

Beyond Structural Inclusion: A Systematic Literature Review of Parenting Dynamics and Emotion Regulation in Inclusive Education

Eric Ong Yong Hao^{1*}, Mohd Norazmi Nordin¹

¹ Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

*Corresponding Author: p154665@siswa.ukm.edu.my

Received: 3 January 2026 | Accepted: 1 April 2026 | Published: 15 April 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ijares.2026.8.3.6>

Abstract: *The inclusive education largely focuses on structural access as opposed to the developmental processes that sustain psychological inclusion. This is a systematic literature review (SLR) that takes into account ten journal articles to determine the role of parenting dynamics that enable the regulatory capacity of students with special educational needs (SEN). The study that was carried out on the premises of the psychosocial theory as proposed by Erikson demonstrates that the home environment plays a very important mediator role in academic support provided in the inclusive classroom setting. Findings indicate that, as well as adaptive emotion regulation is an individual skill, parental modelling and autonomy support co-construct adaptive emotion regulation. Specifically, authoritative parenting has assisted in defeating such crises as Autonomy vs. Shame and Industry vs. Inferiority and assists a child in gaining essential ego strengths such as will and competence. Conversely, overprotective and stressful parents hinder the possibility of learning to do things on their own, and could lead to developmental retardation or internalized inferiority. The conclusion of the review is that inclusive education needs to be redefined to be a relational-developmental ecosystem. By improving emotional coaching in the parents, and aligning the expectations between school and home, the practitioners will be better placed to help the parents shift the responsibility gradually to the early childhood regulation.*

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Parenting Styles, Emotion Regulation, Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, Special Educational Needs (SEN)

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, global advocacy movements on the one hand, and policy changes on the other hand have placed inclusive education in the forefront of all global education agenda, where education has been considered as a basic human right ((UNESCO, 2021; UNICEF, 2019). In spite of this pledge, children with disabilities continue to have an unequal access to quality education. These equalities highlight the importance of increasing structural access, as well as improving the quality of developmental experiences of inclusive education experiences.

Modern changes in reforms are gradually enhancing the learning settings that embrace cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional variations in the common classrooms. Nevertheless, the conventional models of special education have mostly focused on academic

remediation and behavioural management (Menon, 2025; Wehmeyer et al., 2020). Although these solutions can solve instructional requirements, there has been some research indicating that academic placement and curriculum adjustment is not enough to bring about long term developmental prosperity (Jamaluddin et al., 2021; Ekornes, 2022). Special educational needs students often encounter psychosocial vulnerabilities such as social isolation, low self-esteem, emotional disturbance and identity issues. Such tendencies suggest that inclusion should not be limited to access and performance, but to include the developmental processes that ensure meaningful participation (Berchiatti et al., 2021).

Emotion regulation is a construct that is fundamental within this wider developmental orientation. Frustration management skills, feedback interpretation skills, emotional regulation skills, and perseverance in the face of a challenge have a direct impact on autonomy, competence, and identity development (Abantas, 2022; Bazrafshan et al., 2020). Inclusion Regulation of emotion determines the way the students react to academic demands, peer comparisons, and evaluative situations. In the absence of proper regulatory ability structural inclusion might not be converted into psychological inclusion thus restraining the long term welfare and participation (Schneider & Green, 2020).

Parenting plays the key role in this relational ecology. Parents using patterns of responsiveness, expectations, emotional modeling and autonomy support influence the manner in which children perceive challenge, cope with distress and develop self-understanding. The modern day trends in parenting such as the elevated performance demand, overprotectiveness among parents of children with disabilities, and the enhanced use of technology in mediating soothing behaviours, directly overlap with the children's ability to internalise their self regulatory ability. Such interpersonal relationships shape the adaptation of coping mechanisms in the children or their clinging to external control (Andrada & Barrot, 2025).

These processes need to be systematically analysed with the help of a theoretically based model of development. The psychosocial theory by Erikson offers this kind of framework by connecting the early relational experiences with the progressive consolidation of autonomy, initiative, industry and identity over the lifespan. In this view, parenting is not just a contextual support but a psychosocial scaffold which influences the regulation of emotion and the development of ego strength. It is in this conceptual background that the current review achieves a more specific scope of investigation by considering the role of modern parenting styles in emotion regulation and psychosocial progression among students with special educational needs to promote a developmentally consistent model to inclusive education settings.

2. Conceptual and Psychosocial Foundations

Inclusive education may require conceptualisation in psychosocial framework to facilitate the understanding of the developmental processes by which parenting, emotion regulation, and long term outcomes are related among students with special educational needs. Psychosocial development is the continuous process of interaction between the inner thoughts and feelings of the child and relationships that surround them. To put it in simpler words, children do gain autonomy, confidence, and control of their emotions by themselves. These abilities are created by repetitions of experience with parents, teachers, and peers. A psychosocial perspective, in contrast to methods that concentrate more on observable skills, such as reading skill or task performance, focuses on how children gradually develop a self-concept, coping skills, and a

consistent sense of identity through the aid and responsiveness of relationships. To use an illustrative example, a child can learn not only to do a certain thing but also how to overcome frustration and keep trying when a parent does not correct him/her at once and instead calmly guides him/her in doing what he or she should. In the long run, these experiences empower emotional control and self-esteem (Adi et al., 2024; Bonuomo et al., 2023; Wang & Wong, 2021).

