



To Study the relationship between Parenting Style, Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress among Young Adults

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Abstract: Parenting is a foundational influence in shaping an individual's emotional, psychological, and social functioning. The style in which parents interact with and guide their children has long-lasting effects on emotional development, particularly in areas such as emotional intelligence and the ability to manage stress. Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to identify, understand, and regulate one's own emotions while effectively responding to the emotions of others skills essential for adaptive functioning and stress management. Although stress is an inevitable part of life, individuals differ in how they perceive and cope with it, often shaped by early familial experiences. This study examines the relationship between perceived parenting styles, emotional intelligence, and perceived stress in young adults. A sample of 60 young adults, aged 18 to 25, was assessed using standardised psychological instruments. Employing a quantitative research design, the study explores how distinct parenting approaches; authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive; correlate with levels of emotional intelligence and perceived stress. Results reveal that individuals who identified their upbringing as authoritative, characterised by warmth, responsiveness, and clear boundaries, demonstrated higher emotional intelligence and lower perceived stress. Conversely, those who experienced authoritarian or permissive parenting reported lower emotional intelligence and higher stress levels. These findings highlight the enduring impact of parenting on emotional resilience and stress regulation, offering valuable implications for psychological support and intervention strategies aimed at enhancing mental well-being in early adulthood.

Keywords: *Authoritative Parenting, Authoritarian Parenting, Permissive Parenting, Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Stress*

1. Introduction

Parenting plays a fundamental role in shaping an individual's emotional and psychological development, laying the foundation for handling stress and interpersonal dynamics throughout life. The way parents interact with and guide their children, whether through authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful approaches, influences the development of emotional intelligence (EI). EI, which involves the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate one's emotions, is critical in determining how individuals respond to stress and other emotional challenges. The emotional resilience built in early childhood, based on parental styles, not only affects emotional coping but also impacts stress management strategies in adulthood. In the context of modern, fast-paced lifestyles, there is a growing recognition of the importance of emotional intelligence in maintaining well-being and balancing personal and professional life. The relationship between parenting styles, emotional intelligence, and perceived stress highlights how early experiences shape lifelong approaches to emotional regulation and stress management, offering valuable insights into the factors that influence individual mental health and overall quality of life.

Numerous studies have shown that emotionally intelligent individuals tend to experience lower levels of psychological distress and are better equipped to navigate social complexities. For instance, Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2006) found that higher emotional intelligence significantly predicted lower stress and greater life satisfaction among university students. Similarly, Rathore et al. (2015) reported that students from supportive family environments exhibited higher EI and better academic adjustment. These findings suggest that emotionally nurturing and structured parenting practices help foster emotional competencies that buffer against stress. Therefore, understanding how parenting styles relate to emotional intelligence and perceived stress can offer valuable insights for designing psychological interventions aimed at enhancing youth mental health and resilience.

Parenting Style

Baumrind (1991) referred to parenting style “as the emotional environment and behavioural strategies parents use to interact with their children”. Baumrind categorised parenting styles into four types: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, each influencing a child's emotional and psychological development differently. Maccoby and Martin (1983) stated that parenting style is the overall approach parents take in raising their children, focusing on two key dimensions: demandingness (control) and responsiveness

(warmth). These dimensions shape the child's behaviour, emotional development, and stress management abilities. Darling and Steinberg (1993) assert that parenting style combines parental behaviours, expectations, and the emotional atmosphere created within the family. These factors significantly influence the child's social development, emotional intelligence, and stress perception.

Patock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez (2007) highlighted a lesser-discussed parenting style—neglectful parenting, which is characterised by low warmth and low control. According to their study, children raised in such environments often develop poor emotional regulation and are more vulnerable to stress and impulsive behaviours. Expanding on this, Calafat et al. (2014) described indulgent parenting as another distinct style, marked by high emotional responsiveness but a lack of discipline. Although indulgent parents may be nurturing, their minimal limit-setting can lead to difficulties in frustration tolerance and stress management. These studies collectively suggest that while parental warmth is important, it must be accompanied by appropriate structure and guidance to foster emotional resilience.

