



Parenting Styles and Emotional Development in Pakistani Families

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ABSTRACT

Parenting is considered an important and determining factor in the emotional growth of the children in that they have an influence on the cognitive, social, and psychological development of the children. Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting styles give different environments that influence how children manage their emotions, learning to be empathetic and cope with social life. Pakistan has had its cultural values and family structure that interacts with parenting practices, and their interaction has produced distinct dynamics in an emotional development. This paper will look at the connection between parenting styles and emotional outcome in Pakistani families, and how the parental behaviors, styles of discipline, and emotional support impact in ensuring emotional regulation of children, their resilience, and general well-being of children. Through these associations, the study will educate family based interventions, educational and policies which will support healthy emotional development within Pakistani cultural norms.



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Introduction

Emotional development of children is a key factor of human development as it defines how they are able to cope with things and feelings, create relationships in the society and interact well with their surroundings. Parenting is one of the most influential elements in the emotional development and it offers immediate social and emotional background through which children are taught to comprehend and control their emotions (Baumrind, 1967; Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Parenting styles, which can be defined as the patterns of warmth, control and responsiveness as practiced by parents, have been broadly researched in regard to emotional development of children. Authoritative parenting with high warmth and reasonable control is typically related to positive emotional control, self-esteem, and social competence, whereas authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting have been found to be associated with less desirable results of anxiety, aggression, and emotional dysregulation (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Chao, 1994).

Cultural practice, religious values and family structures interact in a complex way to shape parenting practices in Pakistan. Pakistani families are on the one hand collectivist and tend to prioritize their interdependence, respect towards elderly individuals, and family unity, which defines the manifestation of parental control and emotional support (Riaz & Haider, 2020). In this framework, parents could use a combination of the traditional authoritarian methods along with the new authoritative methods, and provide different emotional experiences to children. Extended family system, being typical of Pakistani family, also leads to the emotional socialization of the child because the grandparents and other family members are involved in caregiving and disciplinary methods (Shah and Naz, 2017; Qadoos et al., 2020). As a result, the emotional growth of children in Pakistan is imprinted in a culturally unique system that suppresses the impact of the parenting styles noted in the West.

Empirical studies have repeatedly proven that parenting is valuable in developing emotional intelligence, resilience and prosocial behavior among children (Eisenberg et al., 2005; Morris et al., 2007; Hassan et al., 2024; Riaz et al., 2018). Emotional development refers to the skill of identifying and naming emotions, managing impulsive responses, empathy towards others and the capacity to have adaptive coping mechanisms when facing stressors. Children brought up in a setting of warmth, direction, and reliable discipline are more likely to have emotional competency, but those brought up in erratic or abusive parenting might have emotional regulation and social functioning problems (Pomerantz et al., 2007). The emotional needs of children can be mitigated by performance-driven expectations that Pakistani families tend to place on academic performance and obedience, and affect their ability to express their emotions and become resilient.

Socio-economic factors, parental education, and gender expectations are other bases of shaping the dynamics of emotional development. Parents who are more educated can employ the more authoritative parenting style and explain, encourage and support emotional development whereas parents encountering economic stressors can choose to employ tighter control or punitive disciplinary techniques, which affect the emotional security of children (Karim and Akhtar, 2019). Parenting practices are also shaped by gender norms; for example, it is possible to encourage boys not to express their emotions and girls to focus on empathy and relational sensitivity, as they reflect the expectations in society (Ahmed et al., 2018). The combination of these factors indicates the necessity to investigate the parenting styles and emotional development in the particular cultural, social, and financial environment of the Pakistani population.

Although the study of child development in Pakistan has gained recent attention, the empirical research studies have not yet been carried out in the direct relationships between certain parenting styles and the emotional outcomes of children. Academic achievement, behavioral adjustment, or overall psychological well-being have been of the major subject of most studies, and comparatively limited attention has been paid to the subtle mechanisms of emotional development (Hussain and Malik, 2016). The knowledge of these processes will be vital in making culturally appropriate interventions that will assist parents in nurturing their emotional growth in a healthy manner and especially in urban and rural settings where resources and awareness might vary.

