample of an item is ''Are really interested in what I do''. For adult children, the WAS adult version was used. The WAS adult version contains the same items written in the past tense (e.g., ''Were really interested in what I did''). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .943. Parental strictness was measured with the 13 items on the Parental Control Scale (PCS) (Rohner, 2005). The PCS is frequently used in parenting studies and assesses the degree to which children experience strict parental control with firmness, demand, and severity over their behavior (Ali et al., 2015; Gimenez-Serrano, Alcaide et al., 2022; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020). In this sense, the PCS scale is a good psychometric measure

widely used across the world to evaluate children's and adults' perceptions of parental control (i.e., the extent to which parents insist on compliance with their demands, directives, rules, prescriptions, and proscriptions, see p. 643) (Rohner & Khaleque, 2003). A sample of an item is ''Are always telling me how I should behave''. For adult children, the PCS adult version was used. The PCS adult version contains the same items written in the past tense (e.g., ''Were always telling me how I should behave''). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .889. On both the WAS and the PCS, adolescents and young adult children answered in a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (''almost never true'') to 4 (''almost always true''). Higher scores on the two scales represent high parental warmth and strictness. The Warmth/Affection scale (WAS) and the Parental Control Scale (PCS) are reliable and valid measures to assess parental socialization during the socialization years (García, Serra et al., 2018; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020) and also in adult children, when parental socialization is over (García, Serra et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2021; Gimenez-Serrano, Alcaide et al., 2022; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020).

Self-esteem. Self-esteem was measured through the 10 items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), (Rosenberg, 1965). This scale explores personal self-esteem, feelings of self-worth and self-respect. Examples of items are '' I am able to do things as well as most other people'' or ''I certainly feel useless at times''. Of the 10 items in the scale, 5 were positively stated and the remaining 5 were negatively stated. Responses were collected via a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (''almost never true'') to 4 (''almost always true''). Scores for negatively stated items were reversed. The RSE is one of the most popular measures to assess global self-esteem and is widely used across the world. Its Spanish version has good psychometric properties (Martín-Albo et al., 2007). Higher scores on the scale indicate greater self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha value was .869 for the aforementioned scale.

Emotional Self-Concept. Emotional self-concept was measured with the 6 items of the emotional scale from the AF5 Self-Concept Form 5 (Garcia & Musitu, 1999). The emotional scale from the AF5 Self-Concept Form 5 assesses the general self-perception of the emotional state and its responses to specific situations of daily life that require a certain degree of commitment and involvement (Fuentes et al., 2020; Garcia, Martinez et al., 2018). Examples of items are ''I become nervous when the teacher

(superior) asks me a question'' or ''I get scared easily'' (reversed items). Responses were represented on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (''almost never true'') to 4 (''almost always true''). The AF5 scale has been validated by CFA analysis in different languages such as Spanish in Spain (Garcia, Martinez et al., 2018; Murgui et al., 2012) and Chile (J. F. García et al., 2011), Portuguese in Portugal (Garcia et al., 2006) and Brazil (Garcia, Martinez et al., 2018) as well as in English (García et al., 2013), and more recently, Chinese (Chen et al., 2020) showing the AF5 scale to be an invariant structure by sex, age and language (Chen et al., 2020; Garcia, Martinez et al., 2018; García, Serra et al., 2018). In particular, the AF5 is one of the most popular measures of self-concept widely used in studies with adolescents and adults in the Spanish language (Cornellà-Font et al., 2020; Reyes et al., 2023; Zurita-Ortega et al., 2018). It presents good reliability and validity and its factor structure has been confirmed in CFA analysis (Murgui et al., 2012; Toma´s & Oliver, 2004). It does not present method effects (Toma´s & Oliver, 2004) and has been used to validate other scales of self-perceptions (Fernández et al., 2022; Martín-Albo et al., 2007). Higher scores on the scale indicate greater emotional self-concept. Cronbach's alpha value was .758.

Nervousness. Nervousness was measured with the eight items of the nervousness scale of the Psychosocial Maturity questionnaire (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Greenberger et al., 1975). Nervousness is a set of elements that form the person throughout life and that allow to know how he/she behaves in certain life situations. More specifically, it measures the degree of emotional stability of the person in terms of anxiety and/or tension. Examples of items are ''I consider myself impatient with the indecision or slowness of others in complicated situations'' or ''I get irritated easily''. Responses are reported in a 4-point range from 1 (''almost never true'') to 4 (''almost always true''). The nervousness subscale includes the person's difficulties to adequately regulate his or her emotions in difficult situations. The Psychosocial Maturity Questionnaire is an instrument developed in the Spanish language based on the classical scales in which maturity is conceptualized as the adaptation of the individual to society demands (individual, social and interpersonal) (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Greenberger et al., 1975). Specifically, the nervousness subscale measures the person's difficulties in adequately regulating their emotions during difficult situations. The Psychosocial

Maturity Questionnaire has been used in different investigations and presents good reliability indices (Garcia et al., 2021; Gimenez-Serrano, Garcia, & Garcia, 2022; Villarejo et al., 2024). Higher scores indicate higher nervousness. Cronbach's alpha value was .782.

Achievement. Achievement was measured with the 4 items of the achievement scale of Schwartz's Values Inventory (Schwartz & Sortheix, 2018). The subscale of achievement evaluates the priority toward ambition, influence, competence, or success in achieving objectives. Examples of items are ''Ambitious (Hard working, high level of aspirations)'' or ''Capable (Competent, efficient.)''. Responses were represented on a scale from 1 to 99, with 1 corresponding to ''not important in my life'' and 99 to ''essential in my life''. Modifications were conducted to obtain a score index ranging from 0.10 to 9.99 (Garcia et al., 2019). Schwartz's Values Inventory has been widely validated to measure the Theory of Human Values (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987) in more than 200 cross-cultural samples from over 60 countries (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995). The Theory of Human Values is based on 10 value types that have been related to a wide range of indicators of adjustment across the world (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995; Vecchione & Schwartz, 2022). Specifically, the priority toward achievement represents the extent to which individuals give value and significance toward personal success by demonstrating competence according to social standards (Vecchione & Schwartz, 2022). Internalization of achievement values has been related to good self-regulation and school performance (Vecchione & Schwartz, 2022; Wigfield et al., 2017). Higher scores indicate greater priority toward achievement values. Cronbach's alpha value was .632.

Data Analyses

Correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis were conducted. The variables of the correlation analysis were the two main parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness) and the specific children's adjustment criteria (i.e., self-esteem, emotional self-concept, nervousness, and achievement). The correlation analysis takes into account data from both adolescent and young adult children. In the multiple linear regression analysis, the dependent variables were the children's adjustment criteria (self-esteem, emotional self-concept, nervousness, and achievement), and the predictors

were the parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness), age and sex of the participants.

Results

Parenting and Adjustment: Comparisons Between Adolescents and Young Adults

Table 1 displays the results from the correlation analysis between parenting dimensions and child adjustment. Some statistically significant correlations were found between parenting dimensions and child adjustment. A common pattern was found among adolescent and adult children: higher parental warmth was associated with higher child adjustment, whereas parental strictness showed no relationship with child adjustment or was even detrimental. Higher parental warmth was associated with higher adult and adolescent children's self-esteem and achievement, but lower nervousness. Higher parental warmth was also associated with higher emotional self-concept in adolescent children. Parental strictness showed no relationship with adolescent children's adjustment. For young adult children, higher parental strictness was related to higher nervousness and lower self-esteem and emotional self-concept. Additionally, some indicators of adjustment were positively correlated with each other. In adolescents and young adults, the same pattern was found: higher self-esteem was related to higher emotional self-concept and achievement, but lower nervousness. Higher nervousness was also related to lower emotional self-concept.

Predictive Models of Adjustment

Table 2 displays the results from the multiple linear regression analyses. A multiple linear regression model was conducted for each child adjustment criteria (i.e., self-esteem, emotional self-concept, nervousness, and achievement), as a linear function of parenting dimensions (i.e., warmth and strictness), age and sex.

Overall, the results of the linear multiple regression analysis were in line with those obtained in the correlation analysis. Parental warmth was a predictor of child adjustment in the four models ($p < .05$), whereas parental strictness showed no

relationship with child adjustment ($p > .05$) or was identified as a significant predictor ($p < .05$), but in a different direction than parental warmth.

