Review Journal of Social Psychology & Social Works

http://socialworksreview.com

**ISSN-E:** 3006-4724 **Volume**: 3
**ISSN-P:** 3006-4716 **Issue:** 2 (April - June, 2025)

# Parenting Styles and Their Effects on Emotional Intelligence and Identity Development in Emerging Adulthood

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.71145/rjsp.v3i2.271

## Abstract

The present paper aims to explore the impact of parenting styles on emotional intelligence and identity development among individuals in emerging adulthood. The study explained the relationship between parenting styles and the emotional and identity-related outcomes of young adults as they navigate increased self-sufficiency and psychosocial evolution. A sample of 270 university students in Pakistan was assessed using validated self-report measures, including the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale, and the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ). Statistical outcomes, including correlation and regression, discovered that authoritative parenting was positively associated with higher emotional intelligence and identity achievement. Lower emotional intelligence and identity foreclosure are linked with an authoritarian parenting style. In comparison, permissive parenting leads to mixed linkage, especially with identity diffusion and lower emotional regulation. Well, the statistical outcomes highlight the long-term effect of early parental conduct on social, emotional, and psychological functioning of emerging adults, with cultural context working as a moderating factor. This study also focused on the importance of counseling, psychoeducation, and parent training programs, especially in communist societies where parenting standards are different from those in Western cultures.

***Keywords:*** Parenting Styles, Emotional Intelligence, Identity Development, Early Adulthood, Collectivistic Culture

## Introduction

Parenting styles have always been an integral factor in raising children and adolescents. Parenting style was first defined as a steady pattern of child-nurturing behaviors that descend from parental behaviors/outcomes to their children (Baumrind, 1971). A pivotal study, in concurrence with the above results, explained the classification of four different parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). These upbringing patterns differ in their level of responsiveness and demandingness and have been critically studied for their emotional and developmental consequences (Lau et al., 2012). It has been seen in literature that an area of grave importance, linked with parenting style, is emotional intelligence (EI). EI is the aptitude of a person to recognize, comprehend, manage, and productively utilize emotions. Salovey and Mayer (1990) gave a definition of EI as either

a set of cognitive-emotional aids or a cluster of personality traits and social, emotional skills (Petrides et al., 2016; Mayer et al., 2016). EI is strongly connected with rapport building with others, performing well in an academic environment, and better mental wellbeing (Keefer et al., 2018). Early age family bonding is extremely vital for teens' emotional growth; the way parents nurture their children can have a lasting effect on how EI develops in young adults. Identity creation is another important duty for young adults to work on. As people become adults, they must think about important questions regarding their beliefs, objectives, and sense of self. These questions are very important for developing their identity (Kroger, 2017). Some people are clear about what they want to do and how to do it, while others are still unsure or try to dodge the problems. A well-formed identity has been linked to greater psychological resilience, mental clarity, and overall health (Schwartz et al., 2011). The influence of parents, especially their parenting style, is a key factor in determining how young people develop their identities (Beyers & Goossens, 2008). Parent–child interactions do not occur in a vacuum but are deeply influenced by cultural contexts. Culture shapes the goals of parenting, the strategies parents use, and the meanings attached to those strategies (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). Behaviors considered normative in one cultural context may be atypical or even inappropriate in another. For example, displays of obedience and deference to elders, such as bowing and saying "excuse me" when passing elders, are highly valued in many Asian cultures but may not carry the same meaning in Western societies. Cultural characteristics, including individuality and collectivism, provide a framework for comprehending cross-cultural variations in parenting styles (Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Although comparable parental styles may be present throughout cultures, their meanings and developmental ramifications can differ markedly. Authoritarian parenting is frequently correlated with adverse outcomes in Western environments, although it may be associated with favorable adjustment in collectivist civilizations, such as within Middle Eastern households (Dwairy, 2008). The style of parenting is a big part of how kids grow emotionally, socially, and mentally. Nonetheless, the impacts of diverse parenting approaches are not uniform and may vary considerably among cultural and ethnic groups (Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). It has been seen in African American children that they exhibit more signs of depression in the presence of their controlling and strict parents (Pezzella, 2010). On the other hand, in Asian American and Middle Eastern families, the authoritarian style of parenting has seldom correlated with positive consequences, like academic achievement and emotional management.

