

Dimensions of Parenting and Their Relation to Emotional Intelligence in Emerging Adults

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ABSTRACT

During the critical stage of early adulthood, cultivating emotional intelligence-related abilities like social competence and emotional regulation may be useful for enhancing general well-being. The present study explored the relationship between parenting styles and emotional intelligence (EI) among emerging adults, with the primary objective of examining how different parenting approaches are related to the development of EI in individuals aged 19 to 25. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) by Buri (1991) and the Emotional Intelligence Scale by Dr. Arun Kr. Singh & Dr. Shruti Narain (2014). Data were collected from a sample of 100 college and university students. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was computed using the SPSS-26 software. Overall, findings indicated no statistically significant correlation between general parenting styles and the emotional intelligence of emerging adults. However, in-depth analysis revealed that mothers' authoritative parenting style was comparatively more correlated with higher EI levels. Conversely, fathers' parenting styles showed minimal correlation, suggesting a limited paternal influence on the emotional development of their children in this sample. These results provide a potential importance of emotional presence and involvement in parenting. In particular, the data suggest that when a father is not consistently emotionally engaged or involved in everyday interactions, even if he adopts an authoritative style, his impact on the child's emotional development may be limited. The study contributes to the understanding of family dynamics and underscores the differentiated roles of mothers and fathers in shaping emotional intelligence during emerging adulthood.

Introduction

The most important social unit in society is the family, where children are raised and exposed to important social values, behaviours, attitudes, and skills that influence their personalities, capacities for adaptation, and personal development. Trust, loyalty, and open communication are all encouraged in a nurturing family setting, which helps people

develop well-rounded personalities. The first people to create a positive family atmosphere are the parents. The way a child views their parents or other caregivers is known as their parenting style (Baumrind, 1989). A child's emotional intelligence, the capacity to identify, comprehend, control, and effectively communicate emotions, is greatly influenced by their parents. Parents assist children in acquiring the skills necessary to manage relationships, overcome obstacles, and thrive in life by providing emotional support, healthy communication, and positive role modelling. By fostering emotional intelligence from an early age, parents equip their children with lifelong tools for well-being and success.

Parenting Styles and Emerging Adults

The term 'parents' refers to all individuals who play an essential role in caregiving within a home or family setting. Parenting styles refer to the overall strategies parents use to raise their children (Baumrind, 1989). Three parenting philosophies were distinguished by Baumrind (1966): permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. Over the following 20 years, they were commonly used and accepted until Maccoby and Martin (1983) famously proposed a fourth parenting style: neglectful. When parents set high but realistic and consistent standards for their children's behaviour, communicate effectively with them, show warmth and responsiveness, and use reasoning rather than coercion to regulate their behaviour, children generally grow more competent and self-assured. It has been said that this type of parenting is authoritative. This type of parent is encouraging and involved in their children's activities, yet they are not controlling and let their kids make healthy errors. The next one, authoritarian parenting is "disciplinary." Authoritarian parents are demanding and offer little assistance. Mistakes are punished rather than guided, and obedience is frequently motivated by fear of the repercussions. Children are discouraged from thinking independently and have limited influence over decision-making. The permissive, or indulgent, style is probably being used by parents who are high in support and low in demands. Their kids are more likely to struggle with authority and score poorly on measures of contentment and self-control. This type of parent avoids conflict, is forgiving, and does not require their kids to follow rules or boundaries. The uninvolved approach, as a neglectful, is used by parents who reject or neglect their children and fail to deliver most, if any, of the essential parenting duties. Children of demanding and unsupportive parents typically perform less than their classmates in all areas of life, lack self-control, have low self-esteem, and are less capable.