Regarding the prediction of child adjustment based on the two parental dimensions, the following results stand out. First of all, parental warmth significantly ($p < .05$) and positively predicted self-esteem and emotional self-concept. However, the opposite occurs with parental strictness, self-esteem and emotional self-concept were significantly ($p < .05$) and negatively predicted by parental strictness. On the one hand, higher scores on parental warmth positively predicts self-esteem and emotional self-concept in the child. On the other hand, higher scores on parental strictness are associated with low self-esteem and emotional self-concept. Second, nervousness was negatively predicted by parental warmth ($p < .05$) while parental strictness did not predict this child adjustment criteria ($p > .05$). Only higher scores on parental warmth were associated with low child nervousness. Finally, achievement was significantly ($p < .05$) and positively predicted by parental warmth, but parental strictness did not reach a level of statistical significance ($p > .05$). Higher scores on parental warmth were related to a higher level of child achievement.

Although it was not the main objective of this study, the following results stand out for the prediction of child adjustment based on age and sex. Age of the child was a significant ($p < .05$) positive predictor of self-esteem and emotional self-concept, but not a significant predictor of nervousness and achievement ($p > .05$). The older the child, the higher the self-esteem and emotional self-concept ($p < .05$). It can be observed that self-esteem and emotional self-concept were higher in young adults than in adolescents. Sex of the child was only a significant predictor for self-esteem, emotional self-concept, and nervousness ($p < .05$). It can be observed that self-esteem and emotional self-concept were higher in male individuals than in female individuals while the contrary occurs for nervousness, female individuals scored higher than male individuals.

Discussion

The present study analyzed the relationship between the two main dimensions of parental socialization (warmth and strictness) and child adjustment through emotional self-concept, self-esteem, nervousness, and internalization of achievement values. The

study examined whether the relationship between adjustment in young adulthood and both parental warmth and strictness follows a similar or different pattern to that observed in adolescence. It also sought to test whether parental warmth and strictness are predictors of child adjustment. The association between parental socialization and child adjustment for both adolescent and young adult children showed a theoretically consistent pattern, similar but not identical. The family may have a beneficial, but also a detrimental contribution. Parental warmth might be a positive contribution to child adjustment, but parental strictness might not be necessary or may even be detrimental.

Age-group specific analyses revealed a similar pattern in the association between parental dimensions and child adjustment. In adolescents, higher levels of parental warmth were related to higher emotional self-concept, self-esteem, and achievement, as well as lower nervousness. The same was also observed in young adults, higher parental warmth during socialization years was associated with higher self-esteem and achievement, but lower nervousness. On the opposite side, strictness showed no relationship with adjustment indicators in adolescents. In young adults, greater strictness during the years of socialization was related to lower emotional self-concept and self-esteem, and higher nervousness.

The results of the regression analysis showed warmth to be a predictor in the four predictive models, with parental strictness either not predicting adjustment or predicting it in the opposite direction. Regarding parental warmth, the predictive models revealed that the greater the parental warmth, the more likely the children were to report higher emotional self-concept, self-esteem, and performance, but lower nervousness. By contrast, strictness was not a significant predictor in two of the models (nervousness and achievement), and when it was a significant predictor, it was in the opposite direction. Interestingly, the results showed that when parents are more strict, their children are expected to have lower emotional self-concept and self-esteem.

The present study was conducted in a European country (i.e., Spain) and the findings provide new and relevant evidence on parental contribution to child adjustment (Calafat et al., 2014; García & Gracia, 2009; Martinez et al., 2020; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2019; Riquelme et al., 2018). By contrast, the findings of the present study seriously question some evidence from studies with European-American families that suggest the

benefits of high warmth in combination with high strictness (Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Specifically, the present findings are in accordance with those with European-American families which highlight the association between parental warmth and optimal child scores, but are contrary in terms of the benefits of parental strictness (e.g., obligation for children to do things as parents say, strict parental habits, use of behavioral punishment) (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). According to classical studies with European-American families, parental strictness combined with warmth (authoritative style), identified as positive parenting, would be related to greater adjustment (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994), but the findings of the present study do not coincide with this on the strictness dimension. The present findings suggest that only higher warmth and lower strictness helps children reach maximum levels of adjustment in terms of developing a good image of their general qualities (i.e., self-esteem) as well as their emotional and self-regulation abilities (emotional self-concept). Similarly, in terms of protection against nervousness and achievement value orientation, parental warmth is also beneficial regardless of parental strictness. The present study follows the two-dimensional theoretical model (warmth and strictness), which is widely used in research around the world to identify positive parenting behaviors for child adjustment. In addition, the criteria used in the present study (i.e., self-esteem, emotional self-concept, nervousness, and achievement) are in line with other frequently used measurements in previous parenting research, including self-perceptions (Barber et al., 1992; Lamborn et al., 1991), emotional regulation (Steinberg et al., 1994), or priority toward social values (Martínez & García, 2007). However, according to the present findings, the optimal parenting strategy seems to be different from that found in previous research conducted with mainly European-American families (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994), although the results agree with other recent studies conducted in Europe and South America (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020). Variation in the optimal parenting style could be due to the cultural context in which parenting takes place. Additionally, the present study extends the study of parenting not only to the socialization years but also beyond adolescence. Other studies have also identified that young adult adjustment is related to parenting during the socialization years, although

they have not specifically measured the two dimensions (Buri, 1991; Candel, 2022; Waterman & Lefkowitz, 2017).

According to the present findings, it is possible that parental warmth provides children with security and confidence in themselves and their abilities. This would allow them to explore the world and face difficulties and problems, while favoring emotional stability as a result of the parental offer of support and security. In addition, parental warmth might also benefit children's curiosity and interest in the world, developing a high priority toward achievement because they can explore and learn in a safe environment. Parental strictness appears to be unnecessary or may even have high costs for child adjustment in terms of low self-esteem and poor appraisal of one's own self-regulatory emotional qualities (emotional self-concept). It is possible that the regular use of high levels of strictness may have a detrimental impact on children's appraisal of themselves as valuable individuals with good qualities. It might also make it difficult for them to develop confidence and security in their emotional self-regulation skills.

On the contrary, some previous research seems to identify parental strictness as being a positive component in parenting because it seems to encourage children's behavior to be in accordance with social and cultural values (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). According to findings mainly from European-American families, the use of strictness should be accompanied by warmth (authoritative style) so that children not only develop their individuality, but also obey their parents and conform to social norms and values (European-American children of authoritarian parents, who use strictness without warmth, seem to perceive that their family does not love or care about them) (Baumrind, 1971, 1983; Lamborn et al., 1991). In other contexts, the use of strictness could be effective even without warmth. Probably when families live in contexts characterized by less opportunities, violence, and poverty (e.g., African American families). In this context, the use of strictness despite the lack of warmth (i.e., authoritarian style) could provide the safety and security that the neighborhood does not offer (Baumrind, 1996; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996). Moreover, it is possible that in Arab and Asian societies, parental strictness without warmth may not have the detrimental effects identified in studies of Western families (Dwairy et al., 2006; Triandis, 1989). Family is especially valued in collectivist cultures, although

parent-child relationships are culturally hierarchical (parents should rule, and children should obey), which could explain why the authoritarian style does not have negative consequences as children may accept the authority of their family over them (Chao, 1994; Ho, 1986).

Likewise, the results of the present study revealed the importance of good adjustment both during the years of parental socialization years (adolescence) and beyond (young adulthood). The results of the correlations between the indicators of adjustment for adolescents and adults studied separately exhibited a common pattern. Thus, adolescents and young adults with high self-esteem had better emotional adjustment in terms of good appraisal of their qualities (emotional self-concept) and low levels of nervousness, as well as high priority for achievement. In turn, higher emotional self-concept was related to lower nervousness in both adolescents and young adults. Priority for achievement was uniquely associated with higher self-esteem.

In the regression models, the effects of age and sex were also tested. It is important to note that age and sex differences in adjustment (self-esteem, emotional self-concept, nervousness, and achievement) are consistent with previous research findings. On the one hand, age was a statistically significant predictor of the emotional self-concept and self-esteem models. Young adulthood seems to be associated with improvements in self-perceptions, both in self-esteem and emotional self-concept. These results seem to confirm that there are age-related differences in adjustment from adolescence to young adulthood (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Orth et al., 2010). Young adults seem to have more emotional resources and confidence in their qualities and abilities (Aquilino, 1997; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). On the other hand, sex was a statistically significant predictor in three of the four regression models (except for achievement values). Thus, the results showed that male individuals were predicted to have higher scores on emotional self-concept and self-esteem, as well as lower nervousness. Sex-related differences also seem to be important in explaining the differences in adjustment and competence; the pattern of vulnerability in the studied indicators seems to be more accentuated in women than in men (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Orth et al., 2010).