Schools are increasingly offering academic accommodations and behavioural support in inclusive educational environments. Nonetheless, there are still students with special educational needs who face low self-esteem, dependency, emotional outbursts or lack of confidence in their abilities. These trends indicate that developmental growth may not be entirely dependent on academic access (Berchiatti et al., 2021). Psychosocially, non-compliance can manifest as withdrawal, avoidance or over dependency on the adults. They can contain unresolved developmental conflicts over autonomy or competence (Bachtsis et al., 2024; Andrada & Barrot, 2025). As an example, a child who does not want to do some independent work might not be incapable but might be afraid of failure because of being repeatedly placed in a situation of comparison or overhelp. Likewise, a student who gets easily frustrated when working in a group might not be able to regulate their emotions when that ability was not developed over time with the help of organized learning activities that helped them to handle solvable problems. When these behaviours are perceived as influenced by developmental processes that are formed by parenting and school contexts, educators and families can move beyond the processes of simply correcting behaviour to the processes of reinforcing the emotional and relational structures that underlie long term resilience and self-integration.

2.1 Erikson's Psychosocial Theory: Mechanisms within Special Education Contexts

The psychosocial theory developed by Erikson offers the lifespan framework of developmental crises negotiation at the level of relational systems. At each stage, there exists a significant tension between forces, e.g., autonomy and shame or industry and inferiority, and the resolution is to be resolved by balancing the forces functionally instead of removing the conflict (Erikson, 1963). Effective negotiation also helps in shaping ego strengths such as will, purpose, competence, and fidelity. These abilities are cumulative and epigenetic; initial relational experiences provide building blocks that shape up later developmental periods (Herdiansyah et al., 2024). When previous crises are not adequately addressed, people can come to subsequent tasks with undermined internal resources, which increases their vulnerability to insecurity, shame, or identity diffusion.

In the sphere of special education, parenting practices have a serious mediating effect on the quality of crisis resolution. In early childhood, autonomy depends on the responses of caregivers to independence seeking behaviour (Carter et al., 2017). Protective parenting or other highly controlled parenting, which is frequently driven by justified safety concerns, can unwittingly lead to restricted opportunity to engage in self-directed action, and thereby compound doubt and reflect in delay of development (Thompson & Chang, 2022; Souza, 2025). In the stage of Industry vs. Inferiority, children assess their competence in comparison to their peers and expectations. In the case of students with special educational needs, repeated academic comparison or deficit oriented narratives can put students at risk of internalised inferiority. Performance contingent approval based parenting styles might also increase evaluative anxiety, but autonomy supporting and mastery oriented parenting styles might moderate these effects by redefining challenge as a growth opportunity. During adolescence,

identity consolidation demands exploration space and narrative integration. It is possible that rigid labelling or fixed role expectations inhibit identity exploration; conversely, supportive dialogue provides an opportunity to coherent self-construction outside diagnostic categorizations.

The main process that interconnects parenting style and psychosocial crisis resolution is emotion regulation. Parents determine the ability of children to cope with frustrations, decode feedback, and withstand developmental tension through co-regulation processes, modelling, and structured autonomy support (Rorije et al., 2023). Adaptive emotional regulation allows children to be active in evaluative or comparative contexts to facilitate balanced crisis negotiation and the enhancement of ego virtues. In contrast, internal regulatory development can be compromised by chronic exposure to dysregulated emotional climates, unstable boundaries, or extreme performance pressure, which can support shame, inferiority, or identity confusion patterns (Christiaens et al., 2025). By doing so, emotional competence is not only a behavioural product but also a fundamental developmental skill that maintains long term ego integration.

In the special education context, the Erikson framework provides a developmental model that cuts across time to include parenting dynamics, emotion regulation and identity formation. The theory allows the holistic interpretation of behavioural and emotional manifestations through situating the students with disabilities in normative psychosocial processes, and noting the heightened relational pressures they frequently face. It consequently provides a solid conceptual basis of studying parenting style as a primary psychosocial scaffold affecting emotion regulation and developmental resilience in the context of inclusive education (Lovaas & Schreibman, 2020).

3. Literature review

3.1 Modern Parenting Style Gaps in Erikson in Special Education Conditions.

From the psychosocial backgrounds discussed above, it is necessary to examine modern parenting trends in the frame of emotion control and crisis adaptation in the field of special education (Thørrisen & Sadeghi, 2025; Aubakirova et al., 2025; Bonuomo et al., 2023). In the event that ego strengths become condensed via recurrent relational interactions, then alterations in the parenting practices that are moulded by academic competitiveness, enhanced concerns of security, digital mediations, and the growth of the discourse of diagnosis are bound to affect the developmental patterns of children. Parenting is not independent of more general sociocultural influences and it mediates the way children feel autonomy, competence, and the development of identity. Among the groups of students with special educational needs where the developmental processes could already be under increased scrutiny and support, the parenting style variations can have a stronger psychosocial impact. Transformed into the interpretations of Erikson, modern parenting styles operate as relational climates that either permit or limit emotion regulation and ego strength development (Mukhtarkyzy et al., 2025; Torsani, 2025; Zhan et al., 2021).

3.2 Overprotective Parenting and the Constraining of Autonomy

A common protective parenting aspect in families of children with disabilities may have a solid foundation due to valid issues of parental concern over safety, social outcasting, or a feeling of parental helplessness. In order to reduce risk and guarantee achievement, parents are free to interfere with day-to-day decision making, interaction with peers, as well as completion of

tasks. Although this kind of intervention is caring and advocacy-driven, it can have the unintended effect of altering the developmental conditions that lead to healthy autonomy formation (Marston et al., 2022).

