

# The Impact of Perceived Dysfunctional Parenting Styles on Level of Emotional Intelligence of Young Adults

Marvi Panhwar<sup>1</sup> and Qudsia Tariq<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

*The present study focused on young adults' perception of their parents' parenting styles, as they perceived them in the sixteen years of their lives, and their impact on their level of emotional intelligence. It was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between different parenting styles and the young adults' emotional intelligence level. The study sample was randomly drawn from various University of Sindh and Jamshoro departments. The total sample was 120 participants (male 30, female = 90) with a mean age of (M= 21.7, SD = 1.7). Two questionnaires were used to collect the data for the study. Parker et al. (1997) developed measures of parenting style Scale (MOPS) and Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Schutte et al. (1998). Data was analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS (version 28). Results indicated that overall dysfunctional parenting styles (mother and father) are unrelated to the young adults' emotional intelligence level except for one subscale of the mother version, i.e., over control, which is significantly related to emotional intelligence. No significant gender difference was found on the parenting style scale (mother and father versions) or emotional intelligence scale. The results of the current study give valuable insight into cultural sophistication in understanding parenting styles and their impact on positive behaviors in youth. Findings can also be helpful for mental health professionals to understand risk factors contributing to the mental health problems of young adults, develop interventions, and facilitate positive parenting practices.*

**Keywords:** Parenting Styles, Emotional Intelligence, Young Adults.

## Introduction

Parenting plays a vital role in the development of children, and parents' way of interacting and dealing with their children significantly affects their personalities in all aspects, including emotional intelligence. Parenting styles are "a collection of behaviors or actions of parents towards their children." It is considered an emotional environment parents create for their children, which they foster and experience (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Their parents discover the way children learn to identify and communicate their emotions. This is the first learning of understanding emotional communication from the parents; later, children show the same emotional signals to others (Huver et al., 2010). Parents' interaction and dealing with children can significantly affect children's emotional intelligence, and when this interaction is warm and loving, it can positively influence an individual's emotional intelligence (Shylla & Bapu, 2021).

The history of emotional intelligence can be traced back to Thorndike's social intelligence theory and Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal theory. However, it became the focus of attention in

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<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Psychology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh. Email: [panhwar.marvi@gmail.com](mailto:panhwar.marvi@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan.



the field after Salovey and Myer (1990) formally introduced this term. After that, different models were developed to define and understand the concept. The ability model of emotional intelligence states that an individual can understand, recognize, and communicate their own and others' emotions (Salovey & Mayers, 1990). Every person has a different level of emotional intelligence and performs an essential function in developing different behaviors and overall psychological well-being (Ahmed et al., 2009).

## Literature Review

Parenting styles and practices have a significant impact on an individual's personality. Early childhood experiences remain with individuals in their adult lives and significantly influence them. Alegre and Benson (2010) examined how parental practices and styles relate to teenagers' emotional intelligence. Interestingly, the study showed that mothers who interacted more with their children, primarily through educational activities, had children with higher emotional intelligence. However, a democratic parenting style positively correlated with the more flexible teens. This finding is also supported by the work of Silick and Schutte (2006), who identified a similar relationship between perceived parental love and higher levels of emotional intelligence in children. Shalini and Acharya (2013) conducted a study investigating the impact of perceived paternal parenting styles on adolescents' emotional intelligence while exploring sex differences in these perceived parenting styles. The results revealed that both authoritative and authoritarian paternal parenting styles significantly correlated with emotional intelligence in adolescents. Moreover, fathers were perceived to exhibit a more authoritative parenting style towards girls compared to boys.

Fletcher et al. (2014) conducted a study aiming to identify differences in emotion regulation strategies and perceived parental style between individuals with Bipolar II disorder (BP-II) and Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). Findings revealed that individuals with BPD were significantly more likely to employ maladaptive emotion regulation strategies and scored higher on perceived dysfunctional parenting scales compared to those with BP-II. Dysfunctional maternal relationships were uniquely associated with maladaptive emotion regulation strategies in BPD participants. In contrast, dysfunctional paternal relationships were relevant to emotion regulation strategies in both BPD and BP II groups. Abolqasemi et al. (2015) found the role of parenting styles as perceived by students, emotional intelligence, and social adjustment among males in secondary school in Tehran. The study claims that people who perceive their parents as possessing a high authority level exhibited better social adjustment than those with authoritarian or permissive parents. Furthermore, those with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated better interpersonal connections and mental health, which is evidence of a positive connection between emotional intelligence and social adjustment. The results showed that the parents' authority and emotional intelligence have a central role in regulating the adolescents' social adjustment.