The proposed study will address this gap; therefore, this research seeks to explore the relationships between parenting styles and emotional growth among Pakistani children in families. It studies the effect of differences in parental warmth, control and responsiveness on the emotional management, empathy and overall adjustment of the children. By contextualizing the study in Pakistani cultural context, the research will take into consideration, the influence of collectivist orientations, gender orientations and socio-

economic influences in parenting practices and emotional outcomes. It is believed that the findings will aid the accumulation of literature in the field of parenting and child development as well as benefit the parents, educators and policymakers with regards to improving the emotional well-being of Pakistani children.

To sum up, parenting styles play the key role in the emotional development of children since they give them the social, emotional, and cognitive scaffolding that can enable them to grow well. In Pakistan, the culturally informed parenting behaviour is intertwined with the family life, social norms, and the financial status of the family that can impact the emotional results of children. Further knowledge of such relationships can be used to inform interventions, education programs, and policies that may facilitate the development of emotionally competent and resilient children. The role of parenting styles and emotional development in the Pakistani family is therefore critical in the research of child development and the promotion of positive psychological result in culture relevant cases.

Literature Review

The styles of parenting have been widely known as a very important factor in the emotional, cognitive as well as social development of children. This achievement was seminal work by Baumrind (1967) which divided parenting into three main styles which included authoritative, authoritarian parenting as well as permissive and later it was extended by Martin and Maccoby (1983) to include one more category namely neglectful/uninvolved style. Always, authoritative parenting with warmth, responsiveness, and strict yet justifiable control is found to produce positive emotional outcomes, such as high emotional regulation, empathy and social competence (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg et al., 1994). Conversely, high control, low warmth parenting style as is the case in authoritarian parenting has been associated with emotional problems including anxiety, low self-esteem, as well as inadequate coping skills (Baumrind, 1971; Chen et al., 1997). Permissive parenting, which is warm and lacks strict rules and regulations, can lead to emotional discontrol, impulsiveness, and lack of control (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Lamborn et al., 1991). Low warmth and low control or lack of control form the neglected parenting style that leads to the worst results such as emotional insecurity, social withdrawal and behavioral issues (Steinberg et al., 1994; Gershoff et al., 2010).

The studies in the developmental psychology assert that emotional development not only implies the manifestation and control of feelings but also includes the ability to empathize, be resilient, and understand others (Eisenberg et al., 2005; Denham et al., 2012). The first social setting where such emotional skills are cultivated is the parenting styles. The children who have been brought up in authoritative families also have adaptive coping skills, high self-esteem, and good relationships with peers (Baumrind, 1991; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). On the other hand, the internalization of such issues as depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal may be problematic in children subjected to authoritarian or neglectful parenting (McLeod et al., 2007; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018). Even though being warm, permissive parenting can also miss the boundaries and emotional control, which lead to externalizing behavior (aggression or frustration control problems) (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Lamborn et al., 1991).

Parenting style and the reaction of children in relation to the cultural context are influenced by it. Familial obedience, respect to elders, and interdependence are very important in collectivist societies, like Pakistan (Riaz and Haider, 2020; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003). Such cultural values affect the dominance of the authoritative behaviour and the understanding of the parental control. As an illustration, these disciplinary measures can be viewed as caring

and responsible instead of damaging some of the negative emotional effects experienced in the West (Chao, 1994; Dwairy, 2004). In the same manner, the extended family structure in Pakistan brings on board more agents of socialization, including grandparents and uncles/aunts, which can either reinforce or moderate parenting practices and also lead to the socialization of emotions in children (Shah and Naz, 2017; Qureshi, 2018).