Based on Eriksonian wise, the Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt crisis is to be addressed with organised opportunities of independent discovery within a setting of emotionally safe parameters. Where agency and frustration tolerance are not internalised and where the adult intervention habitually precedes the independent effort, children might not have many opportunities to practise frustration tolerance (Rorije et al., 2023). With time, the autonomy or ego strength of assisted success over self initiated mastery may be undermined by repeated experiences of assisted success. In the special educational settings in which children might experience some form of academic or functional impairment, too much protection can deepen dependence trends and decrease exposure to manageable challenges (Abidin et al., 2022). Such environments especially influence the regulation of emotions, since children do not necessarily learn to tolerate discomfort, uncertainty, or evaluative feedback. In an inclusive classroom, the hidden autonomy can be revealed in such forms as avoiding new activities, excessive anxiety when working alone, or the constant need to seek adult confirmation. These behaviours have been viewed as low motivation but in reality, they could be an indication of limited opportunities to self-regulate emotions and autonomous coping (Wu et al., 2025; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2022).

3.3 Permissive Boundary Avoidant Parenting and the Weakening of Initiative

Conversely, another modern trend that has psychosocial consequences is permissive or boundary avoidant parenting. Caregivers, being driven by empathy and the need to protect children against further stress, might lower expectations, steer clear of conflict, or offer inconsistent structure. Even though these environments may be full of warmth and acceptance, lack of predictable boundaries and directed accountability can change the developmental processes of initiative formation.

The crisis of Initiative versus Guilt, according to Erikson, is the ability of the child to act willfully, take responsibility, and plan behaviour in relation to goals with socially facilitated boundaries. Initiative is cultivated by a carefully regulated independence and not by an unconditional freedom (Bachtsis et al., 2024). Children can be under-trained in long-term work, deferral of gratification, and emotional restraint when these expectations are too flexible or unevenly applied. In students with special educational needs, who might already have executive functioning difficulties, lack of scaffolding at home can further limit the opportunities to internalise regulatory routines (Chan & Tsui, 2025). A regulation of emotion in permissive contexts can thus be defined as a challenge in processing impulses into goal directed behaviour. This developmental disconnect can manifest in an inclusive classroom setting as impulsiveness, difficulties in completing tasks, or difficulties with following through on multi step tasks. Instead of explaining such behaviours in terms of neurological factors only, a psychosocial interpretation acknowledges the relational bases that shape the solidification of purpose, the ego strength of initiative (Pavon & Ralić, 2025).

3.4 Developmental Implications for Emotion Regulation in Inclusive Education

The two parenting styles of overprotective and permissive have differences in their behavioural expressions but may share the same perspective of interfering with the balanced tension needed in overcoming psychosocial crisis in a healthy manner. Both overprotective control and boundary inconsistency can bias development in a way that is more doubtful and dependent,

whereas a lack of purposeful engagement and self direction can be undermined by boundary inconsistency. In both situations, the emotion regulation is the key developmental process between parenting practices to the long term outcomes. To adapt to psychosocial crises, children have to learn how to endure internal conflict and external challenges. The opportunities to internalise the coping strategies, the cognitive reframing and persistence are minimised when exposure to manageable frustration is limited or when boundaries are poorly organised.

In an inclusive education environment, these regulatory weaknesses can be in the form of anxiety, avoidance, impulsiveness, lack of engagement or overreliance on the adult. Such behaviours are then reformulated through a psychosocial lens as consequences of relationally shaped developmental processes, but not as discrete deficits. Parenting style is not only related to instant behavioural styles, but also to the developing ability of the child to control affect, develop a sense of competence and to develop a coherent identity. Based on the Eriksonian theory, this discussion demonstrates the importance of enhancing structured autonomy, relationship emotional consistency, and progressive exposure to challenge at home settings to enhance the maintenance of resilience to emotion regulation and adaptive engagement among students with special educational needs.

4. Research Problem, Research Gaps

The preceding literature review has established that inclusive education, while structurally progressive, does not inherently guarantee psychosocial integration. Although policy initiatives have expanded access and strengthened academic accommodations, recurring patterns of diminished autonomy, fragile self-concept, social withdrawal, emotional dysregulation, and identity insecurity remain evident among students with special educational needs. These patterns suggest that structural inclusion may not automatically translate into developmental consolidation. Interpreted through Erikson's psychosocial framework, such vulnerabilities raise a critical concern regarding the alignment between relational environments and the developmental tasks inclusive education seeks to promote. In particular, the parenting context emerges as a central yet insufficiently examined determinant of emotion regulation and ego strength formation within special populations.

This concern constitutes the core research problem of the present study. Inclusive education aspires to cultivate autonomy, competence, participation, and self-determination; however, developmental misalignment may occur when home environments inadvertently constrain psychosocial crisis resolution. Overprotective parenting may restrict opportunities for autonomous mastery, performance contingent approval may intensify internalised inferiority, permissive boundary structures may weaken initiative, and rigid diagnostic labelling may narrow identity exploration. Under such conditions, classroom behaviours commonly interpreted as motivational deficits or executive dysfunction may instead represent manifestations of unresolved psychosocial tensions. Moreover, prevailing parenting interventions within special education frequently emphasise behaviour management and academic reinforcement strategies without situating these practices within a lifespan developmental framework. Consequently, behavioural adjustment may be achieved without necessarily strengthening the underlying capacities of emotion regulation, autonomy, and identity integration.

