



PARENTING MODELS IN MODERN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: A COMPARISON OF SUPPORTIVE AND OVERPROTECTIVE PARENTING

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ABSTRACT. This article explores parenting models in modern children's literature, focusing on the contrast between supportive and overprotective (helicopter) parenting. Contemporary literary texts provide a rich space for analyzing how parental behavior shapes children's emotional, cognitive, and social development. The study examines how supportive parenting encourages autonomy, resilience, and critical thinking, while overprotective parenting often limits independence and decision-making abilities. Drawing on examples from English and Uzbek children's literature, the article analyzes character development, narrative conflict, and moral outcomes associated with different parenting styles. From a pedagogical perspective, the study highlights how such literary representations can be used to teach critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and social awareness.

Keywords: parenting models, children's literature, supportive parenting, overprotective parenting, autonomy, child development, pedagogy, literary analysis


Introduction

Parenting plays a fundamental role in shaping a child's identity, behavior, and cognitive development. In modern society, different parenting styles have been widely discussed in psychology and education, particularly the contrast between supportive and overprotective parenting. These models are not only observed in real-life contexts but are also vividly represented in children's literature, where family dynamics often serve as a central theme.

Modern children's literature has evolved from simple moral storytelling into a complex field that reflects psychological realities, social expectations, and developmental challenges. Characters are no longer portrayed in strictly idealized forms; instead, they experience realistic struggles, including conflicts with parents and authority figures. This shift makes literature an effective medium for analyzing parenting styles and their consequences.

Supportive parenting is generally characterized by guidance, encouragement, and respect for the child's individuality. It promotes independence, self-confidence, and problem-solving abilities. In contrast, overprotective parenting involves excessive control, constant supervision, and limited freedom, often leading to dependency and reduced autonomy.

From a cognitive perspective, these parenting styles significantly influence how children think, make decisions, and interpret the world. Supportive parenting fosters critical thinking and adaptability, while overprotective parenting may hinder these processes by limiting experiential learning.



From a pedagogical perspective, analyzing parenting models in literature provides valuable opportunities for classroom discussion and critical reflection. Students can evaluate character behavior, compare parenting approaches, and connect literary themes to real-life experiences.

Literature Review

The study of parenting styles has been widely explored in psychological and educational research. Baumrind's classification of parenting styles—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful—provides a foundational framework for understanding parental influence on child development. Supportive parenting closely aligns with the authoritative model, which balances guidance and autonomy, while overprotective parenting often overlaps with authoritarian or excessively controlling behaviors.

In literary studies, parenting is analyzed through character relationships and narrative structures. According to Nikolajeva, children's literature frequently portrays power dynamics between adults and children, emphasizing the tension between control and freedom. These dynamics are central to understanding how parenting models are constructed in narrative form.

From a cognitive perspective, Piaget's theory highlights the importance of active learning and exploration in child development. When children are allowed to engage with their environment independently, they develop stronger reasoning and problem-solving skills. Overprotective parenting, however, may limit such opportunities.

In language and literature education, scholars argue that literary texts provide meaningful contexts for discussing social and psychological issues. Literature allows readers to observe the consequences of different behaviors and to develop empathy and critical awareness.

Recent studies also emphasize the pedagogical value of literature in teaching life skills. By analyzing fictional characters and their experiences, students can reflect on real-world situations and develop emotional intelligence.

Thus, the literature suggests that parenting models in children's literature are not only narrative elements but also tools for cognitive and educational development.

Modern children's literature offers numerous examples of both supportive and overprotective parenting.

In *Wonder*, supportive parenting is clearly illustrated through the character of Auggie's parents. They provide emotional support while encouraging him to face challenges independently. This balance allows Auggie to develop confidence, resilience, and social skills. From a cognitive perspective, such parenting promotes problem-solving and adaptive thinking.

In contrast, overprotective tendencies can be observed in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, particularly in the case of Veruca Salt. Her parents' excessive indulgence and constant intervention prevent her from developing self-discipline and realistic expectations. As a result, she exhibits impulsive behavior and poor decision-making.





Another example of supportive parenting appears in *Anne of Green Gables*, where Marilla gradually shifts from strict control to a more understanding and supportive approach. This transformation positively affects Anne's emotional growth and creativity.

In Uzbek children's literature, works by Xudoyberdi To'xtaboyev often depict children who are given space to explore and learn from their experiences. Such narratives emphasize independence and responsibility, reflecting a supportive parenting model.

Discussions

The comparative analysis highlights important differences between supportive and overprotective parenting models in literature. Supportive parenting is consistently associated with positive developmental outcomes, including independence, confidence, and critical thinking. Characters raised in such environments are more likely to overcome challenges and achieve personal growth.

Overprotective parenting, on the other hand, often leads to negative consequences such as dependency, lack of resilience, and poor decision-making. Literary narratives frequently use exaggeration to emphasize these effects, making them more visible to readers.

From a pedagogical perspective, these contrasts provide valuable teaching opportunities. Educators can use literary texts to initiate discussions about parenting, responsibility, and personal growth. Students can analyze character behavior, evaluate decisions, and reflect on their own experiences.

Furthermore, literature allows students to engage emotionally with the topic, making learning more meaningful and memorable. By connecting theory with narrative, teachers can foster deeper understanding and critical thinking.

Conclusion

In conclusion, modern children's literature provides a rich framework for analyzing parenting models and their impact on child development. The comparison between supportive and overprotective parenting reveals that balanced guidance and independence are essential for cognitive and emotional growth.

Literary texts not only reflect societal views on parenting but also serve as powerful pedagogical tools. By incorporating such analyses into teaching practices, educators can help students develop critical thinking, empathy, and self-awareness.

Ultimately, supportive parenting emerges as the most effective model for fostering independence and resilience, while overprotective parenting highlights the risks of excessive control. Literature, therefore, plays a crucial role in understanding and evaluating these dynamics.





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