Fernandes (2016) conducted a study focusing on the interaction of resilience, emotional intelligence, and perceived parenting styles among adolescents. Through the analysis of the effects of parenting behaviors on adolescent development, the research aimed to reveal the magnitude of parenting in determining psychological outcomes. Information was taken from the sample of adolescents using instruments including The Measure of Parental Style, The Resilience Scale, and The Emotional Intelligence Scale. The statistics showed there was a particular connection between dysfunctional parenting, characterized by controlling behaviors, and decreased resilience and the emotional intelligence of adolescents. George et al. (2017) investigated emotional intelligence (EI) and the perceived parenting styles among rural teenagers in Karnataka's area. They conducted a

cross-sectional assessment applying an EI scale for different assessments such as self-awareness, self-discipline, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Consequently, the study showed that most students perceive themselves as practicing affection. The study has demonstrated an obligation to combat the contradictory images of parenting styles and emotional intelligence deficits in adolescents to promote their emotional health and social existence.

The study by María et al. (2018) explored how students' reported perceptions of their fathers' and mothers' parenting practices correlated with different emotional intelligence profiles among college students. They found significant differences in parenting practices between the identified emotional intelligence profiles. Specifically, the profile characterized by adequate emotional skills was associated with greater utilization of positive parenting dimensions and lower utilization of negative dimensions. On the other hand, dysfunctional profiles were associated with mixed or higher utilization of harmful parenting practices and lower utilization of positive ones. Chamarty (2019) conducted a study to explore the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of their upbringing and their emotional intelligence (EI) level. The quantitative results showed no significant correlation between perceived upbringing and EI. However, the qualitative findings revealed both positive and no correlations between these variables. Participants who perceived influential upbringing highlighted aspects such as emotional warmth, parental involvement, and interest in their life events, which were associated with higher EI.

Tahir and Jabeen (2022) researched undergraduates from Forman Christian College, Lahore, Pakistan. The study focused on the link between parenting styles, emotional intelligence, and psychological health. It was determined that maternal authoritativeness and emotional intelligence were positively associated with psychological well-being, while maternal and paternal authoritarianism had a negative correlation. Authoritative and permissive parenting styles have also shown significant positive associations with emotional intelligence. Interestingly, this study contended that the assumptions that parenting styles are the ultimate determinants of psychological well-being in adulthood are inaccurate. It emphasizes the significance of emotional intelligence, which can be acquired over time, compared with IQ, which is inborn. Mishra and Singh (2022) undertook a cross-sectional study among college students at Delhi University, India, exploring the level of emotional intelligence and associations with parental styles and gender as a possible modifier. The survey concluded that most of the perceived parenting styles were authoritative and followed by authoritarian. Parenting styles such as maternal authoritarianism and permissiveness were found to have a poor relationship with vital emotional intelligence compared to the parenting style of authoritativeness.

Moreover, gender seemed to affect the modification of the link between emotional intelligence and paternal parenting style. The study of Radhakrishnan et al. (2023) on utilizing emotional intelligence as a mediator while identifying the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors among young people in Malaysia was successfully conducted. The study made clear that permissive parental behaviors are associated with antisocial behavior. On the contrary, authoritarian parenting shows a positive association.

### Study Objectives

- To analyze the relationship between perceived parenting styles of mothers by young adults and their level of emotional intelligence.
- To analyze the relationship between perceived parenting styles of fathers by young adults and their level of emotional intelligence
- To find the gender difference in perceived dysfunctional parenting styles.
- To find the gender difference in level of emotional intelligence.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The objective of the current study was to investigate the impact of perceived dysfunctional parenting style on the emotional intelligence of young adults. The cross-sectional survey design was used to collect the data, and a correlation coefficient technique was applied to analyze the relationship between the study variables. The study also analyzed the gender differences in perceived dysfunctional parenting style and emotional intelligence.