Within this context, several interrelated research gaps become apparent. First, although parental involvement has been extensively investigated in special education literature, empirical inquiry has predominantly focused on academic achievement and behavioural compliance rather than psychosocial crisis resolution. Second, conceptual integration between contemporary parenting styles and Erikson's stages of autonomy, initiative, industry, and identity remains limited, resulting in fragmentation between developmental psychology and inclusive education scholarship. Third, deficit oriented paradigms continue to interpret emotional vulnerability, dependency, or disengagement primarily as intrinsic characteristics of disability, with insufficient attention to relational influences. Finally, while contemporary parenting trends, including overprotective practices, performance driven expectations, permissive boundary patterns, and technology mediated regulation, have been examined in general developmental research, their specific psychosocial implications for students with disabilities within inclusive contexts remain underexplored. Collectively, these gaps underscore the need for a theoretically coherent framework that positions parenting as a central psychosocial scaffold influencing emotion regulation and developmental resilience.

5. Research Questions, and Research Objectives

In response to these limitations, the present study advances research questions designed to bridge empirical observation and theoretical integration. Rather than focusing exclusively on academic or behavioural outcomes, the inquiry seeks to examine the developmental mechanisms through which contemporary parenting styles shape psychosocial crisis resolution among students with special educational needs. Simultaneously, the study explores the potential of Erikson's psychosocial theory to inform developmentally aligned parenting practices within inclusive education contexts. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do contemporary parenting styles affect psychosocial development among students with special educational needs?
2. How can Erikson's psychosocial theory inform parenting practices within inclusive education?

Aligned with these questions, the research objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the influence of contemporary parenting styles on the psychosocial development of students with special educational needs within inclusive education settings.
2. To develop a theoretically grounded framework, informed by Erikson's psychosocial theory, that guides parenting practices in supporting autonomy, competence, emotion regulation, and identity formation.

Together, these research questions and objectives aim to address conceptual fragmentation within the literature, reinterpret psychosocial vulnerabilities through a developmental lens, and advance a holistic model of inclusive education that integrates parenting dynamics with schooling processes to strengthen long term emotional and developmental outcomes.

6. Methodology

The present research utilises a systematic review of literature (SLR) design that is informed by the Preferred Reporting Items of Systematic Reviews and Meta Analysis (PRISMA) framework and aimed at synthesising both empirical and theoretical findings on the subject of

contemporary parenting styles, psychosocial development, emotion regulation, and inclusive education based on the psychosocial theory developed by Erikson. The systematic review design was chosen to promote methodological transparency, replicability, and coverage of interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of intersection between parenting research, developmental psychology, and special education. Having implemented the principles of PRISMA into the research design, the study creates a meaningful and responsible way of identifying, screening, evaluating and synthesising the pertinent literature, and therefore enhances the rigour and credibility of the review.

The review process was thus undergone in line with the accepted systematic review reporting standards based on PRISMA principles. These criteria guaranteed clear descriptions of search strategy, database choice, keyword development, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and screening steps. Through an established methodological direction, the research design promotes replicability and critical evaluation, which makes the review a strong starting point to build a theoretically integrated view of parenting as a psychosocial process in inclusive education.

6.1 Identification

The identification phase consisted of a thorough search of three academic databases including Scopus, Pubmed, and Web of Science that were chosen due to their ability to index high quality journal articles in the areas of psychology, education, and social sciences. The search was carried out on the basis of carefully designed keyword strings alongside Boolean operators to provide a balance between breadth and conceptual focus. The main search parameters were variations of parenting style, parental involvement, and parenting practices, along with emotion regulation, psychosocial development, socioemotional functioning, well-being, family resilience, and parental stress, and were also associated with special educational needs, disability, and inclusive education. A set of filters was used to narrow down the list to journal articles published from 2020 to 2025 in English. There were no geographical limitations to ensure one obtains different cultural views. The initial search provided a wide range of articles which were narrowed down to a size during the screening process.

6.2 Screening

In the screening stage, titles and abstracts of all the identified studies were outlined thoroughly according to a list of predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. To be eligible in the review, the studies had to be journal articles published between 2021 and 2025, address parenting-related variables in relation to psychosocial, emotional or developmental outcomes and the child or adolescent had to have special educational needs, i.e., autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, or other disabilities. Moreover, the researchers had to present empirical results or systematic review results. To eliminate duplication, duplicate records were initially eliminated. The studies were filtered out in case they dealt with medical interventions only, or discussed academic performance only without referring to psychosocial issues, or studies that discussed adult populations with disability without relating the discussion to parenting variables. This screening process allowed making sure that the chosen studies were closely related to the purpose of the review, i.e. to investigate parenting as one of the psychosocial mechanisms that can influence the process of emotion regulation and development in children and adolescents with special educational needs.

6.3 Eligibility

Following screening, the text of the shortlisted studies was scrutinized further in order to ascertain that they met the expected standards and were quite relevant to the objectives of the review. This step was the assessment of their quality of methodology, thematic coverage, and their general relevance to the research questions. Particular focus was placed on the presence of the studies that directly tackled the issue of parenting-related factors, including parenting styles, parental stress, self-efficacy, resilience, emotion regulation, socioemotional development, or parental involvement in special educational needs (SEN) environments. All studies were evaluated thoroughly with regard to clarity of the research design, strength of the data analysis, and relevance of the results to the inclusive or special education settings. Only articles that lacked methodological rigor or those that could not identify the relationship between parenting variables and psychosocial/developmental outcomes were omitted. Based on this intensive review, ten studies were selected that met all the requirements and were incorporated into the final analysis. These research works utilized a wide array of methodological strategies among which were systematic reviews, quantitative correlational design, qualitative inquiries, and intervention-based research. Such a variety of methods helped to provide not only good empirical data but also different conceptual resources, making the whole review even more profound and comprehensive.