These dynamics have been pointed out by empirical studies in Pakistan. Studies conducted by Hussain and Malik (2016) revealed that authoritative parenting has a positive relationship with emotional regulation and social competence in Pakistani children, and authoritarian parenting is related to anxiety and low emotional well-being. On the same note, Ahmed et al. (2018) established permissive parenting, regardless of its warmth, to be associated with self-regulation and coping problems during stress. These consequences are also framed by gender norms; boys tend to have more limitations to their emotional expression, and girls tend to be directed to be relationally sensitive and empathetic (Riaz and Haider, 2020; Karim and Akhtar, 2019). These results indicate that the two parenting style and cultural expectations interact to determine the outcome of emotional development.

The mediating variables between the parenting style and emotional outcomes are also highlighted in research as far as parental responsiveness and emotional support. According to Eisenberg et al. (2001), warmth, guidance and modeling by parents on how to emotionally respond are essential in developing empathy and self-regulation in children. When parents are depicted as being emotionally nurturing and responsive, children tend to grow up with secure attachment styles, greater self-esteem, and greater emotional coping abilities (Morris et al., 2007; Thompson and Meyer, 2007). In contrast, the inability to show emotions even in the organized families can result in emotional insecurity and problems in peer and family relationships (Bowlby, 1982; Granot and Mayseless, 2001).

A number of researches have also investigated how socioeconomic status and the education level of parents influence emotional development. Parental education is related to authoritative parenting and higher emotional coaching, which leads to improved emotional outcomes (Bornstein and Bradley, 2014; Putnick et al., 2015). It is true that families under economic stress can have more authoritative or punitive practices that have negative implications on the emotional adjustment of children and predisposes them to anxiety and depression (Conger et al., 1994; McLoyd, 1998). These results are particularly applicable in the Pakistani context where the socio-economic differences impact the parenting behavior and access to favorable environments of children (Karim and Akhtar, 2019; Qureshi, 2018).

Another theory that can be put forward to explain the connection between parenting and emotional development is the attachment theory. Sensitive and responsive parenting leads to secure attachment, which is associated with greater emotional competence, empathy and social adjustment (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Thompson, 2008). Emotional dysregulation, low self-esteem and relationship problems are linked to the insecure attachment which may be due to inconsistent, neglectful or over-controlling parenting (Sroufe, 2005; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). Pakistani families have collectivist values that focus on the interdependence of families, which makes the attachment processes depend not only on parents but also on the extended families, thereby affecting the emotional security and coping styles of children (Shah and Naz, 2017).

Emotional socialization research has also placed an emphasis on emotionally-related practice of the parent, such as coach, discussion, and modeling of emotional responses. Children whose parents value discussing emotions and modeling the ability to express and regulate them, as well as show empathy, have better skills of understanding and regulating their

emotions (Gottman et al., 1996; Denham et al., 2007). On the other hand, dismissive and punitive styles on emotion interfere with the building of emotional competence and predispose the occurrence of internalizing issues (Eisenberg et al., 1998; McElwain and Halberstadt, 2008). Parental stress on obedience and emotional control can reduce the ability to express their emotions freely in Pakistani families, which is important in determining emotional development (Riaz and Haider, 2020; Shah and Naz, 2017).

Besides, the results of cross cultural research indicate that parenting styles have different impacts on individuals based on societal expectations and norms. In collectivist situations, it is possible that authoritative parenting does not have consistently positive results when it is at variance with normative demands of rank and obedience (Chao, 1994; Dwaire, 2004). Equally, authoritarian approaches can be less decimental in the culture where parental strictness is culturally approved and is accompanied by nurturing and engagement (Chao, 1994; Sorkhabi, 2005). These results emphasize the fact that strategies used to assess the impact of parenting on emotional development should be culturally sensitive.

Lastly, the recent studies point to the overlap of parenting styles, digital media, and emotional regulation. The use of social media among children and adolescents is growing, which affects the emotional reactions and socialization. Combination styles of guidance, monitoring, and emotional support can mitigate adverse emotional effects of digital exposure, and permissive or neglectful parenting can increase emotional difficulties (Livingstone and Helsper, 2008; Valkenburg et al., 2013). Pakistani settings, in which internet access and smartphone use are experiencing swift expansion, it is essential to comprehend the ways that parenting intersects the realm of the digital world to facilitate emotional competence.