Relationships between parents and grown children can differ depending on several factors, including social class and the child's plans to pursue education or employment as a young adult. These relationships may not be the same in the present cohorts as they were in the recent past. In a similar vein, raising young children has evolved considerably over the past century, moving away from a focus on the children's economic worth to reflect the time and emotional investment made by parents in developing each unique child (Alwin, 2010; Hulbert, 2003). According to Trumpeter et al., (2008), authoritarian parenting sets reasonable boundaries and is appropriately frustrating, while permissive parenting is unduly indulgent and inadequately frustrating. The ability to self-regulate and

exhibit social responsibility (Baumrind, 1966), develop an internal locus of control and a more positive self-concept (McClun & Merrell, 1998), and promote self-actualization (Dominguez & Carton, 1997) have all been linked to authoritative parenting. According to research, teenagers' low acceptance and high levels of parental overprotection are significantly correlated with their sense of self-worth (Herz & Gullone, 1999). Furthermore, these correlations persist into adulthood, endangering interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, self-esteem, and confidence. Conversely, people with early positive experiences with their primary caregivers exhibit higher levels of ego-resilience (Howes et al., 1994) and trust in others (Larose & Bernier, 2001), eventually resulting in high self-esteem and positive self-worth.

Emotional Intelligence and Emerging Adults

Emotional Intelligence, was first introduced by Abraham Maslow using the term emotional strength in the 1950s. Salovey and Mayer (1990) originally defined Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a component of social intelligence that enables individuals to recognize, differentiate, and manage their own emotions and those of others, using this awareness to inform their thoughts and actions. Emotional intelligence enables an individual to correctly exhibit the suitable number of different emotions, such as rage, fear, love, happiness, etc., in his/her behaviour proportional to the situations and time. Moreover, it enables them to know about others' emotions and react accordingly (Goleman, 1998). Djik and Freedman (2007) asserts that emotional intelligence enables individuals to prioritize effectively and shapes many aspects of their daily behaviour. Emotional intelligence involves not only recognizing and understanding emotions but also using that emotional knowledge effectively to enhance thinking, decision- making, and behaviour.

Young people's emotional intelligence and life happiness provide important insights into how well-being is shaped throughout this stage; those with higher emotional intelligence levels also typically have higher levels of life satisfaction. During this critical stage of life, cultivating emotional intelligence-related abilities like social competence and emotional regulation may be useful for enhancing general well-being. Individuals with greater trait emotional intelligence are better at controlling their emotions and, consequently, at handling stressors that are essential to happiness (Furnham et al. 2003). According to a recent meta-analysis by Martins et al., (2010), emotional intelligence showed a robust, favourable correlation with mental health status within young adults.

Numerous studies have examined parenting styles and their influence on academic performance or behaviour; there is a growing interest in how these early experiences impact emotional development into young adulthood. Understanding this relationship is especially critical in contemporary society, where emerging adults (18-29) encounter diverse emotional and social challenges. By exploring the connection between parenting styles and emotional intelligence in emerging adults, this study seeks to offer insights that can inform parents, educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers. The findings will facilitate to foster more resilient young adults at both personal and social levels.

Review Of Literature

Mehta & Babel (2019) in their study named "To study the parenting styles of fathers of early adolescents." aimed to assess the parenting styles of fathers with early adolescent children. The sample consisted of 120 fathers from middle-income backgrounds. Data was collected using the Parenting Style Questionnaire. The findings revealed that fathers predominantly followed an authoritative parenting style. They maintained a balanced approach - neither being overly strict nor excessively lenient, while fostering a positive relationship with their adolescents.

Joshi & Dutta (2015) examined how mothers' parenting styles related to adolescents' emotional intelligence with the title "A Correlative Study of Mother Parenting Style and Emotional Intelligence of Adolescents Learner". Parents, particularly during the early stages of a child's life, play a crucial role in fostering emotional intelligence by providing a supportive social and emotional environment. 115 girls and 131 boys in the age group of 13 - 15 years participated, and Dr. Ekta Sharma's tool for emotional intelligence and the Parenting Style Dimension Questionnaire was used. This study found no direct correlation between authoritative parenting and emotional intelligence in boys, girls, or students overall.

Devi & Uma (2013) executed a study on "Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence of Adolescents in Andhra Pradesh". Studied 120 parents, an equal number of parents for each parenting style, and their children (15-17 years). The Parental Interactional Style Questionnaire and the Emotional Intelligence Inventory were used and found that kids with supportive parents had higher emotional intelligence than those with strict or lenient parents. Mainly, authoritative parents explained the reasons behind their rules, which helped children to understand and manage emotions better.

Stack et al. (2010) explored how parenting style affected children's emotions in a longitudinal study titled "Parental Effect on Children's Emotional Development Over Time and Across Generations". As per the result, the way parents raise their kids could shape their emotional well-being or help them develop healthy emotional skills, leading to emotional difficulties as they grow up, even across generations.