Some limitations of the present study should be considered. The study uses cross-sectional data, so no time-related causal relationships can be inferred. Future

studies should follow children through adolescence and young adulthood to analyze the relationship between parental socialization and adjustment using longitudinal evidence (Aquilino & Supple, 2001). Also, the measure of parental socialization is based on children's rather than parents' reports. However, the accuracy of children appears to be more reliable and more closely matched to reality than that of the parents (Barry et al., 2008; García & Gracia, 2009), and the same measures have also been used for adolescent and adult children based on age-invariant measures for adolescents and adults (Ali et al., 2015; Garcia & Serra, 2019). Finally, the methodology of the study is non-experimental, so it is not possible to establish cause-effect relationships between family and child adjustment.

This present work has important implications for families and society. Adolescence can be a period of certain psychosocial vulnerability compared to adulthood, but parents also often have difficulties with their adolescent children (Musitu-Ferrer, Esteban-Ibañez et al., 2019; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). In the transition to adulthood, adolescents should develop autonomy and good self-regulation, which could be favored by warmth as confirmed by the present study (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Although most parenting interventions encourage not only warmth but also strictness (Sanders et al., 2022), according to the present findings the strictness component may be unnecessary or even detrimental. Once the adolescent reaches legal age, parenting is over (Baumrind, 1978; Maccoby, 1992). Adult children, as adults in society, have to face different psychosocial challenges without the care and protection of their parents (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Lambert et al., 2010; Mañez et al., 2024).

Like adolescents, adult children seem to benefit from parental warmth during the socialization years (Axpe et al., 2023; Ortega et al., 2023). Interestingly, the main findings of this study seem to suggest that parenting strictness is especially detrimental in adult children, when parental socialization is completed (the more parental strictness, the less self-esteem and emotional self-concept, and the more nervousness). However, future research should identify with longitudinal evidence the consequences of parenting on adjustment in adolescence and adulthood, especially to identify whether the effect of one or the other dimension on children's adjustment changes over time. Finally, it is likely that those parents who applied positive parenting during the socialization years may have not only better adjusted children, but also better

relationships with their parents (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002), although this last point will need to be measured in future studies with specific measures of parent-child relationships in young adulthood.

Conclusions

The findings of the present investigation suggest that adjustment (in terms of emotional self-concept, self-esteem, nervousness, and achievement priority) exhibits age-related differences in young adulthood compared to adolescence, as well as sex-related differences. However, regression models reveal the key role of the family, both beneficial and detrimental. There is a time when parental socialization is complete and young adults, like their parents, have the same status (both are adults). However, few studies have studied the relationship between adjustment and family socialization in adulthood. The implications of these results are important because they show that family has a significant effect (whether beneficial or detrimental) not only during the socialization years but also beyond adolescence, when parental socialization is over. Specifically, according to regression analyses, high parental warmth and low strictness are beneficial factors. They predict that children will be more likely to have higher emotional self-concept, self-esteem, and achievement, as well as less nervousness.

Therefore, the findings of the present study seriously question the classical studies conducted with mainly European-American families (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). These studies suggest that high parental strictness, one of the main components of the so-called optimal or positive parenting (i.e., authoritative style, characterized by high warmth and high strictness) is always beneficial when it comes to child adjustment. In addition, the cultural context in which parents raise their children seems to be important because the consequences of the parental dimensions on child adjustment may not always be the same (Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Thus, the results of the present study confirm findings from a growing body of recent studies, mainly in European and Latin American countries (Calafat et al., 2014; Martinez et al., 2020). According to these studies, the results show significant benefits for adjustment only when there is high parental warmth and low strictness.

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Table 1. Correlations Between Parenting Dimensions and Child Adjustment.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Parental warmth		20.242**	0.258**	0.083*	20.242**	0.179**
2. Parental strictness	20.225**		20.054	20.067	0.005	20.021
3. Self-esteem	0.304**	20.194**		0.447**	20.555**	0.231**
4. Emotional self-concept	0.037	20.158**	0.434**		20.487**	20.002
5. Nervousness	20.233**	0.161**	20.609**	20.522**		20.033
6. Achievement	0.098*	20.064	0.182**	0.035	20.017	

Note. Correlations for the adolescent group appear on the upper diagonal and for the young adult group appear on the lower diagonal.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients Between Parenting Dimensions, Age and Sex and Child Adjustment.

Dependent variable	Predictors	*B*	SE B	β	*t*	Lower	Upper
Self-esteem	Parental warmth	0.013	0.001	.287	10.20***	0.011	0.016
R^2adj = .108	Parental strictness	20.004	0.002	2.059	22.08*	20.007	0.000
$F(4, 1213) = 37.90$***	Age	0.109	0.027	.111	4.04***	0.056	0.162
	Sex	0.133	0.028	.132	4.84***	0.079	0.187
Emotional self-concept	Parental warmth	0.012	0.005	.073	2.57*	0.003	0.021
R^2adj = 0.077	Parental strictness	20.012	0.006	2.101	23.53***	20.035	20.010
$F(4, 1213) = 26{,}32$***	Age	0.279	0.096	.081	2.99**	0.090	0.486
	Sex	0.883	0.098	2.251	9.00**	0.690	1.075
Nervousness	Parental warmth	20.015	0.002	2.248	28.62***	20.018	20.012
R^2adj = 0.067	Parental strictness	0.002	0.002	.025	0.88	20.003	0.007
$F(4, 1213) = 22{,}70$***	Age	20.033	0.036	2.025	20.90	20.103	0.038
	Sex	20.145	0.037	2.111	23,96***	20.217	20.073
Achievement	Parental warmth	0.018	0.004	.141	4.78***	0.010	0.025
R^2adj = 0.017	Parental strictness	20.002	0.005	2.010	20.33	20.011	0.008
$F(4, 1213) = 6.36$***	Age	0.015	0.076	.006	0.19	20.135	0.164
	Sex	0.105	0.078	.039	1.36	20.047	0.257

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

La socialización parental y sus relaciones con la adaptación e inadaptación de los hijos en la socialización y más allá [Parental socialization and its relationship to child adjustment and maladjustment in socialization and beyond]

Martin-Blesa, E., Garcia, O. F., **Alcaide, M.**, and Garcia, F. (2024). Parental socialization and its relationship to child adjustment and maladjustment in socialization and beyond. *Ansiedad y Estrés-Anxiety and Stress, 30*(3), 147-156. https://doi.org/10.5093/anyes2024a19 (Impact factor 2024 = **0,5**; 174/185; **Q4**, Psychology, Clinical; Times cited in WOS July 2025: **4**).

Abstract

Introducción: Este estudio analiza la relación entre los cuatro estilos de socialización parental (autorizativo, indulgente, autoritario y negligente) con cinco indicadores del ajuste psicosocial de los hijos, considerando tres indicadores de ajuste y dos de desajuste. Métodos: La muestra incluye 2125 participantes españoles, divididos en cuatro grupos de edad, 609 personas entre 12-18 años (adolescentes), 603 de entre 19-35 años (jóvenes adultos), 509 entre 36-39 años (adultos de mediana edad) y 406 de 60 años y mayores (adultos mayores). El ajuste psicosocial se midió con el autoconcepto familiar, la autoestima y la empatía, y el desajuste con la inseguridad personal y la hostilidad. Resultados: El estilo indulgente obtuvo mejores puntuaciones, incluso que el estilo autorizativo, al relacionarse con valores psicosociales positivos como el autoconcepto familiar, la autoestima y la empatía frente a estilos parentales como el autoritario o el negligente que se han relacionado positivamente con valores psicosociales de desajuste psicosocial como la inseguridad personal y la hostilidad. Conclusión: Teniendo en cuenta las diferencias contextuales que pueden influir en el estilo de socialización parental, se considera que en el entorno europeo el desarrollo psicosocial de los hijos es mejor cuando se basa en el afecto y la implicación sin severidad (estilo parental indulgente).