On the whole, the sources show that parenting styles have a strong impact on the emotional development of children. Authoritarianism in parenting tends to lead to adaptive emotional development in children, and authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful approaches are likely to expose children to emotional challenges. An additional moderation of these relationships exists in cultural norms, socio-economic variables, parental education, attachment pattern, and engagement in digital media. Parenting practices and emotional outcomes in Pakistani families are determined by the collectivist values, the importance of extended family, and gender expectations, which underscores the significance of context-specific studies (Hussain and Malik, 2016; Shah and Naz, 2017; Riaz and Haider, 2020). The dynamics can only be understood in a bid to design interventions, educational programs and policy initiatives promoting emotional competence and resilience among Pakistani children.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in this study was quantitative studies since it aimed at investigating the connection between parenting styles and emotional development among Pakistani families. The main goal was to identify the impacts of the various parenting styles as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful to the emotional regulation, empathies, and general social-emotional competence of the children. The correlational survey design was applied to gather data to give a picture of the relationship between parenting style and the outcome of emotions at one point in time.

Population and Sample

This research study included families that lived in major urban centers in Islamabad as the population. The participants were selection of parents and their children in the age bracket of

10-18. A convenience sampling method was used to pick a sample of 300 participants who had a mix of socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels and family setups. Both males and females were used to ensure that various fathers and mothers give different perspectives about parenting habits and how they thought they impact the emotional growth of children.

Data Collection Instruments.

They were gathered through the standardized self-report questionnaires pre-tested to suit the Pakistani setting. The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) was used to measure parenting styles as it examines authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting practices created by Robinson et al. (1995). The scale of neglectful parenting was based on the items that were modified according to Parental Neglect Scale (Straus et al., 1998). The Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI)- Youth Version was used to determine the level of emotional development in children based on the emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and emotional empathy (Saarnio, 1999). All the instruments were translated into Urdu and pilot-tested with a small sample of 30 people to be sure that the instruments were clear, cultural, and reliable.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical principles of the research involving human subjects were observed. Parents were informed about the purpose and gave their consent, children were informed and gave assent. Respondents were provided with the guarantee of the confidentiality of their answers and were informed about their freedom of leaving the study at any point without punishment.

Data Analysis

The SPSS v26 and AMOS v26 were used to conduct data analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM). The descriptive statistics were calculated to analyze the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions of the variables. A correlation analysis was conducted to help in the determination of initial relationships between parenting styles and dimensions of emotional development. Cronbach alpha was estimated to determine the internal consistency of the scales and values more than 0.70 were satisfactory. They then used SEM to test the hypothesized model and investigate the direct and indirect roles of parenting styles on the outcomes of emotional development of children. This design was able to give a detailed picture of the complicated connections among the variables and was able to hold other possible confounding variables like socioeconomic status and parental education at bay.

Rigor and Reliability

The methodology was very rigorous because of reliability checks, pilot tests and culturally relevant instruments that yielded sound data to investigate the role of parenting styles on emotional development in Pakistani families. The study sample of 300 was considered adequate to conduct the analysis of SEM, as this sample can be statistically powerful and generalized to the targeted population.

Data Analysis and Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The research received 300 answers. Of these 160 (53.3) were male children, and 140 (46.7) were female children. The age of children was between 10 and 18 years with a mean age of 14.2 years (SD = 2.6). The educational education of the parents was mixed: 20 percent of them had secondary education, 45 percent undergraduate education and 35 percent

postgraduate education. The socioeconomic status was recorded to be 30 low, 40 middle, and 30 high.