### Participants

The study's participants are 120 undergraduate students from different universities in Sindh and Jamshoro. The sample was drawn by using a simple random technique. The sample consisted of male=30 and female=90, with a mean age of  $M= 21.7$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ .

### Instruments

Two questionnaires were used to collect the data for the study variables. A demographic questionnaire was also used to get information related to the demographic characteristics of the participants.

#### 1-Demographic Information Questionnaire

The demographic information questionnaire was developed to get the participants' demographic characteristics. It includes age, gender, level of study, family system, and socioeconomic status.

#### 2-Measures of Parenting Styles (MOP) Scale

Parker et al. (1997) developed a measure of parenting style scale. It consisted of three subscales, i.e., control, abuse, and indifference. It is a self-reported questionnaire on which respondents' responses on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "not true at all" to "extremely true." Two separate versions are used in the questionnaires for mother and father separately.

#### 3-Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

The Emotional Intelligence Scale was developed by Schutte et al. (1998). It consisted of 33 items on which respondents had to respond on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "quite disagree," scoring 1, to "quite agree," scoring 5.

### Procedures

Permission was obtained from the concerned authorities to conduct the research at the university. To collect the data, students were approached in their respective classes with the permission and help of concerned teachers. Participants were briefed about the study, and consent was obtained from them. After that, study and demographic information questionnaires were given to participants, and data was collected.

## Results

Table 1 indicates the demographic characteristics of the study sample. It includes gender, family system, and socioeconomic status.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the demographic characteristics of the sample (N= 120)**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	30	25
Female	90	75
<b>SES</b>		
Upper middle class	40	33.3
Upper class	4	3.3
Middle class	67	55.8
Lower middle class	9	7.5
<b>Family System</b>		
Joint	44	36.7
Nuclear	76	63.3

**Table 2: Mean and SD of the continuous demographic variable (N=120)**

Variable	Mean	SD
Age	21.71	1.7

**Hypothesis 1;** There would be relationship between perceived dysfunctional parenting styles of mothers and level of emotional intelligence of young adults.

**Table 3: Correlation between perceived parenting style (mother) and emotional intelligence**

Variable	Emotional intelligence	sig.
Perceived dysfunctional parenting Style (mother)	.102	.26
Over control (mother)	.202	.02*
Abuse (mother)	.053	.56
Indifference (mother)	.034	.71

Note. \*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3 indicated that there is no relationship between perceived parenting style (mother) and emotional intelligence. On subscales of measure of parenting style (mother), only over control subscale is positively related to emotional intelligence,  $r = .202$ ,  $p = .02$ . The other two subscales abuse and indifference are not related to emotional intelligence.

### **Hypothesis 2**

There would be relationship between perceived dysfunctional parenting styles of fathers and level of intelligence of young adults.

**Table 4: Parenting style and emotional intelligence**

Variable	Emotional Intelligence	Sig.
Perceived dysfunctional parenting	.102	.26
Style (Father)		
Over control (father)	.157	.08
Abuse (father)	-.004	.96
Indifference (father)	.122	.18

Table 4 is indicating that the perceived dysfunctional parenting style (father) and its subscales are unrelated to emotional intelligence of young adults.

### Hypothesis 3

There would be gender difference in the perception of dysfunctional parenting styles (mother).

**Table 5: Independent sample t-test for dysfunctional parenting style (mother) and gender**

Variable	Male		Female		T	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Perceived Dysfunctional Parenting (mother)	8.6	5.3	10.4	8.8	-1.04	>.05
Indifference (mother)	1.3	1.9	2.5	4.2	-2.1	< .05*
Abuse (mother)	2.9	2.2	2.6	3.5	.43	>.05
Over control (mother)	4.4	2.6	5.2	2.5	-1.4	>.05

Note. significant at \*0.05 level Df =118, Male=30, Female = 90

Table 5 indicate that there is no gender difference in overall perceived dysfunctional parenting style for mother. However, on subscale of indifference there is significant difference found in gender ( $t = -2.1$   $p < .05$ ).