6.4 Included Studies

The last sample included ten journal articles published within the period of 2021 and 2025. These works combined to investigate a spectrum of variables related to parenting, such as parenting styles, parenting stress, self efficacy, emotion control, family, and parental involvement in a family that was rearing children with special needs such as autism. The research has been performed in different areas including Europe, North America, Asia and Middle East. This wide geographical distribution brings the aspect of cross-culture to the review and enhances the applicability of the general findings to a variety of social and educational backgrounds. Regarding methodology, the fact that both systematic reviews and the original empirical study were used allowed the results to be viewed in several different ways. The review could access various research designs and as such triangulation of evidence was possible thus improving the credibility, depth or comprehensiveness of the evidence.

6.5 Data Analysis

The qualitative thematic analysis was applied to synthesize the results of the chosen studies and give them meaning. Following the six-phase model of the process created by Braun and Clarke, the first stage was to read every article several times and pay special attention to its methodology, results, and discussion parts. This contributed to building an in-depth knowledge of how each research study was conducted regarding parenting and the effects it has on the children with special educational needs. Data patterns pertaining to the parenting dynamics, emotion regulation, psychosocial adjustment, autonomy development, parental stress and resilience were systematically identified and coded. It is these preliminary themes that the initial codes were compared across studies and grouped into broad patterns that create preliminary themes. With a continuous and critical review process, each theme was developed in a very clear way and in line with the objectives of the research. It was by making this that a meaningful and integrative interpretation of parenting could be made as a psychosocial support system in the context of inclusive and special education. On the whole, the thematic synthesis helped to make sure that the conclusions were closely based on the empirical evidence, as well as being informed by the developmental approaches to the emotion regulation and identity formation.

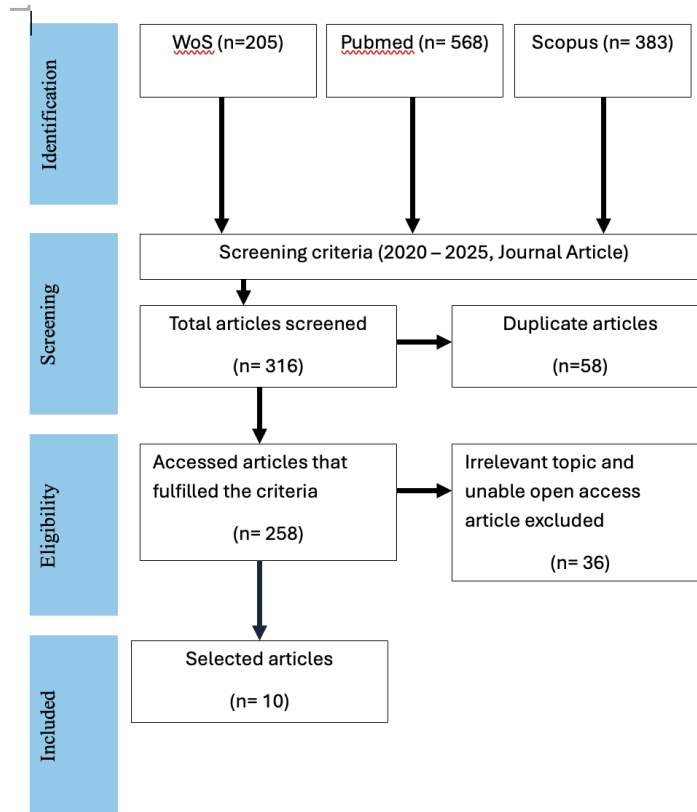


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Table

7. Finding Result

The current systematic literature review summarizes the findings of ten peer reviewed articles published in 2017-25 that together address parenting styles, parental stress, emotion regulation, psychosocial functioning, and inclusive education on the special educational needs (SEN) setting. The review was intended to combine both empirical and systematic findings to develop a developmentally informed perspective regarding parenting as a psychosocial process that affects autonomy, emotion regulation, and identity formation. The chosen researches are different in terms of methodology such as quantitative correlational designs, qualitative studies, and intervention based research. The sample of participants was in the form of both smaller qualitative cohorts and larger survey based parent population that collectively represented a number of several hundred participants which represented a variety of sociocultural backgrounds such as Europe, Turkey, Malaysia, North America, and the Middle East.

Thematic synthesis of the ten articles selected resulted in the formation of three broad themes, which were (1) Parenting Style as a Regulator of Emotion Development, (2) Parenting within Special Education Populations, and (3) Parenting Style and Developmental Competence. These themes present the prevailing conceptual arrangements throughout the literature as well as demonstrating structural gaps on psychosocial developmental theory.

7.1 Theme 1: Parenting Style as a Regulator of Emotion Development

The first theme recognizes parenting style as the focal regulation system that affects the emotional development and the psychosocial adaptation of children within special education settings. In various studies, authoritative, democratic, and autonomy-supportive parenting

styles were repeatedly linked to better-emotional stability, adaptive functioning, and family well-being (Benseny Delgado et al., 2024; Chin et al., 2025).