A summary of the demography is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	160	53.3
	Female	140	46.7
Age	10–13	90	30.0
	14–16	130	43.3
	17–18	80	26.7
Parental Education	Secondary	60	20.0
	Undergraduate	135	45.0
	Postgraduate	105	35.0
Socioeconomic Status	Low	90	30.0
	Middle	120	40.0
	High	90	30.0

The overall analysis of the primary research variables revealed that the description of authoritative parenting had a mean of 3.92 (SD = 0.65), authoritarian parenting 3.41 (SD = 0.72), permissive parenting 3.05 (SD = 0.68), and neglectful parenting 2.71 (SD = 0.70). The level of emotional development among the children was relatively high (mean of the 3.88 SD of 0.61), indicating that the children overall reported positive emotional results.

Correlation Analysis

Parenting styles were associated with emotional development in children, and Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationships.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Authoritative	1.00				
2. Authoritarian	-0.42**	1.00			
3. Permissive	-0.21**	0.31**	1.00		
4. Neglectful	-0.48**	0.36**	0.29**	1.00	
5. Emotional Development	0.57**	-0.44**	-0.25**	-0.51**	1.00

Note: **p < 0.01

The correlation analysis has shown that authoritative parenting has a positive relationship with the emotional developments in children ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$), whereas authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting are negatively related to the emotional developments in children. The association with Neglectful parenting is the most negative ($r = -0.51$, $p < 0.01$), which explains why active and nurturing parenting is crucial to building emotional competence.

Multiple Regression Analysis.

The predictive impact of parenting styles on emotional development of children was also established through a multiple regression analysis taking the age, gender, and socioeconomic status into consideration.

Table 3: Coefficients of Regression that predict Emotional Development.

Predictor	B	SE	β	t-value	p-value
Authoritative	0.34	0.05	0.41	6.80	<0.001
Authoritarian	-0.28	0.06	-0.32	-4.67	<0.001
Permissive	-0.15	0.05	-0.18	-3.00	0.003
Neglectful	-0.31	0.06	-0.36	-5.17	<0.001
Age (Control)	0.04	0.02	0.06	1.20	0.230
Gender (Control)	0.05	0.03	0.07	1.67	0.096
Socioeconomic Status	0.08	0.03	0.11	2.67	0.008

According to the results of regression, authoritative parenting proves to be the best positive predictor of emotional development of children ($b = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), whereas neglectful and authoritarian parenting are the strongest negative predictors. There is also negative prediction of emotional development with permissive parenting although at a lower scale. The only control variable that was positively but significantly influenced was the socioeconomic status.

SEM Structural Equation Modeling

SEM analysis was done with AMOS 26 to determine the direct and indirect implications of parenting style on emotional development. All the four parenting styles were taken as independent variables in the hypothesized model, and emotional development as the dependent variable. Indicators of a good fit included the use of model fit indices, which are $\chi^2/df = 2.12$, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94 and RMSEA = 0.046.

Table 4: SEM Path Coefficients

Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	SE	t-value	p-value
Authoritative → Emotional Development	0.42	0.05	6.85	<0.001
Authoritarian → Emotional Development	-0.33	0.06	-5.00	<0.001
Permissive → Emotional Development	-0.18	0.05	-3.20	0.002
Neglectful → Emotional Development	-0.36	0.06	-5.40	<0.001

SEM results confirm the regression results in which authoritative parenting has a positive impact on emotional development, whereas authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parenting have a major negative impact.

Exploratory Analysis: Gender Differences

The independent sample t-tests were used to test the differences between genders in the emotional development. There were also slight differences in the emotional development of female children (Mean = 3.94) than the males (Mean = 3.82, $t = 2.10$, $p < 0.05$), which showed that there were small variations in gender.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings have shown that the parenting style is a major determinant of emotional development in children. The most helpful one is authoritative that is associated with warmth, responsiveness, and guidance, and the earlier research supports the claim that it has a positive influence on socio-emotional competence (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Conversely, neglectful and authoritarian parenting are harmful which is likely as a result of the absence of support, too much control or the absence of guidance. The consequences of permissive parenting are also negative and they indicate lack of structure and boundaries.

Gender and socioeconomic are not that powerful and this implies that emotional development is largely determined by the parenting behaviors and not the demographics. In general, the results of this study indicate the significance of nurturing, structured, and responsive parenting in developing emotions, empathy, and social competence in children in Pakistani families.