Palabras clave: Estilos parentales, Afecto parental, Severidad parental, Desarrollo psicosocial

La socialización parental es el proceso por el cual los padres, madres o cuidadores principales transmiten a sus hijos sus valores, creencias y aprendizajes que les permitirán la adaptación al contexto en el que se van a desarrollar hasta la edad adulta (Baumrind, 1978; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). El periodo de la infancia y la adolescencia es fundamental en este proceso de socialización (Baumrind, 1968; Lamborn et al., 1991). La familia constituye el primer núcleo social y la primera relación emocional, por ello, juega un papel relevante en la transmisión de pautas culturales (Baumrind, 1971; Garcia et al., 2020a; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). El interés y estudio de los estilos parentales surge en la primera mitad del siglo pasado (Freud, 1933; Watson, 1928), y los resultados de investigación muestran relaciones teóricamente consistentes entre los estilos parentales y el ajuste psicosocial de los hijos (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg et al., 1994; Villarejo et al., 2024).

Uno de los primeros modelos teóricos que relacionó los estilos parentales con determinados patrones de ajuste del hijo fue el modelo tripartito Y (Baumrind, 1966). Este modelo definió la socialización sobre dos dimensiones (afecto y control) y tres estilos parentales: el estilo autoritario (alto control y bajo afecto), el estilo autorizativo (alto control y afecto), y el estilo permisivo (bajo control) (Baumrind, 1971). Los padres autoritarios (alto control y bajo afecto) intentan moldear, controlar y evaluar el comportamiento y las actitudes del hijo de acuerdo con una norma de conducta establecida, generalmente aplicada de forma absoluta, utilizando el control psicológico (Barber, 1996; Schaefer, 1959). Valoran la obediencia como una virtud y están a favor de medidas punitivas para frenar la voluntad del hijo cuando las acciones o creencias de éste entran en conflicto con lo que los padres consideran la conducta correcta. Además, restringen la autonomía del hijo y el diálogo o el intercambio verbal ya que creen que debe aceptar lo que es correcto y mejor para él (bajo afecto) (Baumrind, 1966, 1971). Sin embargo, los padres autorizativos, al igual que los autoritarios, ejercen un control firme en los puntos de divergencia que tienen con el hijo, utilizan el poder para lograr sus objetivos y no basan sus decisiones en el consenso familiar o en los deseos individuales del hijo, pero, a diferencia de los padres autoritarios, los padres autorizativos utilizan el control conductual (Barber, 1996; Schaefer, 1959). Además, no dejan de lado la voluntad del hijo y aplican el razonamiento para explicarle en qué se basa su política, reconocen sus intereses individuales y solicitan sus objeciones cuando

no entiende la norma parental, reafirmando y reconociendo sus cualidades positivas (alto afecto) Los padres permisivos se comportan de manera no punitiva con el hijo y no utilizan ningún tipo de control (Baumrind, 1966; Martinez et al., 2012).

Sin embargo, Baumrind (1966, 1971) únicamente diferenció los niveles de afecto entre familias que utilizan un alto grado de control (autoritario, con bajo afecto; y autorizativo, con alto afecto), si bien, entre los padres de bajo control, no distinguió entre aquellos de alto afecto (permisivos indulgentes) de los de bajo afecto (permisivos negligentes) (Lamborn et al., 1991; Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020). Por un lado, están las familias cuyo bajo nivel de control se deriva de una orientación ideológica que tiene sus cimientos en la confianza, la democracia y la indulgencia (es decir, la «permisividad indulgente», que se caracteriza por alto afecto); por otro lado, están las familias cuyo bajo nivel de control refleja el desentendimiento de las responsabilidades de cuidado de los hijos (es decir, la «permisividad negligente», que no se caracteriza por bajo afecto) (Lamborn et al., 1991). Esta distinción de estilos parentales indulgente y negligente sí la contempla el modelo bidimensional de cuatro estilos parentales, que se convirtió en el modelo teórico de referencia en el estudio de la socialización parental (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Lamborn et al., 1991; Pinquart & Lauk, 2024; Steinberg et al., 1994).

El modelo teórico bidimensional permite relacionar la socialización parental y las diferencias en ajuste psicosocial de los hijos. Se han identificado dos dimensiones teóricamente ortogonales (afecto y severidad) de cuya combinación surgen cuatro estilos parentales: autoritario (bajo afecto y alta severidad), autorizativo (alto afecto y alta severidad), indulgente (alto afecto y baja severidad) y negligente (bajo afecto y alta severidad) (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Los padres indulgentes muestran al hijo su amor, aprobación, aceptación y apoyo, se implican en los asuntos del hijo y utilizan el diálogo y el razonamiento para establecer normas y límites (alto afecto), en vez de castigar e imponer las normas mediante el control conductual o psicológico (baja severidad) (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022a; Lamborn et al., 1991). Los padres negligentes no imponen su autoridad y control para que los hijos se ajusten a las normas (baja severidad), pero tampoco muestran aceptación, proximidad emocional ni comunicación con el hijo (bajo afecto) (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020, 2023; Steinberg et al., 1994).

La mayoría de los estudios con familias europeo-americanas de clase media han identificado el estilo autorizativo como el más adecuado para la socialización de los hijos (Baumrind, 1966, 1971; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) ya que por ejemplo se relaciona con los niveles más altos de rendimiento académico, menores problemas de conducta (Lamborn et al., 1991), buenas autopercepciones, ajuste escolar o mayor internalización de normas (Steinberg et al., 1994). Sin embargo, parece que el estilo parental basado en alta severidad y afecto (autorizativo) no siempre se relaciona con los mejores resultados evolutivos (Dwairy & Achoui, 2006; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Pinquart & Lauk, 2024).

En la literatura han sido identificadas variaciones en el estilo parental óptimo en función de la cultura y la etnia de las familias (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Los hijos con padres que son exigentes y a la vez afectuosos no siempre tienen el mejor desarrollo, el estilo autorizativo podría no tener beneficios universales (Chao, 2001; Palacios et al., 2022). Por un lado, en algunos estudios sobre minorías étnicas de Estados Unidos, como afroamericanos, asiáticos-americanos y también en la población árabe (Chao, 2001; Dwairy & Achoui, 2006; Whaley, 2000), los hijos de padres autoritarios presentaron un buen ajuste psicosocial en algunos indicadores. Por ejemplo, los estudios muestran mayor asertividad e independencia en las hijas afroamericanos (Baumrind, 1972), una ausencia de problemas de salud mental en los hijos adolescentes árabes (Dwairy & Achoui, 2006) o mayor éxito académico en hijos asiáticos-americanos (Chao, 2001). Además, el estilo parental autoritario podría ser un factor protector contra los problemas de conducta del hijo en familias afroamericanas mientras que en familias europeoamericanas el estilo parental autoritario se relaciona con mayores problemas de conducta del hijo (Whaley, 2000). Se ha argumentado que es probable que la familia ofrezca la protección y seguridad que no se encuentra en el entorno más próximo (Gracia et al., 1995; Whaley, 2000).

Por otro lado, algunos estudios recientes principalmente realizados en Europa y los países del sur de América encuentran que el estilo indulgente es el que se asocia con iguales o incluso mejores resultados en términos de ajuste y competencia que el estilo autorizativo (severidad sin afecto), mientras que los estilos de bajo afecto (autoritario y

negligente) se relacionan con las puntuaciones más negativas (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019, 2020b; Villarejo et al., 2024).

Por ejemplo, los beneficios del estilo parental indulgente se han identificado en importantes componentes del ajuste psicosocial como autoestima (Calafat et al., 2014), rendimiento académico (Fuentes et al., 2015), autoconcepto académico, emocional, familiar y físico (Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020), empatía cognitiva (Fuentes et al., 2022) y menores niveles de nerviosismo, sexismo hostil (Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022b) y agresión (Alcaide et al., 2023).

Son muchos los estudios que han examinado la relación entre la socialización de los padres y el ajuste de los hijos en la edad infantil y adolescencia, que es una etapa de mayor vulnerabilidad psicosocial (Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019; Steinberg, 2001; Veiga et al., 2023), pero son menos los estudios realizados para valorar este impacto más allá de la adolescencia. Al alcanzar la edad adulta, los hijos deben enfrentarse a las tareas propias del desarrollo sin la supervisión y cuidado de sus padres porque la socialización parental ha finalizado (Garcia et al., 2024; Mañez et al., 2024). Hoy en día, existe poca evidencia científica sobre los efectos a largo plazo, a pesar de que los teóricos del desarrollo sugieren que la socialización parental tiene implicaciones cruciales más allá de la adolescencia (Bowlby, 1969; Freud, 1933).