### Hypothesis 4

There would be gender difference in the perceived dysfunctional parenting style (father).

**Table 6: Independent sample t-test for dysfunctional parenting style (father) and gender**

Variable	Male		Female		T	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Perceived Dysfunctional Parenting (father)	9.0	8.7	8.8	9.7	.06	>.05
Indifference (father)	1.5	3.9	2.8	4.8	-1.4	>.05
Abuse (father)	3.1	3.2	2.1	3.7	1.3	>.05
Over control (father)	4.2	2.8	3.8	2.5	.68	>.05

Df =118, Male=30, Female = 90

Table 6 indicate that there is no gender difference in overall perceived dysfunctional parenting style for father and in its all subscales.

### Hypothesis 5

There would be gender difference in the level of emotional intelligence.

**Table 7: Independent sample t-test for level of emotional intelligence and gender**

Variable	Male		female		T	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Emotional intelligence	119	15.6	121	19.9	-.505	>.05

Cohen's d = 0.1  
Df = 118, Male=30, Female = 90

Table 7 indicate that there is no significant gender difference in level of emotional intelligence.

### Discussions

The present study investigated the relationship between perceived dysfunctional parenting styles and their impact on young adults' emotional intelligence levels. Hypotheses 1 and 2 of the study stated that there would be a relationship between perceived dysfunctional parenting style (mother and father) and the emotional intelligence of young adults. Results indicated that perceived dysfunctional parenting styles (mother and father) and young adults' emotional intelligence are unrelated (see tables 3, 4). The results of previous studies do not support the results of the current study. Nguyen et al. (2020) reported the impact of parenting on emotional intelligence. The same results reported by Amirabadi (2011) show that parenting styles and emotional intelligence are related. A positive relationship was found between authoritative parenting style and emotional intelligence, and a negative relationship was found between permissive and authoritarian parenting style and emotional intelligence in a study conducted by Charulatha and Sinha (2023). The above studies revealed that warmth, care, and balanced parenting could lead to the development of high emotional intelligence. However, control and lack of supervision in parenting can negatively affect emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis 3 and 4 stated that there would be gender differences in perceived dysfunctional parenting styles (mother and father). Results indicated no gender difference in the variable except on the subscale of Indifference (mother), on which a significant difference was found ( $T = -2.1, p = .05$ ) between male and female participants. Mean values showed that females perceive more indifferent parenting styles of mothers than male participants (see tables 5, 6). These results are supported by a previous study by Kashif et al. (2021) who reported gender differences in mothers' parenting styles. In Pakistani culture, abuse and overcontrol are accepted behaviors of parents by children and are considered as concerns and care of parents. Moreover, mothers pay more attention to their male children as compared to female child that is why females perceive their mothers as indifferent to them.

Hypothesis 5 stated that there would be gender differences in emotional intelligence. The current study found no gender difference in the variable (see table 7). These results are supported by previous studies in which no gender difference was found in emotional intelligence (Mathibe, 2015; Mashket & Negati, 2017; Mokhleshi & Patil, 2018). At the same time, many studies indicated contradictory results. In their research, Ahmed et al. (2009) showed that males have a higher emotional intelligence than females. In a female study, Cabello et al. (2016) reported that females scored higher on the emotional intelligence scale than males. These mixed findings can depend on differences in the methodologies, instruments, and contexts used in the studies.

## Conclusion

The current study gave valuable findings regarding perceived dysfunctional parenting styles and their impact on young adults' emotional intelligence levels. Most of the results indicated a non-significant relationship between the study variables, which made the researcher think more about the risk factors contributing to young adults' emotional intelligence development. Moreover, past studies on parenting styles focused on four types of parenting suggested by Baumrind (1971), authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Numerous studies have shown that the warmth dimension of parenting is associated with high emotional intelligence (Charulatha & Sinha, 2023). Whereas the current studies focused on hostile/dysfunctional parenting, and few types of research are conducted on this aspect of parenting.

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