To understand the impact of parenting on developmental outcomes, including EI and identity, it is essential to observe the interplay between parenting style and cultural context (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). Multiple studies have increasingly highlighted that parenting style is a dynamic construct, and it affects differently according to the cultural and social situations in which it prevails (Calzada et al., 2019). Therefore, a culturally integrated understanding of parenting styles is mandatory for analyzing their impact on emerging adults' emotive and identity development. The general typology for parenting styles is termed as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or negligent, which contributes to the uphill of emotional reactivity in a certain environment as parenting behaviors manifest. Meta studies have confirmed a vigorous correlation between authoritative parenting (including warmth, responsiveness, and balanced control) and favorable developmental outcomes, and enhanced EI with a stimulated sense of identity (Pinquart, 2016; Ruiz-Hernández et al., 2019). However, research findings demonstrate significant variability among ethnic and cultural groups. Authoritative parenting is typically associated with favorable child outcomes in European American communities; however, authoritarian parenting has shown ambiguous or even positive correlations in certain non-Western environments (Shaw & Starr, 2019). These differences highlight the importance of exploratory parenting approaches regarding the child's ethnicity, culture, and psychological characteristics (Calzada et al., 2019).

Fresh literature showed the mediating effect of parental psychological conditions (anxiety, depression, and stress) on parenting conduct and, later, teens' outcomes (Hutchison et al., 2016). If parents are distressed, then it would lead to an adverse parenting style, leading to influence a teens' emotional competence and identity growth. This study focused on investigating the complex linkage between parenting style, EI, identity development, and cultural background. Daniel Goleman's innovative book, "*Emotional Intelligence*", put forth the notion of emotional intelligence (EI) into the mainstream, particularly in the fields of business, education, and leadership. Goleman emphasized that EI is the ability to identify, understand, control, and effectively execute emotions. It is vital to individual and professional achievement, commonly surpassing the predictive legitimacy of conventional intelligence assessments (Goleman et al., 2013). Since then, several studies have been conducted on the educational effects of EI, pointing out its importance for improving academic grades, emotional management, social communication, and overall health (Brackett et al., 2011; Keefer et al., 2018). Some researchers see emotionally intelligent behavior as "wise behavior" as it associates emotional and cognitive functioning (Mayer et al., 2016). Unlike typical IQ measures, EI assessments disclose people's way of using their emotional and cognitive skills in real-life scenarios, exclusively in academic and societal domains (Petrides et al., 2016). After analyzing all these skills that EI develops in person, the general population also wants to have these qualities to outshine their school grades, social bonds, and grow as a person in college.

Parallel to emotional development, identity formation is a fundamental developmental task during adolescence and young adulthood. Identity encompasses one's sense of self, values, and direction in life, and involves commitments, goals, and motivations that shape future behavior (Becht & Denissen, 2016). Young adulthood marks a critical period in which individuals engage in deeper self-exploration and strive to establish a coherent and stable identity. Marcia's (1966) identity status model and Berzonsky's (2004) identity processing styles framework have been instrumental in classifying individual differences in identity development. Yet, the determinants of these variations remain an area of active investigation. Among the factors influencing identity formation, the role of parenting has been particularly emphasized. Early familial relationships and parenting styles shape not only emotional development but also the way young people process identity-related information (Soenens et al., 2011). Sympathetic and freedom-giving parenting environments are certainly linked with more adaptive identity development and emotional competence, signifying a critical connection between EI and identity formation that initiates in the parent–child dynamic. Despite the worldwide attention on these variables, there remains a scarcity of empirical research within the Asian context. Cultural differences in parenting methodologies and emotional expression specify that results from Western cultures may not be universally applicable (Kaur & Kaur, 2019). In Pakistan, where collectivist cultural norms, familial obligations, and intergenerational impact are deep-rooted, the relationship between EI and identity development may exhibit distinctive patterns. Consequently, the present study aims to elucidate the correlation between EI and identity development among Pakistani emerging adults/students, while examining the probable impact of parenting methods on these psychological types.

The current paper aimed to investigate the association between parenting techniques and two salient psychological constructs in young adulthood: EI and identity formation. The results of this research will improve the understanding of how parenting practices affect psychological development across various sociocultural domains by inspecting these linkages within a culturally informed framework.

## Methodology

### Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between perceived parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) and emotional intelligence among emerging adults.
2. To explore the association between parenting styles and identity development.
3. To investigate the predictive role of parenting styles in determining emotional intelligence and identity development.

### Hypotheses

- Authoritative parenting will be positively associated with higher emotional intelligence and identity achievement.
- Authoritarian parenting will be positively associated with identity foreclosure and negatively associated with emotional intelligence.
- Permissive parenting will be associated with identity diffusion and lower emotional regulation components of emotional intelligence.