En la literatura se ha utilizado habitualmente indicadores del desarrollo de los hijos tales como el autoconcepto, la seguridad en uno mismo y las relaciones con los otros, con el objetivo de analizar su relación con la socialización parental. Se han descrito diferencias de sexo y edad en diferentes indicadores del desarrollo (Garcia & Gracia, 2009; Lamborn et al., 1991). El autoconcepto familiar tiende a ser mayor en mujeres que en hombres, y menor en edades más avanzadas (Palacios et al., 2022; Villarejo et al., 2024). La autoestima tiende a ser más alta en hombres que en mujeres (Bleidorn et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2024; Salvador et al., 2010) y se ha descrito un incremento desde la adolescencia hasta la adultez y un descenso en la vejez (Bleidorn et al., 2016; Garcia et al., 2024; Robins et al., 2002). En inseguridad personal algunos estudios no han encontrado diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre hombres y mujeres y se ha encontrado que la inseguridad personal podría seguir una tendencia decreciente con la edad (Christopher et al., 2006). La empatía suele ser más alta en

mujeres que en hombres (Fuentes et al., 2022; Lila et al., 2010) y parece presentar una tendencia creciente desde la adolescencia hasta la adultez media, con un posible descenso en el final de la vida (Alcaide et al., 2023; Retuerto-Pastor, 2004). En hostilidad, algunos estudios no han encontrado diferencias significativas en función del sexo (Barefoot et al., 1993; Reyes et al., 2023) mientras que otros trabajos muestran una mayor hostilidad en hombres (Andreu-Rodriguez et al., 2000; Matthews et al., 1992). Asimismo, la hostilidad tiende a decrecer con la edad (Andreu-Rodriguez et al., 2000; Villarejo et al., 2024). Además de confirmar las diferencias de sexo y edad habituales en los indicadores del desarrollo de los hijos (efecto principal de sexo y edad), un objetivo especialmente relevante en los estudios de socialización parental es identificar si la relación entre los estilos parentales y el desarrollo de los hijos se ve afectada por el sexo y la edad de los hijos (posible efecto de interacción de sexo y edad con los estilos parentales).

Existen resultados discrepantes sobre cuál es la estrategia parental óptima, así como una limitación de los estudios principalmente a los años de la socialización. El presente estudio analiza la relación entre los estilos parentales (autorizativo, indulgente, autoritario y negligente) y cinco indicadores de ajuste psicosocial (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima, empatía, inseguridad personal, hostilidad) durante la adolescencia y, en tres grupos de adultos (jóvenes, de mediana edad y mayores). En base a las investigaciones más recientes en el contexto europeo y latinoamericano, se espera que el estilo indulgente se relacione con altas puntuaciones en autoconcepto familiar, autoestima y empatía, y bajas puntuaciones en inseguridad personal y hostilidad.

Método

Participantes y procedimiento

La muestra se compuso de 2125 participantes, 1247 mujeres (58.7%) y 878 hombres (41.3%), adolescentes y adultos (M = 36.16 y DT = 20.477), divididos en cuatro grupos de edad: adolescentes (n = 607, 353 mujeres, 58.2%), de 12 a 18 años (M = 16.61 y DT 1.63); jóvenes (n = 603, 352 mujeres, 58.4%), de 19 a 35 años (M = 23.62 y DT 3.76); adultos de mediana edad (n = 509, 328 mujeres, 64.4%) de 36 a 59 años (M = 48.32 y DT 6.39); y adultos mayores (n = 406, 214 mujeres, 52.7%) de 60 años o más

(*M* = 68.78 y *DT* = 7.96). El análisis de la potencia a priori para la estimación del tamaño muestral indicó que la muestra necesaria para un tamaño del efecto pequeño (*f* = .10) sería de 1724 sujetos (donde α = .05, β = .05). El cálculo de la sensibilidad, con la muestra final de 2125 participantes del estudio, indicó que se podía detectar un tamaño del efecto muy pequeño (*f* = .09) con una potencia del 95% (α = .05, 1- β = .95) (Faul et al., 2009; Pérez et al., 1999). Los participantes del estudio cumplieron con los siguientes requisitos: (1) nacionalidad española; (2) la participación fue voluntaria; (3) se garantizó el anonimato de las respuestas; (4) los menores contaban con el permiso paterno. Se siguió el procedimiento de recogida de datos similar al de otros estudios anteriores (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Garcia et al., 2021).

Medidas

Socialización parental. Las dos dimensiones parentales se evaluaron con la escala Calor/Afecto (WAS) y con la de Control (PCS) del cuestionario PARQ (Rohner, 1990). La escala Calor/ Afecto (WAS) evalúa la implicación y muestras de afecto de los padres hacia sus hijos. Consta de 20 ítems (e.g., "*Me hablan de forma cariñosa*"), con un formato de respuesta de 1 (*casi nunca es cierto*) a 4 (*casi siempre es cierto*). Puntuaciones altas se asocian con altos niveles de afecto. El alfa de Cronbach fue .944. La escala Control (PCS) evalúa el grado en el que los padres actúan de manera estricta e impositiva en el establecimiento de normas y correcciones. Presenta 13 ítems (e.g., "*Siempre me están diciendo cómo debo comportarme*"), con un formato de respuesta de 1 (*casi nunca es cierto*) a 4 (*casi siempre es cierto*). Altas puntuaciones implican un alto grado de severidad. El alfa de Cronbach fue .902. Los hijos adultos contestaron a los mismos ítems que los adolescentes, pero redactados en pasado. Tanto la escala de Calor/Afecto como la de Control presentan buenas propiedades psicométricas en investigaciones con hijos adolescentes y adultos (Ali et al., 2015; Rohner & Khaleque, 2003).

A partir de las puntuaciones en las medidas de afecto y severidad, considerando el sexo y el grupo de edad de los participantes, se definieron los cuatro estilos de socialización examinando simultáneamente las dos dimensiones parentales. Teniendo en cuenta el valor de la mediana, se clasificaron a las familias dentro de uno de los estilos: autoritario (por debajo en afecto y por encima en severidad), negligente (por debajo en

ambas medidas), autorizativo (por encima en ambas medidas) e indulgente (por encima en afecto, pero por debajo en severidad) (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Lamborn et al., 1991; Villarejo et al., 2020).

Autoconcepto familiar. Se evaluó con los 6 ítems de la escala familiar del cuestionario Autoconcepto Forma 5 (AF5) (Garcia & Musitu, 1999). La escala familia evalúa la percepción de la persona en su entorno familiar (e.g., "*Me siento feliz en casa*"). Utiliza una escala de respuesta de 1 (*totalmente en desacuerdo*) a 99 (*totalmente de acuerdo*). Altas puntuaciones se relacionan con un mayor autoconcepto familiar. El alfa de Cronbach fue .814.

El cuestionario Autoconcepto Forma 5 (AF5) presenta buenas propiedades psicométricas; su estructura factorial ha sido confirmada mediante análisis factoriales confirmatorios (Fuentes et al., 2020; Garcia et al., 2011; Murgui et al., 2012; Tomás & Oliver, 2004), así como la invarianza de la versión original y la desarrollada en inglés (Garcia et al., 2013), chino (Chen et al., 2020) o portugués de Portugal (Garcia et al., 2006) y Brasil (Garcia et al., 2018). El AF5 no parece presentar un efecto de método asociado a la respuesta de ítems invertidos (Tomás & Oliver, 1998).

Autoestima. Se evaluó mediante el cuestionario de Rosenberg (Rosenberg, 1965). Esta escala consta 10 ítems que evalúan sentimientos propios de respeto y aceptación (e.g., item invertido, "*Me gustaría tener más respeto por mí mismo*"). Tiene una escala de respuesta de 1 (*completamente en desacuerdo*) a 4 (*completamente de acuerdo*). Puntuaciones altas implican un alto grado de autoestima. El alfa de Cronbach fue .848.

Inseguridad personal. Se evaluó mediante los 4 ítems de la escala de inseguridad personal del Cuestionario de Madurez Psicosocial (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Greenberger et al., 1975). Esta escala evalúa el grado de desconfianza en uno mismo que limita las propias acciones (e.g., "*Me siento inferior a los demás*"). Tiene una escala de respuesta 1 (*muy inadecuado para describirme*) a 5 (*muy adecuado para describirme*). Puntuaciones altas se relacionan con alta inseguridad personal. El alfa de Cronbach fue .712.