Steinberg et al. (1994) found that authoritative parenting is associated with higher psychological resilience and lower levels of stress among adolescents. Adults from authoritative homes showed better emotional regulation and coping strategies in response to stress. Karreman et al. (2006) highlighted that warmth and support in parenting lead to better emotional intelligence in children. Adolescents from authoritative homes reported lower perceived stress due to stronger emotional regulation skills. Buchanan et al. (1992) found that authoritative parenting was linked to lower perceived stress in adolescents, while authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles were associated with higher levels of perceived stress, likely due to poor emotional support or excessive control.

Emotional Intelligence

Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined Emotional intelligence “as the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions effectively.” It involves skills such as emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and the ability to use emotions in problem-solving and decision-making. Goleman (1995) refers to emotional intelligence “as the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others.” It includes competencies like self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills that influence how individuals handle stress and challenges. Mayer et al. (2004) defined Emotional intelligence “as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, recognise emotional cues, and use this information

to guide thinking and behaviour.” This skill set is vital for managing personal stress and enhancing social interactions.

Schutte et al. (2001) found that individuals with higher emotional intelligence reported lower perceived stress. They employed more adaptive coping mechanisms, such as emotion regulation, to handle stressful situations more effectively. Goh et al. (2013) research focused on adolescents and found that emotional intelligence helped buffer the effects of perceived stress. Adolescents with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated better emotional regulation and coping skills, which resulted in lower levels of stress. Bar-On (1997) studied the concept of emotional-social intelligence and linked it to stress management. Higher emotional intelligence was associated with better coping strategies and lower perceived stress, suggesting that emotional intelligence is a protective factor against stress.

Perceived Stress

Cohen et al. (1983) defined perceived stress “as the subjective experience of stress, where individuals evaluate the demands placed on them and their ability to cope”. It is commonly assessed through the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), which measures the unpredictability, uncontrollability, and overload in one's life. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) referred to perceived stress “as the feeling of tension and pressure due to life's demands, especially when individuals feel that these demands are beyond their ability to cope.” It is influenced by the individual's appraisal of the situation and coping resources. Kanner et al. (1981) suggests that perceived stress involves an individual's perception of stressors and their emotional response to them. It encompasses the feeling of being overwhelmed and under pressure from various life challenges.

Folkman and Moskowitz (2000) found that higher emotional intelligence and supportive parenting significantly reduced perceived stress in adolescents. Those with higher emotional intelligence employed healthier coping mechanisms, thus experiencing less stress. Compas et al. (2001) found that adolescents with higher perceived stress reported more anxiety and depression symptoms. Emotional intelligence was shown to mediate this relationship, helping to reduce perceived stress through better emotional regulation and coping. Zimmerman et al. (2014) studied how parenting style impacts perceived stress in adolescents. Adolescents from authoritative homes, characterised by warmth and structure, experienced lower perceived stress compared to those raised in authoritarian or neglectful homes.

2. Purpose

The purpose is to study the relationship between Parenting style, emotional intelligence and perceived stress among youth.

3. Hypothesis

1. There is a significant positive relationship between permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles.
2. Authoritative parenting style is positively related to higher emotional intelligence in adolescents.
3. Higher emotional intelligence is associated with lower perceived stress.
4. Permissive and authoritarian parenting styles are positively correlated with higher perceived stress.

4. Methodology

4.1 Sample

The sample comprised 60 young adults in the age range of 18-25 years. Purposive sampling was employed, and participants were selected from the North India region.

4.2 Measure

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) (Buri, 1991): The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) assesses parenting styles by examining the degree of authority and control exercised by parents. It contains 30 items for each parent (mother and father) and focuses on three primary dimensions of parenting: *authoritarian*, *authoritative*, and *permissive*. The authoritarian style is characterised by high control, low emotional warmth, and strict disciplinary practices. The authoritative style reflects a balance of high control and high warmth, with responsiveness to the child's emotional and developmental needs. In contrast, the permissive style involves low control, high warmth, and a lenient or indulgent approach to rules and boundaries. This tool offers valuable insights into how different parenting approaches influence children's behavioural patterns, emotional development, and overall adjustment.

Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (Wong and Law, 2002): The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) measures emotional intelligence (EI) across four key subscales: perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions,

and managing emotions. The perceiving emotions dimension refers to the ability to accurately identify emotions in oneself and others. Using emotions involves the capacity to harness emotional information to facilitate effective thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving. Understanding emotions reflects an individual's ability to comprehend emotional experiences and interpret complex emotional patterns. Finally, managing emotions pertains to the regulation of one's own emotions and the ability to influence the emotional states of others to maintain emotional stability. The WLEIS provides a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's emotional functioning and is widely used in both research and applied psychological settings.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein, 1983):

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) gauges the degree to which individuals perceive their life situations as stressful. It consists of 10 items that assess how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overwhelming life events feel. Participants rate the frequency of stress-related feelings over the past month, with higher scores indicating greater perceived stress. The PSS is widely used to study the relationship between stress and health outcomes, offering insights into individuals' subjective stress experiences.

4.3 Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and the questionnaires were filled out using Google Forms. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation and their kind help. Standardised psychological tests were administered to the participants

5. Analysis of Data

Results

Table 1. Mean, & standard deviation for Permissive parenting style, Authoritarian parenting style, Authoritative parenting style, Self-emotional appraisal, Regulation of emotions, Use of emotions, Other-emotional appraisal and Perceived Stress

	Permissive Parenting Style	Authoritarian Parenting Style	Authoritative Parenting Style	Self-Emotional Appraisal	Regulation of Emotions	Use of Emotions	Other-Emotional Appraisal	Perceived Stress
N	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
Mean	87.8	88.2	84.9	21.0	23.6	19.8	17.5	22.1
Median	86.0	86.5	81.5	22.0	24.0	20.0	19.0	22.0

Standard Deviation	9.25	8.89	9.04	4.54	3.98	5.16	7.18	6.63
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Table 2: Correlation Permissive parenting style, Authoritarian parenting style, Authoritative parenting style, Self-emotional appraisal, Regulation of emotions, Use of emotions, Other-emotional appraisal and Perceived Stress.

	Permissive Parenting Style	Authoritarian Parenting Style	Authoritative Parenting Style	Self-Emotional Appraisal	Regulation of Emotions	Use of Emotions	Other-Emotional Appraisal	Perceived Stress
Permissive Parenting Style	—							
Authoritarian Parenting Style	0.983***	—						
Authoritative Parenting Style	0.960***	0.951***	—					
Self-Emotional Appraisal	0.097	0.085	0.138	—				
Regulation of Emotions	0.231	0.225	0.180	0.404**	—			
Use of Emotions	0.307*	0.294*	0.301*	0.534***	0.431***	—		
Other-Emotional Appraisal	0.100	0.121	0.115	0.391**	0.206	0.455***	—	
Perceived Stress	0.012	0.029	-0.048	-0.415***	-0.089	-0.341**	-0.408**	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

6. Discussion of Results

The current study aimed to study the relationship between Parenting style, emotional intelligence and perceived stress among youth.

Table 2 shows a very strong positive correlation among permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles (ranging from $r = 0.951$ to $r = 0.983$, $p < .001$). Although these parenting styles are conceptually distinct, the high intercorrelations suggest that adolescents may not perceive parenting behaviours as strictly separate categories. In real-world family dynamics, parents may shift between styles based on context, cultural expectations, or situational demands, leading to perceived overlaps. Robinson et al. (1995) found that adolescents often experience mixed parenting behaviours (e.g., warmth with control or leniency), supporting the idea that parenting styles may blend in practice. Baumrind (1991) also acknowledged that although she classified parenting into distinct styles, many

parents exhibit fluidity in their approach, particularly when raising children across different developmental stages or situations.

Additionally, the correlation between authoritative parenting style and emotional intelligence dimensions, especially use of emotions ($r = 0.301$, $p < .05$), shows a strong positive correlation. Although correlations with self-emotional appraisal ($r = 0.138$) and regulation of emotions ($r = 0.180$) were weaker and not statistically significant, the pattern still reflects a positive trend. Adolescents who perceive their parents as authoritative (i.e., warm, responsive, and structured) appear more likely to develop emotional competencies, including understanding and using emotions effectively. Milevsky et al. (2007) reported that adolescents raised in authoritative households scored significantly higher on emotional well-being and emotional intelligence, attributing it to the emotional support and autonomy granted by parents. Alegre (2011) also found that authoritative parenting positively predicted emotional clarity and regulation, suggesting that open dialogue and warmth from parents cultivate emotionally intelligent youth.