Method

Research Design

This study utilized a cross-sectional descriptive design to examine the psychological outcomes of academic and examination stress and to identify associated environmental and lifestyle determinants among school-going children. This design enabled the simultaneous evaluation of stress levels, psychological outcomes, and contributing factors at a single point in time.

Population

The study was conducted across both government and private schools located in rural and semi-urban areas of the Kolar district in Karnataka, India. The target population

consisted of adolescents and school-going children aged 10 to 18 years. A total sample of 300 students ($N = 300$) was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure proportional representation across different school types and demographic backgrounds.

Instruments

Data were collected using three standardized measurement instruments, Socio-demographic Proforma / Demographic Data Collection Tool: Designed to capture primary demographic details (e.g., name, class, gender) and relevant academic background variables. Examination Stress Scale (ESS): Used to measure the specific intensity and levels of academic and examination-related stress. Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21): Utilized to evaluate overall psychological distress, specifically measuring the prevalence and severity of anxiety and depressive symptoms among participants.

Emotional Abuse Test (EAT): Developed by PushpLata Rajpoot (2015), this standardized tool includes 44 items evaluating nine dimensions of emotional abuse: Rejection, Degradation, Denial of Emotional Responses, Social Isolation, Physical Assault, Verbal Assault, Terrorization, Engaging in Illegal Activities, and Exploitation. Items are scored on a three-point rating scale, with higher aggregate scores indicating greater emotional abuse. The instrument demonstrated strong stability and internal consistency with a test-retest reliability of 0.98, Cronbach's alpha of 0.89, and content validity confirmed via expert evaluation and correlation methods (0.70).

Results and Discussion

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analyses (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were performed to summarize sample baseline characteristics and measure overall emotional abuse levels. Total responses were categorized across minimum, average, and maximum classifications to facilitate detailed evaluation. A total of 300 students ($N = 300$) participated in the study, displaying a balanced gender distribution of 52% males ($n = 156$) and 48% females ($n = 144$). Participant ages ranged across early and middle adolescent developmental stages ($M = 14.2$ years, $SD = 2.3$).

Table 1. Gender Difference in Emotional Abuse Among High School Students

Gender	Sample Size (n)	Mean Total Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Girls	144	63.82	12.03	2.17	0.03*
Boys	156	60.67	7.81		

Based on table 1, Results from the independent samples *t*-test indicate a statistically significant difference between female and male students ($t = 2.17$, $p = 0.03$). Female students reported a significantly higher mean level of emotional abuse ($M = 63.82$, $SD = 12.03$) compared to male students ($M = 60.67$, $SD = 7.81$). The statistical

analysis reveals a significant gender difference in reported emotional abuse ($p = 0.03$), with female students exhibiting significantly higher mean emotional abuse scores compared to male students.

Examination Stress and Psychological Distress Outcomes

The evaluation of examination stress levels using the Examination Stress Scale (ESS) indicated a high overall prevalence among participants. The majority faced notable academic pressure:

- 47% reported moderate stress levels.
- 35% reported high stress levels.
- 18% reported low stress levels.

In total, 82% of the surveyed student population experienced significant psychological pressure during examination periods.

Assessment of psychological outcomes via the DASS-21 scale further highlighted severe emotional strain:

- 58% of respondents demonstrated moderate-to-severe anxiety symptoms.
- 42% exhibited moderate-to-severe levels of depression.

Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated strong positive relationships between examination stress and psychological distress:

- Examination stress showed a strong positive correlation with anxiety ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$).

A statistically significant moderate-to-strong positive correlation was observed between examination stress and depressive symptoms ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$). Bivariate analyses identified key associated factors including perceived parental pressure, poor sleep quality, excessive screen time, and low academic performance ($p < 0.05$). In the subsequent multiple regression model, high parental pressure was identified as the most prominent predictor of examination stress, followed by poor sleep quality and excessive screen usage.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 is accepted; there is no significant relationship between the permissive parenting style of a mother and the emotional intelligence of a young adult. According to the study's findings, the emotional intelligence of young adults and the permissive parenting style of mothers have a marginally beneficial association. However, permissive parenting by mothers is not a significant predictor of emotional intelligence, as this association did not approach statistical significance. Studies indicate that while permissive parenting by mothers may provide emotional freedom, it often lacks the structure and guidance needed to foster emotional understanding and regulation, two essential elements of emotional intelligence (Miller et al., 2013). In the context of maternal parenting, emotional competence in adolescents cannot be predicted solely by maternal responsiveness without sufficient behavioural monitoring. This supports the idea that to fully aid the development of emotional intelligence, maternal warmth, typical of permissive parenting, must be combined with boundaries and guidance (Porter, 2015).