Empatía. Se evaluó mediante los 4 ítems de la escala de empatía del Cuestionario de Madurez Psicosocial (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Greenberger et al., 1975). Esta escala evalúa el grado en el que la persona muestra una identificación mental y afectiva con el otro (*e.g., "Soy una persona que sabe escuchar*"). Incluye una escala de respuesta de 1 (*muy inadecuado para describirme*) a 5 (*muy adecuado para describirme*). Altas puntuaciones se relacionan con personas empáticas. El coeficiente alfa fue de .668. Este índice de fiabilidad se encuentra dentro del rango de variación habitual en esta escala (Garcia & Serra, 2019; Steinberg et al., 2006).

Hostilidad. Se evaluó mediante los 6 ítems de la escala hostilidad/agresión del Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) (Rohner, 1978). Esta escala evalúa la predisposición hacia comportamientos agresivos o problemas relacionados con la gestión de la hostilidad y la ira (*e.g., "Tengo dificultad en controlar mis enfados*"). Tiene una escala de respuesta de 1 (*casi nunca es cierto*) a 4 (*casi siempre es cierto*). A mayores puntuaciones, mayor grado de hostilidad. El coeficiente alfa fue de .656. Este coeficiente de fiabilidad se encuentra dentro del rango de variación habitual en esta escala (Khaleque & Ali, 2017; Rohner, 1978).

Análisis de datos

Se aplicaron análisis estadísticos multivariados (MANOVA), análisis univariados (ANOVA) y pruebas de contraste de Bonferroni. Las variables dependientes del diseño factorial multivariado MANOVA (4 × 2 × 4) fueron los criterios de ajuste psicosocial (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima, inseguridad personal, empatía y hostilidad). Los estilos parentales (autorizativo, indulgente, autoritario y negligente) constituyeron las variables independientes, junto con el sexo (hombres/mujeres) y el grupo de edad (adolescentes -12 a 18 años-, jóvenes adultos -19 a 35 años-, adultos de mediana edad -40 a 59 años-, y adultos mayores -60 años o más-).

Posteriormente, se aplicaron pruebas univariadas para las fuentes de variación que alcanzaron niveles estadísticos significativos en las pruebas multivariadas ($p < .05$). A las pruebas que obtuvieron significación en este análisis univariado se les aplicaron pruebas estadísticas post-hoc Bonferroni manteniendo el alfa por estudio al 5%. El software utilizado para los análisis estadísticos fue el programa SPSS.

Resultados

Estilos parentales

En la Tabla 1 se detalla la distribución de los cuatro estilos parentales. En los estilos autorizativo (M = 72.71 y DT = 4.20) e indulgente (M = 73.55 y DT = 4.35) se observaron puntuaciones más altas en la medida de afecto que en los estilos autoritario (M = 55.27 y DT = 9.64) y negligente (M = 56.95 y DT = 9.20). En la medida de severidad fueron los estilos autoritario (M = 41.86 y DT= 5.47) y autorizativo (M = 39.85 y DT = 4.86) los que tuvieron puntuaciones más altas en comparación con los estilos indulgente (M = 28.34 y DT = 5.42) y negligente (M = 28.31 y DT = 5.56).

Análisis estadísticos previos multivariados

Los resultados de los análisis multivariados aparecen en la Tabla 2. Se observaron diferencias estadísticamente significativas en los efectos principales del estilo parental (Λ = .742, F[15, 5767.2] = 43.96, p < .001), de sexo (Λ = .936, F[5, 2089.0] = 28.51, p < .001), y de edad (Λ = .937, F[15, 5767.2] = 9.17, p < .001), y en los efectos de interacción de estilo parental por edad (Λ = .945, F[45, 9347.7] = 2.64, p < .001).

Análisis estadísticos univariados

Los resultados de los análisis univariados mostraron que las diferencias de los estilos parentales en todos los criterios de ajuste resultaron estadísticamente significativas, p < .001 (véase Tabla 3).

También se encontraron diferencias significativas en las variables sexo y edad en todos los criterios de ajuste, p < .01 (véase Tablas 4 y 5).

Estilos de socialización parental

En la Tabla 3 se puede observar que el estilo indulgente fue el único que estuvo asociado al ajuste psicosocial más alto con puntuaciones iguales o incluso más positivas que el estilo autorizativo. Por el contrario, los estilos autoritario y negligente se

relacionaron con las puntuaciones más bajas de ajuste psicosocial. Relacionando los perfiles de las familias por grupos de edad (véase Figura 1), se encontraron cuatro interacciones estadísticamente significativas en las variables autoconcepto familiar (F[9, 2093] = 8.94, $p < .01$), inseguridad personal (F[9, 2093] = 2.48, $p = .08$) empatía (F[9, 2093] = 4.40, $p < .01$) y hostilidad (F[9, 2093] = 2.35, $p = .012$).

Se observó que en autoconcepto familiar los hijos de hogares indulgentes fueron los que más alto puntuaron en todos los grupos de edad, frente al autoritario que se sitúo por debajo de los otros estilos, excepto en el rango de mayores de 60 años, momento en que el estilo negligente se relacionó con las puntuaciones más bajas (Figura 1, sección A). En autoestima los estilos autorizativo e indulgente (alto afecto) se relacionaron con puntuaciones más altas que los estilos bajos en afecto (autoritario y negligente) (Tabla 3).

Por otra parte, en inseguridad personal, durante la adolescencia y la juventud adulta, el estilo autoritario se relacionó con las puntuaciones más altas, el indulgente con las más bajas y el autorizativo y el negligente se relacionaron con puntuaciones intermedias. Esta tendencia fue más pronunciada en la adolescencia que en la juventud adulta. En los adultos de mediana edad los estilos altos en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se relacionaron con menor inseguridad personal que los estilos bajos en afecto (autoritario y negligente). También en los adultos mayores se observó que los estilos asociados a menor inseguridad personal fueron los altos en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo), mientras que, en los estilos sin afecto, el estilo autoritario se asoció a la inseguridad personal más alta (Figura 1, sección B).

En empatía también fueron los estilos autorizativo e indulgente los que se asociaron a mejores puntuaciones generales en todos los rangos de edad frente al autoritario y negligente. En la adolescencia, los hijos de padres indulgentes obtuvieron las puntuaciones más altas en empatía, seguidos de los hijos de padres autorizativos, quienes puntuaron ligeramente más alto que los hijos de padres negligentes, y el estilo autoritario fuer el que se relacionó con la menor empatía. En la juventud adulta, los hijos de padres autorizativo e indulgente obtuvieron puntuaciones similares y altas en empatía mientras que los hijos de padres autoritario y negligente obtuvieron puntuaciones similares y bajas. Los adultos de mediana edad y adultos mayores cuyos

padres eran altos en afecto (estilos indulgente y autorizativo) obtuvieron las puntuaciones más altas en empatía, seguidos de los hijos de padres autoritarios, y finalmente, la menor empatía correspondió a los hijos de padres negligentes (Figura 1, sección B).

Por último, en hostilidad se observó los beneficios protectores asociados al estilo indulgente (afecto sin severidad), especialmente en los grupos de adolescentes, jóvenes adultos y adultos de mediana edad, en comparación con el autorizativo. Los estilos de bajo afecto (autoritario y negligente) se relacionaron con puntuaciones más altas en hostilidad. El estilo autoritario estuvo asociado con puntuaciones más altas en todos los rangos de edad, excepto en la última etapa (60 años o más), momento en que la mayor hostilidad se relacionó con el estilo negligente (Figura 1, sección D).

Sexo y edad

En cuanto a las diferencias de sexo, las mujeres obtuvieron mejores resultados en autoconcepto familiar y empatía, y los hombres puntuaron más alto en autoestima. Asimismo, los hombres obtuvieron puntuaciones más altas en hostilidad y las mujeres en inseguridad personal (véase Tabla 4). Examinando las diferencias de edad, se observó que en autoconcepto familiar los jóvenes adultos superaron a los de mediana edad, quienes a su vez reportaron puntuaciones más altas que las de los adultos mayores (los adolescentes también puntuaron más positivamente que los adultos mayores). La autoestima fue más alta en adultos de mediana edad, que puntuaron más alto que los adultos mayores y los adolescentes; también los jóvenes adultos puntuaron más alto que los adolescentes. En inseguridad personal los adolescentes puntuaron más alto que los adultos de mediana edad y los adultos mayores. La empatía fue más alta en adultos jóvenes y de mediana edad que en adolescentes y adultos mayores. Por último, la hostilidad más alta se identificó en adolescentes y jóvenes adultos, y la más baja, en adultos de mediana edad y adultos mayores.