The study findings tend to indicate a successful mediation of the psychosocial crisis during early and middle childhood; Autonomy-supportive parenting directly supports resolution of Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, which allows children to cultivate the virtue of will. Children internalise confidence but not doubt when caregivers confirm independent efforts and accept error. In a similar fashion, emotionally responsive parenting engages the crisis of Initiative vs. Guilt, which facilitates purpose by enabling the children to experiment socially and intellectually without being overly fearful of punishment.

On the other hand, overcontrol can heighten shame and reduce initiative, especially among children who are already at a developmental disadvantage (Benseny Delgado et al., 2024; Žerak et al., 2024). Overcontrolling may increase the shame levels, crowding out initiative, and diminishing emergent competence. In the special education setting, where children might already be faced with the increased vulnerability, restrictive parenting can unwittingly support inferiority over resilience.

Notably, the relational construction of regulation is emphasized by the studies that connect parental emotion regulation and stress to child outcomes (Keleynikov et al., 2023; Ho & Liang, 2021; Yazicioğlu et al., 2024). The model by Erikson underlines that psychosocial crisis is negotiated within the social relations; therefore, emotion regulation abilities of children are co-constructed via parental modelling. Loss of emotional sensitivity in a stressed parent may lead to the lowered adaptive capacity of the child to resolve psychosocial tensions. This theme thus proposes that the parenting style acts as a crisis-navigational scaffold to support the emotional regulation develops as a strength or vulnerability.

7.2 Theme 2: Parenting within Special Education Populations

The second theme places parenting in the context of heightened psychosocial requirements of raising children with special educational needs. The emotional strain and caregiving intensity levels were always high in the studies involving autism and other disabilities (Benseny Delgado et al., 2024; Chin et al., 2025; Genç, 2025).

In the Eriksonian lifespan model, parents of children with special needs themselves are in the process of fulfilling psychosocial task to some extent, specifically Generativity vs. Stagnation. Generativity is giving directions and investing in the new generation (Yazicioğlu et al., 2024; Article 8). Stress can be detrimental to generative engagement, as stress disrupts emotional availability and consistency in developmental guidance. However, the idea of resilience and social support was recurrently mentioned among the buffering processes, which implies that situational adversity does not deny adaptive developmental functioning. Parental self-efficacy thus assumes not only a role as a psychological construct and predictor of long-term generativity in the face of strain but also a sensory foremost (Gence, 2025; Yazicioğlu et al., 2024).

Moreover, psychosocial negotiation is spread beyond the home in the context of inclusive education (Hyassat et al., 2024). Parents need to protest, cooperate and involve institutional systems, which is another dimension of generativity expression. The skillfulness to oversee school alliances is indicative of parental identity making as well as psychosocial dedication to the child developmental trajectory. More importantly, the studies analyzed are united in the

fact that disability diagnosis does not predetermine maladaptive outcomes. Adjustment is mediated by parenting quality instead. This is in line with the fundamental assumption by Erikson that the crises are developmental turning points, and not fixed points. The psychosocial tension requiring special education situations is never the denial of the adaptive resolution.

7.3 Theme 3: Parenting Style and Developmental Competence

The third theme incorporates the results of autonomy, competence, academic development, and processes of identity. An article from Cheng and Lai (2023) found responsive parenting to be linked with socioemotional competence and cognitive development, whereas autonomy-supportive parenting was shown to support self-regulated learning.

These results are congruent with Industry versus Inferiority whereby children bolster competence through mastery experiences. Persistence and internalised competence is encouraged by supportive parenting and inferiority by stern or erratic discipline, especially in a child who already has academic or communicative difficulties. The fact that emotional security is related to language and cognitive development further supports the hypothesis put forward by Erikson, that ego strengths are built upon one another; prior autonomy and initiative provide the foundation to subsequent competence and identity formation. Yet, longitudinal designs that could empirically follow these cumulative processes are very uncommon in the reviewed studies. Because of this, the continuity of development is likely to be deduced as opposed to proving (HASNI et al).

Intervention research provides a significant rectification to deterministic exegeses. The fact that parenting practices are changeable points to the fact that the psychosocial trajectories were dynamic. The improvement of parental coping, emotional awareness, and regulation strategies seems to support the promotion of both generativity and child competence, which is why it is assumed that developmental pathways are sensitive to recalibration in relationships. (Ho & Liang, 2021)

7.4 Integrated Conclusion of Thematic Analysis

Synthesised through Erikson's psychosocial framework, the thematic findings reveal a coherent developmental structure underlying the empirical patterns identified across the ten reviewed studies. Parenting styles operate as stage-sensitive developmental scaffolds that shape children's capacity to negotiate psychosocial crises, particularly within emotionally demanding special education contexts. Supportive and autonomy-oriented parenting strengthens the resolution of Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt and Initiative versus Guilt, thereby fostering the development of will and purpose. Emotion regulation, which constitutes the central focus of this review, emerges not as an isolated behavioural skill but as a psychosocial achievement constructed within relational environments that validate independence while providing emotional security. In contrast, rigid or stress-reactive parenting may intensify shame, inhibit initiative, and weaken emotional confidence, especially among children who already experience heightened developmental vulnerability.

The recurrent emphasis on parental stress and self-efficacy across the reviewed literature gains deeper developmental meaning when interpreted through Generativity versus Stagnation. Parental self-efficacy reflects adaptive generativity, characterised by sustained investment in the child's growth and developmental guidance. Conversely, chronic stress may reduce emotional availability and weaken the consistency of psychosocial scaffolding. In this relational system, emotion regulation is co-constructed rather than individually produced;

children's regulatory capacities are shaped by the caregiver's psychological stability and developmental positioning. Furthermore, academic competence and self-regulated learning, frequently associated with autonomy-supportive parenting, correspond to Industry versus Inferiority, illustrating how emotional security supports mastery, persistence, and competence formation.