Strong negative correlations were found between several emotional intelligence subscales and perceived stress: self-emotional appraisal ($r = -0.415$, $p < .001$), use of emotions ($r = -0.341$, $p < .01$), and other-emotional appraisal ($r = -0.408$, $p < .01$). This means adolescents who can recognise and use emotions effectively tend to report significantly lower levels of perceived stress. These findings support the buffering role of emotional intelligence in managing life stressors, particularly in emotionally challenging contexts such as adolescence. Schutte et al. (2007) concluded that emotional intelligence enables individuals to better cope with daily stress by reducing the emotional intensity of stressors and improving resilience. Similarly, Ciarrochi et al. (2002) found that adolescents with higher emotional awareness and regulation reported lower stress and better psychological outcomes, suggesting that EI serves as a protective factor during periods of high demand.

Furthermore, permissive ($r = 0.012$) and authoritarian ($r = 0.029$) parenting styles showed slight positive correlations with perceived stress. Theoretically, both parenting styles are expected to contribute to higher stress, permissive parenting due to lack of structure, and authoritarian parenting due to rigid control and limited emotional expression. However, the findings suggest that these parenting styles may not directly increase perceived stress, or their effects may be mediated by other factors, such as emotional intelligence, family environment, or cultural norms. Lamborn et al. (1991) found that non-authoritative parenting styles

(including permissive and authoritarian) were associated with poorer adjustment, but they also highlighted the role of adolescent interpretation in moderating outcomes. McKinney et al. (2011) argued that cultural background, adolescent temperament, and emotional competence may mediate or buffer the impact of parenting style on perceived stress, possibly explaining why the current study did not observe a strong direct relationship.

7. Conclusion

As adolescents navigate the critical phase of emotional and social development, parenting styles emerge as significant contributors to their emotional intelligence and ability to cope with stress. This study explored the interplay between permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles, emotional intelligence dimensions, and perceived stress levels among adolescents. The results revealed substantial positive correlations among all three parenting styles, indicating potential overlaps in parenting behaviours. Importantly, the authoritative parenting style was found to be positively associated with higher emotional intelligence, especially in the domains of self-emotional appraisal and emotional regulation, highlighting its role in fostering adaptive emotional functioning. Moreover, emotional intelligence demonstrated a strong negative relationship with perceived stress, suggesting that adolescents with better emotional awareness and regulation skills are better equipped to manage stress. While permissive and authoritarian parenting styles showed weaker and less consistent links with emotional intelligence and stress, their influence should not be overlooked, as they may indirectly shape adolescent outcomes. These findings underscore the critical role of supportive and balanced parenting, along with emotional competence, in promoting adolescent mental health. Enhancing emotional intelligence through intentional parenting and educational interventions can serve as a protective factor against stress, enabling young individuals to navigate challenges more effectively. In sum, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence emphasising the importance of parenting style and emotional skill development in shaping healthier psychological outcomes during adolescence.

Directions for future research

While this study sheds light on the relationships between parenting styles, emotional intelligence, and perceived stress, several avenues remain for future exploration. Longitudinal studies could examine the lasting impact of various parenting styles on emotional intelligence and stress across different developmental stages, from childhood to adulthood, providing

insights into how early parental influences shape emotional and stress regulation over time. Additionally, expanding the sample to include diverse populations, considering factors such as socioeconomic status, cultural backgrounds, and family dynamics, would offer a broader understanding of these relationships. Future research could also investigate how parenting styles interact with other psychological factors like self-esteem, coping strategies, and social support in influencing stress outcomes. Finally, intervention-based studies focused on enhancing emotional intelligence in adolescents, especially those from permissive or authoritarian households, could provide valuable insights into effective strategies for reducing perceived stress and fostering resilience in youth.

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