Discusión

En este estudio se examinaron las posibles relaciones entre los estilos parentales con el ajuste psicosocial a corto plazo (adolescentes), y a largo plazo (adultos jóvenes, de mediana edad y mayores). La socialización parental fue estudiada siguiendo el

modelo de dos dimensiones y cuatro tipologías (autorizativo, indulgente, autoritario y negligente), mientras que el ajuste psicosocial fue evaluado mediante indicadores que representan un buen ajuste (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima y empatía) y otros que no (inseguridad personal y hostilidad).

Los resultados de este estudio mostraron que el estilo indulgente se relacionó con puntuaciones iguales o incluso más positivas que el estilo autorizativo mientras que el estilo autoritario y negligente estuvieron asociados a serios problemas de ajuste psicosocial. Estos resultados coinciden con estudios anteriores realizados en países europeos y de América latina, en los que se identifica el estilo parental indulgente (afecto sin severidad) como el más adecuado para el bienestar y desarrollo de los hijos (Calafat et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020). Los resultados de otros estudios recientes también han identificado el estilo indulgente como el más adecuado para el ajuste psicosocial de los hijos (Reyes et al., 2023; Villarejo et al., 2020, 2024). En cambio, los resultados del presente estudio no coinciden con otras investigaciones llevadas a cabo en otros contextos. Por ejemplo, estudios clásicos con familias europeo-americanas y minorías étnicas de Estados Unidos identifican los resultados positivos en ajuste psicosocial asociados a la severidad en combinación con el afecto (estilo autorizativo), principalmente entre las familias blancas de clase media (Baumrind, 1968; Lamborn et al., 1991), pero incluso sin afecto (estilo autoritario), en minorías étnicas (Lim & Lim, 2004; Whaley, 2000). Debe tenerse en cuenta por tanto que el entorno de la socialización familiar podría influir en ciertas variaciones acerca del estilo parental más adecuado (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Garcia et al., 2019; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018).

Aunque se ha hipotetizado la influencia a largo plazo de la familia en el desarrollo adulto adolescencia (Bowlby, 1969; Freud, 1933), en este estudio se ha puesto a prueba si las diferencias en ajuste psicosocial en hijos adultos también guardaban relación con las experiencias tempranas en la familia. En este sentido, cabe destacar que, incluso después de los años la socialización, las diferencias en ajuste psicosocial de los adultos mantienen un perfil muy similar al observado en los adolescentes; los estilos de afecto son beneficiosos, pero el estilo sin severidad (indulgente) iguala o incluso supera al estilo autorizativo, mientras que los estilos sin afecto (autoritario y negligente) están asociados a serios problemas de ajuste psicosocial

no solo cuando los hijos viven bajo el cuidado de sus padres (adolescencia) sino incluso una vez ha terminado la socialización parental, en la vida adulta (Martinez-Escudero et al., 2020, 2023).

Los resultados del presente estudio sobre diferencias de sexo (e.g., mayor empatía en mujeres) y de edad (e.g. baja inseguridad personal y hostilidad en adultos de mediana edad y mayores) coinciden en general con los identificados en otros estudios previos edad (Andreu-Rodriguez et al., 2000; Fuentes et al., 2022; Lila et al., 2010; Villarejo et al., 2024). Pero además se encontró que los perfiles de edad presentan algunas variaciones dependiendo de los años de la socialización parental, resultado en línea con la investigación anterior sobre el efecto a largo plazo de la familia como agente de socialización (Ali et al., 2015; Rothrauff et al., 2009). Los hijos de familias de alto afecto (indulgentes y autorizativas), y en especial en aquellas de baja severidad (indulgentes) podrían tener un mejor ajuste no solo en la adolescencia (durante la socialización parental), sino incluso al dejar el cuidado y la protección socializadora de la familia (vida adulta).

La percepción de sentirse querido y valorado por la familia (i.e., autoconcepto familiar) tiende a descender a partir de la juventud adulta (Palacios et al., 2022; Villarejo et al., 2024), tendencia especialmente marcada en el estilo negligente, pero menos pronunciada en los estilos de afecto (i.e., indulgente y autorizativo). En el otro estilo sin afecto, el autoritario, no se observó este patrón relacionado con la edad porque el autoconcepto familiar fue bajo en los tres grupos de adultos, y especialmente entre adolescentes. La empatía también parece ser menor en adolescentes y adultos mayores en comparación con los jóvenes adultos y los adultos de mediana edad vida (Alcaide et al., 2023; Retuerto-Pastor, 2004), perfil que se identificó especialmente en los hijos socializados en familias autoritarias. El estilo negligente también estuvo asociado a baja empatía, pero incluso se observó unas menores puntuaciones de manera constante a partir de la juventud adulta, y no de la mediana edad. Por el contrario, el único estilo de socialización asociado a la máxima empatía también en la adolescencia y el final de la vida fue el estilo parental indulgente (alto afecto y baja severidad), mientras que el autorizativo fue protector en adultos mayores, pero no en adolescentes.

Por otra parte, se identificó una mejor adaptación en términos de menor inseguridad personal y hostilidad en la mediana edad y la vejez, resultado que podría deberse a la mejor adaptación emocional identificada en estudios previos (Carstensen & Mikels, 2005; Soto et al., 2011). Esta tendencia relacionada con la edad fue especialmente destacada en algunas familias (e.g. autorizativas). En cambio, en los hijos socializados en hogares de alto afecto, pero baja severidad (i.e., indulgentes) se observó que los adolescentes y jóvenes adultos puntuaban de forma relativamente similar y positiva a los adultos de mediana edad y mayores en términos de baja inseguridad personal y hostilidad.

Este estudio tiene algunas fortalezas y limitaciones. Entre las fortalezas destaca el uso del modelo de socialización parental basado en dos dimensiones y cuatro tipologías (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) que permite la comparación de resultados con estudios realizados anteriormente, contribuyendo así a la replicación de resultados de la ciencia parental (Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). Además, se ha utilizado una muestra amplia con numerosos participantes, incluyendo hijos adolescentes y de tres grupos de edad adulta. Por otra parte, el estudio ofrece evidencia empírica que cuestiona que la severidad parental sea beneficiosa cuando se combina con el afecto. Entre las limitaciones se debe tener en cuenta la utilización de medidas completadas por los hijos y no por los padres, si bien estos últimos tienden a presentar mayor deseabilidad social (Barry et al., 2008). También hay que tener en cuenta que se trata de un estudio transversal que no permite establecer conclusiones a largo plazo de los estilos parentales, y que estos resultados no deben interpretarse infiriendo relaciones causales.

Conclusiones

El presente estudio analiza la relación entre los estilos parentales y los patrones de ajuste y desajuste psicosocial del hijo (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima, inseguridad personal, empatía y hostilidad) mientras la socialización parental está teniendo lugar (en la adolescencia), pero también cuando dicho proceso ha finalizado y el hijo es un adulto. Este trabajo muestra que los estilos parentales altos en afecto (indulgente y autorizativo) se relacionaron con las mejores puntuaciones en los criterios de ajuste (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima y empatía) y las peores en desajuste

(inseguridad personal y hostilidad). Pero el estilo indulgente (alto afecto y baja severidad) se relacionó con iguales o mejores puntuaciones que el autorizativo (alto afecto y alta severidad). Por otro lado, el peor ajuste psicosocial del hijo se relacionó con los estilos bajos en afecto (autoritario y negligente). En base a los resultados de este estudio y a la investigación más reciente sobre socialización parental principalmente en países europeos y latinoamericanos, el afecto sin severidad parece ser la mejor estrategia socializadora para favorecer un buen ajuste psicosocial del hijo en la adolescencia, pero también en la adultez.