Discussion

The results of this research show clearly that parenting styles are also very significant to emotional development of children in Pakistani families. The most notable positive predictor was authoritative parenting, which focuses on the fact that warmth, responsiveness, and constant direction are the essential factors of the development of emotional competence. Children who were subjected to authoritative parents showed more empathy, emotional control and social comprehension, which was in line with the previous study by Baumrind (1991) and Maccoby and Martin (1983). These findings demonstrate that the positive parent-child relationships based on supportive communication with strict but rational boundaries contribute to the ability of children to cope with social and emotional difficulties in an effective way.

Authoritarian and neglectful parenting, on the other hand, were found to be strongly related with negative emotional outcomes of children. Parenting that is characterized by authoritarianism which is full of strict control and less responsiveness can impair the independence of the children and the emotional expression of the child which leads to reduction in emotional intelligence. Lack of attention, guidance, and support in the form of neglectful parenting revealed the highest correlation of negative relation, which demonstrates that the role of parental involvement is critical in emotional development. The lack of emotional development was also the negative effect of the permissive parenting, although to a lesser extent which means that lack of structure and guidance might also hamper the child in terms of the ability to control the emotions and also in terms of making ethical choices.

The authors also examined such demographic moderators as gender and socioeconomic status. The level of emotional development showed a little higher score among female children as compared to their male counterparts, which implies that the process of socialization can be more prone to make girls more sensitive emotionally, which is in line with previous research (King and Boyatzis, 2004). The socioeconomic status made a small but significant impact on the emotional outcome meaning that resource and educational accessibility could serve to augment the influence of positive parenting on the emotional outcome. These factors were however kept at a secondary position to the parenting style and this highlights the superior position of parental behavior on the demographic variables.

Generally, the results support theoretical views that attract attention to the multidimensionality of emotional development. Parenting styles do give a direct behavioral instruction as well as indirect opportunities to learn socially which contribute to the way children are able to regulate their emotions, empathize and social competence (Hoffman, 2000; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Given the specifics of the Pakistani society, in which extended family structures and cultural beliefs have a significant impact on the ways of parenting children, the encouragement of authoritative parenting can become a decisive measure to improve the emotional status and to minimize the risks of maladaptive emotional styles.

Conclusion

This paper establishes the fact that parenting style plays an important role in the emotional growth of children in Pakistani family. In terms of encouraging emotional competencies, empathy, and social competencies, authoritative parenting, which is warm and responsive and structured, is the most useful. On the other hand, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles are believed to lead to poorer emotional outcomes, and the excessively controlling, permissive, or detached parenting can be rather risky. Although the influence of gender and socioeconomic factors is small, parental behavior and parental engagement is the most influential factor in emotional development.

The results highlight the need of parental support, effective communication and moderate punishment in promoting emotional development among children. Parents are in a position to foster a supportive atmosphere by making use of authoritative approach that will help children acquire the skills needed to manage emotional issues and build positive relationships with others. At the background of the growing mental health concern and socio-emotional challenges surrounding youth, it is important to comprehend the contribution of parenting styles as an element of modifying effective family-based interventions and educational programs.

Recommendations

Resting on the findings of the study, it is possible to offer a number of practical recommendations. First, it is necessary to promote the adoption of authoritative parenting behavior by parents, which involves a combination of warmth and explicit expectations, so that emotional competence would be developed. The positive child-rearing practices can be mentored by parenting workshops, family counseling, and community awareness programs. Second, parental engagement programs should be incorporated into schools and other educational facilities, and they should have training programs aimed at teaching parents how to complement the emotional aspects of their children at home. Third, families under the threat of neglectful or authoritative practices should be targeted by policies and social programs, and they need resources and counseling to curtail the adverse impact on the emotional outcomes of children. Lastly, additional studies are necessary to investigate cultural and geographical differences in parenting styles and emotional growth and their long-term consequences to recommend more specific intervention and family support programs.

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