Importantly, the findings consistently indicate that special education contexts amplify psychosocial tension but do not predetermine maladaptive outcomes. Disability diagnosis alone does not dictate emotional dysregulation; parenting quality and parental resilience remain decisive mediating factors. Despite these strong conceptual alignments with Erikson's stage-based model, none of the reviewed studies explicitly operationalised psychosocial crises as an organising framework. Constructs such as autonomy, competence, resilience, and emotion regulation were examined independently rather than situated within cumulative developmental processes. Integrating Erikson's psychosocial theory therefore provides a cohesive developmental lens that advances the literature beyond descriptive associations and clarifies how parenting styles shape emotion regulation as part of an interconnected, lifespan psychosocial trajectory within special education settings.

8. Discussion

The present systematic review synthesised ten contemporary empirical studies examining parenting styles, parental stress, emotion regulation, and psychosocial functioning within special education contexts. Across diverse cultural settings and methodological designs, the findings converge on three consistent patterns: supportive parenting predicts stronger socioemotional functioning; parental stress compromises adaptive parenting behaviours; and emotion regulation mediates child adjustment outcomes. However, most studies interpret these findings within behavioural or stress-coping frameworks, without situating them in a cumulative developmental model. By integrating Erikson's psychosocial theory, this discussion reframes parenting as a developmental scaffold that regulates crisis resolution across stages, thereby offering greater theoretical coherence to the observed empirical patterns.

8.1 Parenting Style as a Regulator of Autonomy and Initiative

To begin with, the reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that autonomy supportive, emotionally warm, and responsive parenting styles are positively associated with children's emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and socioemotional competence in special education populations. Empirically, children whose parents encourage structured decision making, tolerate manageable frustration, and provide guided independence tend to exhibit stronger adaptive functioning and reduced behavioural dysregulation. This pattern aligns with broader developmental findings indicating that authoritative parenting predicts more positive developmental outcomes across domains (Awiszus et al., 2022; Abidin et al., 2022).

In special education contexts, parenting styles among parents of children with developmental disabilities often reflect unique adaptations to caregiving demands, yet autonomy-supportive approaches remain associated with stronger psychosocial adjustment (Marston et al., 2022). From an Eriksonian perspective, these findings correspond directly to the successful negotiation of Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt and Initiative versus Guilt. Parenting that balances structure with independence enables children to internalise a sense of competence while maintaining relational security. Moreover, Erikson conceptualised autonomy as emerging when children experience themselves as effective agents within a secure relational

environment. Thus, parenting that balances structure with independence enables children to internalise a sense of competence.

Importantly, in special education contexts, where developmental delays, diagnostic labelling, or social comparison pressures may heighten vulnerability, such relational affirmation becomes even more critical. The empirical evidence therefore suggests that autonomy supportive parenting not only improves immediate behavioural outcomes but also consolidates early ego strengths that serve as psychological resources for later developmental tasks.

Conversely, overprotective or rigid parenting practices, which are frequently reported in families of children with disabilities, may inadvertently constrain opportunities for mastery. When parents excessively shield children from challenge, over direct problem solving, or limit independent exploration, they may unintentionally reinforce doubt or dependency (Faught et al., 2022). Within Erikson's framework, repeated experiences of restricted agency may intensify unresolved shame or guilt. As a result, behavioural dependency observed in special education settings may reflect relationally mediated psychosocial patterns rather than inherent incapacity. Thus, parenting style functions not merely as an environmental variable but as a regulator of early psychosocial crisis resolution that shapes self-perception and agency over time.

8.2 Parental Stress, Emotional Climate, and the Development of Industry

In addition to parenting style, a second dominant theme concerns parental stress and emotional climate. Across studies, high parental stress is associated with reduced emotional responsiveness, increased irritability, and diminished parenting self-efficacy. Research indicates that parental stress influences child psychological adjustment indirectly through parenting behaviours, with psychological flexibility functioning as a key mediating factor (Flujas-Contreras et al., 2023). Similarly, parenting stress has been shown to negatively affect positive mental health among parents of children with special needs, particularly when protective factors such as resilience are absent (Wu et al., 2025).

Within Erikson's developmental structure, the crisis of Industry versus Inferiority becomes particularly salient during middle childhood. Industry develops when children receive consistent affirmation of effort and opportunities to build competence. However, when stress undermines emotional availability, the relational scaffolding necessary for industry consolidation weakens. Empirical intervention studies demonstrate that reducing parenting stress through mindfulness-based stress reduction or psychoeducational support significantly improves parental well-being and caregiving quality (Neece et al., 2024). These findings reinforce the view that parental emotional stability is not peripheral but central to children's competence development.

This dynamic is especially critical for special education populations, where academic and social challenges may already heighten vulnerability. Nevertheless, several reviewed studies identify protective factors, such as parental resilience and life satisfaction, that buffer the negative effects of stress. These findings align with Erikson's proposition that ego strengths are shaped not solely by adversity but by the quality of relational support surrounding the child. Industry therefore emerges as a relationally co constructed virtue influenced by both parental emotional regulation and the broader educational environment.

8.3 Emotion Regulation, Parenting, and Identity Consolidation in Inclusive Contexts

Beyond parenting style and stress, emotion regulation emerged as the central mediating mechanism across studies. Parents with stronger emotion regulation capacities tend to demonstrate more consistent discipline, greater warmth, and higher responsiveness (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2022). In turn, children internalise these regulatory patterns, displaying improved coping strategies, reduced behavioural difficulties, and stronger socioemotional functioning.