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Tabla 1. Distribución de los participantes según el estilo parental, puntuaciones medias y desviaciones típicas en las principales dimensiones parentales

	Total	Autorizativo	Indulgente	Autoritario	Negligente
Frecuencia	2125	449	629	609	438
Porcentaje	100,0	21,1	29,6	28,74	20,6
Afecto parental					
Media	64,71	72,71	73,55	55,27	56,95
DT	9,20	4,20	4,35	9,64	9,20
Severidad parental					
Media	34,64	39,85	28,34	41,86	28,31
DT	8,32	4,86	5,42	5,47	5,56

Tabla 2. Factorial ($4^a \times 2^b \times 4^c$) para los criterios de ajuste psicosocial (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima, inseguridad personal, empatía y hostilidad)

Fuentes de variación	Λ	*F*	$gl_{\text{numerador}}$	$gl_{\text{denominador}}$	*p*
(A) Estilos Parentales	0,742	43,96	15	5767,2	<0,001
(B) Sexo	0,936	28,51	5	2089,0	<0,001
(C) Edad	0,937	9,17	15	5767,2	<0,001
Estilos Parentales × Sexo	0,989	1,57	15	5767,2	0,073
Estilos Parentales × Edad	0,945	2,64	45	9347,7	<0,001
Sexo × Edad	0,989	1,50	15	5767,2	0,097
Estilos Parentales × Sexo × Edad	0,973	1,26	45	9347,7	0,111

(A) Estilos Parentales: a_1 autorizativo, a_2 indulgente, a_3 autoritario, a_4 negligente.

(B) Sexo: b_1 mujer, b_2 hombre.

(C) Edad: c_1 adolescentes (12–18 años), c_2 jóvenes (19–35 años), c_3 adultos de mediana edad (36–59 años), and c_4 adultos mayores (60 años o más).

Table 3. Medias y (desviaciones típicas) del estilo parental, y valores *F* univariados para los criterios de ajuste psicosocial (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima, inseguridad personal, empatía y hostilidad)

Estilo parental	Autorizativo	Indulgente	Autoritario	Negligente	*F*(3, 2093)	*p*
Autoconcepto familiar	8,51[a]	8,69[a]	7,08[c]	7,46[b]	201,90	<0,001
	(1,01)	(0,98)	(1,59)	(1,47)		
Autoestima	2,58[a]	2,59[a]	2,52[b]	2,54[b]	16,05	<0,001
	(0,20)	(0,20)	(0,20)	(0,19)		
Inseguridad personal	2,15[b]	2,08[b]	2,32[a]	2,32[a]	17,72	<0,001
	(0,65)	(0,65)	(0,74)	(0,70)		
Empatía	4,05[a]	4,10[a]	3,80[b]	3,71[b]	63,25	<0,001
	(0,50)	(0,51)	(0,60)	(0,62)		
Hostilidad	1,77[b]	1,66[c]	1,94[a]	1,92[a]	38,20	<0,001
	(0,45)	(0,41)	(0,53)	(0,50)		

Prueba de Bonferroni, $\alpha = 0.05$; a > b > c

Table 4. Media y (desviaciones típicas) del sexo, y valores *F* univariados para los criterios de ajuste psicosocial (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima, inseguridad personal, empatía y hostilidad)

Sexo	Mujer	Hombre	*F*(3, 2093)	*p*
Autoconcepto familiar	8,05	7,78	16,26	<0,001
	(1,42)	(1,52)		
Autoestima	2,54	2,58	14,86	<0,001
	(0,20)	(0,19)		
Inseguridad personal	2,27	2,14	16,90	<0,001
	(0,72)	(0,66)		
Empatía	4,02	3,78	90,98	<0,001
	(0,56)	(0,58)		
Hostilidad	1,79	1,85	5,73	0,017
	(0,47)	(0,51)		

Table 5. Medias y (desviaciones típicas) del estilo parental, y valores *F* univariados para los criterios de ajuste psicosocial (autoconcepto familiar, autoestima, inseguridad personal, empatía y hostilidad)

Grupo de Edad	Adolescentes (12-18 años)	Jóvenes adultos (19-35 años)	Adultos de mediana edad (36-59 años)	Adultos mayores (60 años o más)	*F*(3, 2093)	*p*
Autoconcepto familiar	7,98[1]	8,13[a]	7,91[b]	7,64[c, 2]	11,86	<0,001
	(1,52)	(1,45)	(1,42)	(1,43)		
Autoestima	2,53[b, 2]	2,57[1]	2,59 [a]	2,55 [b]	8,63	<0,001
	(0,20)	(0,20)	(0,19)	(0,20)		
Inseguridad personal	2,29[a]	2,22	2,16[b]	2,17[b]	3,85	0,009
	(0,70)	(0,68)	(0,72)	(0,69)		
Empatía	3,89[b]	3,99[a]	3,97[a]	3,81[b]	9,22	<0,001
	(0,56)	(0,56)	(0,58)	(0,64)		
Hostilidad	1,90[a]	1,84[a]	1,75[b]	1,74[b]	10,78	<0,001
	(0,52)	(0,48)	(0,46)	(0,47)		

Prueba de Bonferroni, $\alpha = 0.05$; a > b > c; 1 > 2.

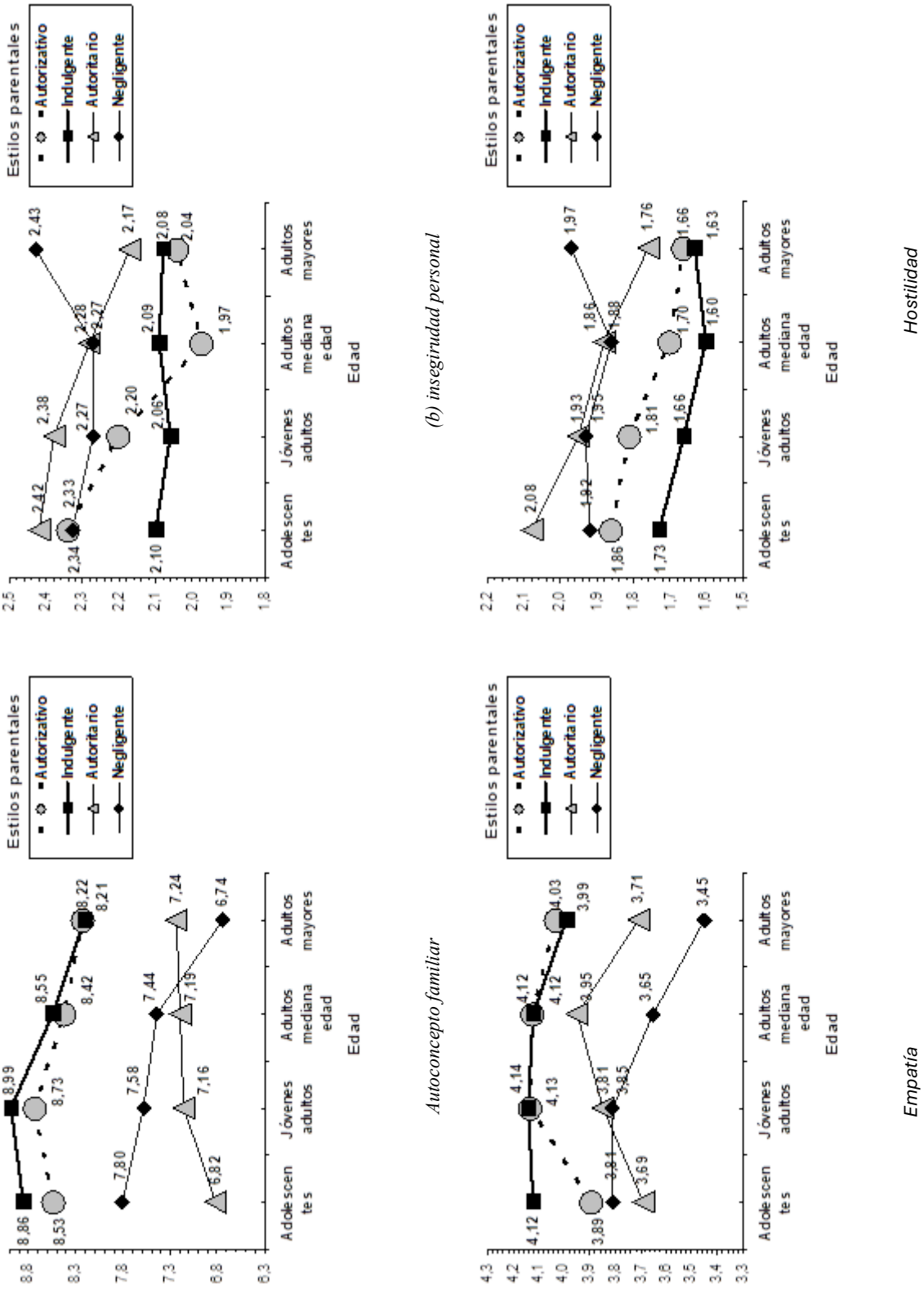

Figura 1. Interacción de los estilos parentales por edad en autoconcepto familiar (A), inseguridad personal (B), empatía (C), y hostilidad (D)