According to Alegre (2010), children of permissive mothers were more likely to have poorer emotional regulation abilities, which are the cornerstones of emotional intelligence. This could be because permissive women tend to avoid conflict and don't set clear guidelines or boundaries, which restricts their kids' chances of receiving constructive criticism and learning to tolerate displeasure.

The results of the study support the acceptance of hypothesis 2, there is no significant relationship between the authoritative parenting style of a mother and the emotional intelligence of a young adult. The study's findings revealed a positive, though not statistically significant, relationship between young people's emotional intelligence and their mothers' authoritative parenting. When mothers adopt authoritative parenting, it appears to produce a regulated and emotionally stimulating atmosphere that fosters the growth of emotional competencies. Mothers who establish clear boundaries and demonstrate emotional expressiveness and responsiveness are likely to raise emotionally competent children. This lends credibility to the idea that the steady, yet caring style of authoritative mothers may encourage open communication and emotional maturity (Turner et al., 2009).

Hypothesis 3 is accepted since the data do not show a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and authoritarian maternal parenting in this sample. A child's ability to develop emotional skills may be limited by authoritarian mothers' tendency to place more emphasis on obedience and discipline than on emotional communication. The authoritarian approach may restrict opportunities for emotional expression, reduce open communication, and inhibit autonomy all of which are crucial for the development of emotional intelligence. Mothers are frequently key to children's early emotional socialization (Garcia Linares et al., 2018).

The results of the study support the acceptance of hypothesis 4: there is no significant relationship between the permissive parenting style of a father and the emotional intelligence of a young adult. Permissive fathers frequently display strong emotional availability but limited behavioural control, which can result in adolescents receiving less guidance and boundaries throughout crucial developmental stages (Mehta and Babel, 2019).

Hypothesis 5 is approved; there is no significant relationship between the authoritative parenting style of a father and the emotional intelligence of a young adult. This result is a little surprising; mostly authoritative parenting defined by warmth, responsiveness, and unambiguous behavioural demands is positively associated with a variety of developmental outcomes, including emotional intelligence. Milevsky et al., (2007) discovered that emerging adults' emotional functioning and general well-being were less predicted by fathers perceived authoritative parenting style. Specifically, they observed that even when fathers were viewed as authoritative, young adults frequently expressed a reduced emotional bond with their fathers.

Hypothesis 6 is accepted; there is no significant relationship between the authoritarian parenting style of a father and the emotional intelligence of a young adult. According to the current study, young adults who have authoritarian fathers' lack

emotional sensitivity may find it difficult to manage and comprehend their feelings, but in other situations, they may completely withdraw from emotional experiences, leading to flat or insignificant associations with emotional intelligence. Singh (2023) discovered an adverse relationship between emotional intelligence and authoritarian parenting of fathers.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that examination stress and emotional abuse are highly prevalent psychological challenges among high school adolescents, with significant gender disparities and severe mental health outcomes. Female students report significantly higher levels of emotional abuse compared to male students. Moreover, a vast majority of students experience moderate-to-severe examination stress, which correlates strongly with high levels of anxiety and depression. Among the various identified risk factors, perceived parental pressure stands out as the primary predictor of examination stress, compounded by poor sleep quality and excessive screen time.

To address these vulnerabilities, immediate school-based interventions are necessary. Educational institutions, together with parents and policymakers, should prioritize:

- Targeted Counseling Services: Implementing gender-sensitive mental health support programs to address emotional abuse and stress coping strategies.
- Parental Psychoeducation: Conducting workshops to reduce academic over-expectation and mitigate parental pressure on students.
- Healthy Lifestyle Promotion: Encouraging balanced daily routines, better sleep hygiene, and reduced screen time to minimize psychological distress.

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