From a developmental standpoint, emotion regulation operates as the bridge connecting earlier crises to later stages. Successful resolution of Autonomy and Initiative fosters ego strengths such as will and purpose. These strengths support the navigation of Industry and ultimately facilitate the transition toward Identity versus Role Confusion in adolescence.

Identity formation requires the ability to integrate conflicting experiences, tolerate social evaluation, and maintain internal coherence. In special education populations, this task may be complicated by stigma, diagnostic labelling, and differential expectations within inclusive classrooms. Therefore, when parenting environments model adaptive emotional coping and frame disability within narratives of competence and growth, children are more likely to integrate their learning differences into a cohesive and resilient self-concept (Hendrix et al., 2022; Chan & Tsui, 2025).

Conversely, emotionally dysregulated or deficit focused parenting may increase vulnerability to identity confusion or foreclosure. Importantly, none of the reviewed studies explicitly examined identity development as an outcome variable. This omission highlights the added theoretical value of Erikson's framework, which situates observable competencies within a broader developmental continuum extending into adolescence and adulthood.

8.4 Parenting Style, Emotion Regulation, and Psychosocial Development in Special Populations

This systematic review synthesised ten contemporary studies examining parenting styles, parental stress, emotion regulation, and psychosocial functioning within special education contexts. Although the collective findings consistently indicate that autonomy-supportive and emotionally responsive parenting is associated with stronger emotional regulation and socioemotional adjustment among children with special educational needs, the methodological landscape remains constrained. Most studies rely on cross-sectional designs, limiting developmental inference and preventing examination of how early parenting practices influence later identity consolidation. The predominance of parent-report measures also raises concerns regarding shared method bias, particularly when parenting style and child outcomes are measured within the same informant framework. Furthermore, diagnostic concentration, especially within autism-focused samples, narrows generalisability across diverse special populations. While associations are robust, the developmental mechanisms linking parenting style to long-term psychosocial outcomes remain insufficiently tested.

Interpreted through Erikson's psychosocial theory, the evidence suggests that parenting style operates as a developmental scaffold regulating crisis resolution across stages. Autonomy-supportive parenting may strengthen early ego capacities by allowing children to make structured choices, attempt problem-solving independently, and experience manageable frustration without excessive correction. Such practices potentially facilitate the resolution of Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt and Initiative versus Guilt by reinforcing a sense of agency

(Flujas-Contreras et al., 2023; Chan & Tsui, 2025; Wu et al., 2025). However, few studies explicitly examine whether these early gains translate into sustained Industry or Identity consolidation. Parental stress, repeatedly linked to reduced emotional responsiveness, may compromise children's opportunities to internalise competence and resilience. Importantly, emotion regulation appears to mediate these processes. Parents who model adaptive coping strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, emotional labeling, calm problem-solving, and structured routine management, provide children with observable regulatory templates. For example, when parents verbalise emotions ("I feel frustrated, so I will take a deep breath and try again"), implement predictable daily structures, use visual schedules, or scaffold coping strategies during transitions, they facilitate the child's gradual internalisation of regulation skills. These relational practices may be particularly critical in special populations where transitions, sensory overload, or social misunderstanding frequently challenge emotional stability.

8.5 Implications for Research, Practice, and Social Systems

Building on these findings, this review contributes theoretically by reframing parenting style as a psychosocial scaffold that supports emotion regulation development across stages. Rather than positioning emotional dysregulation solely within the child, the synthesis underscores the relational processes through which children acquire coping capacities, including emotional labelling, co-regulation during distress, structured autonomy granting, and modelling of adaptive stress management (Awiszus et al., 2022; Marston et al., 2022). This developmental interpretation implies that strengthening parental self-regulation and emotional coaching skills may produce cumulative benefits extending beyond short-term behavioural improvement. For special populations who frequently encounter academic challenges, stigma, or social exclusion, such relational support may serve a compensatory role in reinforcing competence and protecting emerging identity coherence.

At a broader social level, the implications extend beyond individual families to educational and community systems. The review suggests that effective support for emotion regulation in special education requires coordinated alignment between home and school environments. Schools and NGOs can translate these findings into parent-focused training programmes, stress-reduction initiatives, and collaborative emotional learning frameworks that promote consistency in regulatory strategies across contexts. By recognising parents as primary developmental partners rather than auxiliary caregivers, policies and intervention models can move toward family-centred, lifespan-oriented approaches. Ultimately, this SLR contributes a socially responsive framework that situates parenting style at the core of emotion regulation development in special populations, offering both theoretical advancement and practical direction for systemic change.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, this systematic review highlights the significant role of parenting in shaping the psychosocial development of children with special educational needs. Across the reviewed studies, autonomy supportive and emotionally responsive parenting was consistently associated with stronger socioemotional competence and self-regulation, whereas stress reactive and overprotective practices were linked to less adaptive outcomes. When interpreted through Erikson's psychosocial framework, parenting can be understood as a central regulator of developmental crisis resolution across stages, rather than merely a contextual influence. In this model, emotion regulation emerges as the key mechanism through which parenting

practices contribute to long term psychosocial resilience. Nevertheless, further longitudinal research incorporating explicit psychosocial constructs is needed to strengthen theory driven interventions and deepen understanding of how parenting shapes developmental trajectories over time.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed, both directly and indirectly, to the completion of this study.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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