### Research Design & Sample

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design to explore the associations between parenting styles, emotional intelligence, and identity development. The sample included 270 university students (139 females, 131 males) aged 18 to 25 years, taken from multiple public and private universities across KP, Pakistan. Participants were selected using convenience sampling, targeting students from diverse academic backgrounds to reflect a broad representation of the emerging adult population in a collectivist context.

### Instruments

Parenting Styles were assessed using the ***Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)*** (Buri, 1991). This 30-item instrument measures perceived parenting behaviors across three dimensions; authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Responses are given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Subscale reliability in this study ranged from .72 to .83.

***The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSREI)*** (Schutte et al., 1998) was used to assess emotional intelligence. It consists of 33 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale covers dimensions such as emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy. Cronbach's alpha was .89 for the current sample.

***The Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ)*** (Balistreri et al., 1995) was employed to measure identity exploration and commitment across multiple life domains. The 32 items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale. Identity statuses were inferred based on the patterns of exploration and commitment scores. Internal consistency values for exploration and commitment were .78 and .81, respectively.

### Procedure

Data was collected via online survey platforms, including Google Forms, distributed through academic mailing lists and student groups on social media. Participants first viewed an informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and right to withdraw at any time. The survey took approximately 20–25 minutes to complete.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the host university before data collection. Participants were informed of their rights, and digital informed consent

was collected. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. No identifying information was gathered, and data was stored securely for research purposes only.

## Results

**Table 1** *Descriptive Statistics and Reliability for Study Variables (N = 270)*

| Variables | Mean (*M*) | *SD* | Min | Max | Cronbach's α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Authoritative Parenting | 3.87 | 0.56 | 2.40 | 4.90 | .83 |
| Authoritarian Parenting | 2.74 | 0.61 | 1.60 | 4.50 | .78 |
| Permissive Parenting | 3.11 | 0.59 | 1.90 | 4.60 | .72 |
| Emotional Intelligence (EI) | 121.6 | 14.8 | 85 | 160 | .89 |
| Identity Exploration | 4.02 | 0.63 | 2.50 | 5.80 | .78 |
| Identity Commitment | 3.91 | 0.67 | 2.30 | 5.70 | .81 |

**Note.** *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation.

All scales showed acceptable internal consistency (α > .70). On average, participants reported moderately high levels of authoritative parenting and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence had the highest internal reliability (α = .89), indicating strong consistency in responses.

**Table 2** *Correlations among Parenting Styles, Emotional Intelligence, and Identity Dimensions (N = 270)*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Authoritative Parenting | — | | | | | |
| 2. Authoritarian Parenting | -.32*** | — | | | | |
| 3. Permissive Parenting | .18** | .12 | — | | | |
| 4. Emotional Intelligence | .46*** | -.32*** | -.19* | — | | |
| 5. Identity Exploration | .41*** | -.21** | .05 | .39*** | — | |
| 6. Identity Commitment | .39*** | -.28*** | -.09 | .42*** | .60*** | — |

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

Authoritative parenting was significantly positively correlated with emotional intelligence, identity exploration, and identity commitment, while authoritarian parenting was negatively correlated with these variables. Permissive parenting was weak but significantly negatively related to emotional intelligence and positively related to identity diffusion. These findings support the hypothesized differential relationships between parenting styles and socioemotional outcomes.

**Table 3** *Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Emotional Intelligence and Identity Development from Parenting Styles (N = 270)*

| Outcome Variables | Predictors | β | *t* | *p* | $R^2$ | *F*(3, 266) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emotional Intelligence | Authoritative | .38 | 6.92 | < .001 | .20 | 22.34*** |
| | Authoritarian | -.25 | -4.54 | < .001 | | |
| | Permissive | -.08 | -1.47 | .14 | | |
| Identity Achievement | Authoritative | .35 | 6.08 | < .001 | .18 | 19.76*** |
| Identity Foreclosure | Authoritarian | .31 | 5.32 | < .01 | .15 | 16.12*** |
| Identity Diffusion | Permissive | .24 | 3.88 | < .01 | .10 | 9.64** |

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

Authoritative parenting emerged as a significant positive predictor of both emotional intelligence and identity achievement, supporting its role in adaptive psychosocial

development. Authoritarian parenting significantly predicted lower emotional intelligence and higher identity foreclosure. Permissive parenting significantly predicted identity diffusion but was not a significant predictor of emotional intelligence. These models accounted for 10% to 20% of the variance in the respective outcome variables.

**Discussion**

The present study aimed to examine the effect of parenting styles on emotional intelligence (EI) and identity development in emerging adults aged 18–25 in Pakistan. The findings offer empirical support for the differential role of parenting styles in shaping socioemotional and identity-related outcomes during a critical developmental period. The results strongly supported Hypothesis 1. Authoritative parenting was a significant positive predictor of both EI and identity achievement. This aligns with prior research emphasizing the adaptive nature of authoritative parenting, which combines warmth, responsiveness, and consistent discipline (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Hoskins, 2014). Emerging adults who perceived their parents as authoritative reported higher EI, suggesting that such environments may cultivate emotional awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills, core dimensions of EI (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The association with identity achievement also resonates with Erikson's (1968) theory, where identity formation is central to adolescence and emerging adulthood. In authoritative households, young adults are likely to receive support in exploring options and committing to values, thereby facilitating both identity exploration and commitment (Crocetti, 2017). These findings extend cross-cultural applicability to collectivist societies like Pakistan, where familial influence remains strong in early adulthood (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Moreover, the relationship may reflect culturally adaptive parenting variations, where authoritative behaviors are adjusted to match the local value systems (Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). In the Pakistani context, supportive parental involvement, when perceived as non-coercive, may help emerging adults manage psychosocial transitions such as increased autonomy, career uncertainty, and social role exploration.

The second hypothesis has been statistically proven. Authoritarian parenting displayed a considerable negative correlation with EI and a positive correlation with identity foreclosure. In line with existing literature, authoritarian parenting, noted as the elevated demands and reduced responsiveness, which appears to deter the development of emotional competencies owing to its repressive and controlling environment (Sahithya et al., 2019). This approach often limits emotional expression and autonomy, leading to poor self-awareness and ineffective subjective regulation. The connection to identity foreclosure indicates a tendency for individuals to adopt roles and ideals without sufficient examination, rapidly. Authoritarian parents/guardians frequently prioritize compliance and obedience, therefore limiting opportunities for self-exploration (Luyckx et al., 2008). This is especially happening in a collectivist domestic setting where parental authority is hardly challenged (Kauser & Pinquart, 2020). The disciplinary behavior of authoritarian parents often directs to an external locus of control, which adversely impacts the emotional resilience and adaptive functioning of young adults (Rauf et al., 2023). These findings indicate the conceivable risk of authoritarian parenting in enhancing identity confusion and socio-emotional trials, despite its prevalent cultural normalization in various non-Western countries.

The results showed partial support for the third Hypothesis. Permissive parenting showed a notable association with identity diffusion, though it doesn't serve as a dominating predictor of EI generally. These findings correlate with the statistical outcomes of current data, indicating that permissive parenting (having traits like increased warmth combined with poor discipline and structure) may deter goal-oriented identity formation (Baumrind, 1991). Without

appropriate boundaries, developing adults do face challenges in goal obligation and identity coherence, hence enhancing the likelihood of diffusion (Kroger et al., 2010). The negative link between permissive parenting and EI did not achieve statistical significance in regression analysis. This suggests that emotionally permissive atmospheres may foster expressiveness but fail to offer the essential framework for emotional regulation and control (Miller et al., 2013). Developing EI probably needs a balance between letting teens be fully expressive with their emotions and giving them a pathway, which permissive parents may not be able to provide.

This outcome is significant within the context of a collectivist society. In Pakistani society, characterized by a more hierarchical family structure and expectations, permissiveness may lead to role confusion and challenges in conforming to societal norms (Nisar et al., 2021). It may also foster dependency or detachment, both of which impede healthy identity development.

**Implications**

The statistical outcomes confirmed the theoretical basis of Baumrind's parenting model and Erikson's psychosocial theory in a non-Western culture. Importantly, the study demonstrates that parenting continues to exert a lasting influence into emerging adulthood, a stage often under-researched in developmental psychology (Arnett, 2015).

These findings have implications for counseling, education, and parent training interventions in collectivist cultures. Programs that promote authoritative parenting practices, like setting clear expectations while maintaining warmth and responsiveness, could enhance EI and support identity development. Interventions must be culturally sensitive, recognizing the normative role of parental authority while promoting youth agency.

**Limitations and Future Recommendations**

Several limitations should be noted. First, reliance on self-report measures may introduce social desirability bias. Second, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine developmental trajectories across time. Additionally, future research should consider the moderating role of gender, socioeconomic status, and urban rural differences. Qualitative methods could further explore how cultural narratives shape parenting perceptions and identity formation.

**Conclusion**

This study contributes to a growing body of literature on parenting and emerging adulthood by demonstrating that authoritative parenting fosters emotional intelligence and identity achievement, while authoritarian and permissive styles may hinder these outcomes. In collectivist contexts like Pakistan, where familial ties remain central, the enduring impact of early parenting on young adult development underscores the need for culturally grounded family interventions and support systems.

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