

## Impact of Perceived Parenting Style on the Attachment Style of Adults in a Romantic Relationship

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### ABSTRACT

The research focuses on exploring the impact of perceived parenting style on the attachment style of adults engaged in a romantic relationship. Specifically, it investigates the individual's perception of their mother's parenting style during childhood influences the development of attachment patterns in adulthood within the setting of romantic relationships. The study emphasises determining the association between different dimensions of parenting style (Authoritative, Authoritarian and permissive) and Attachment styles (close, depend, anxious) manifested by adults in their romantic relationships. The sample comprises 150 adults aged between 21 to 30 years from the Delhi-NCR region who were in romantic relationships. The study employed a convenience sampling technique to select participants and used scales like the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Revised Adult Attachment Scale (AASR). The data was analyzed using Pearson's Correlation on IBM SPSS. After analysing the data it was found that there was a partial significant correlation between Perceived parenting style and Adult attachment style.

**Keywords:** *Parenting Style, Attachment Style, Adult, Romantic Relationship*

The present study focuses on understanding the attachment style of adults in a romantic relationship and its correlation with perceived parenting style. Review various research techniques and results used by the researcher to discover a correlation between the two variables used i.e. perceived parenting style and attachment style. This information will help in providing a basis for the hypothesis in finding whether there is a correlation between how one perceives the parenting they received and the effect it had on the formulation of their adult attachment style.

Among The Indian urban youth, individualism and autonomy are growing. There are fewer restrictive social norms and more visibility of non-arranged romantic relationships in Modern India (Gala and Kapadia in Psychol Dev Soc,2014). Establishing and maintaining relationships, accompanied by the goal of finding a long-term partner, are pivotal aspects of emerging adulthood (Mayseless and Keren in Emerg Adulthood, 2014).

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Romantic connections are chief familial links determining well-being during the life course. A high-quality romantic relationship has various advantages (Laursen, 1995). For example, relationships may add value to one's life. According to Connolly and Konarski (1994) and Harter (1999), personal and reciprocal relationships between couples foster a sense of belonging and enhance self-worth by making the individuals in a relationship feel wanted. Research indicates that high-quality connections increase confidence, self-esteem, and social skills (Pearce et al., 2002; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2001).

Parenting has always been a piece of work that has been long-debated and still disputed (nature-nurture dichotomy). Parenting has generally been considered a key source of "environmental" diversity (Bernier, 2016). In context with culture, parenting has always been perceived as a fundamental building block towards building the family.

### ***Perceived parenting styles***

The perceived parenting style employed to raise a kid will most likely influence that child's future success in romantic, peer, and parental relationships. Diana Baumrind, a clinical and developmental psychologist, coined the following perceived parenting styles: authoritative/authoritarian, and permissive/indulgent.

Research has shown that Perceived parenting style refers to how parents assist their children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth from infancy to maturity. The American Psychological Association states that parenting approaches worldwide aim to prioritize children's health and safety, prepare them for adulthood, and instil cultural values. (APA, 2018)

Sears et al. (1957) identified a love-oriented parenting style in which mothers used warmth, praise, and emotional attachment to respond to their children's behaviours, followed by withdrawal. The object-oriented parenting method involves mothers using physical items like toys or additional playtime to respond to their children's conduct. Sears et al. (1957) discovered that some punishment approaches had a distinct impact on children's absorption of their parents' ideals.

According to Baumrind (1978), authoritative parents are friendly, and sensitive, and encourage their children to pursue their interests. These parents have high expectations for their children's maturity, which they cultivate through bidirectional communication, explanations of conduct, and promotion of independence. Parents may rationalize their children's behaviours and priorities, such as "it will allow you to succeed as an adult." Maccoby and Martin (1983)

Baumrind (1978) found out authoritarian parents lack warmth and responsiveness towards their children. Parents have high expectations for their children's maturity since they do not tolerate selfish or unacceptable behaviour. These parents are severe, require compliance, and use force when their children disobey. Authoritarian parenting is imposing rules and instructions on their children without explaining the reasoning behind them.

The authoritarian perceived parenting style has acquired a negative significance in Western literature, primarily because of the negative child and adolescent outcomes frequently associated with it. Perceived parenting styles among Asian parents (in particular, Chinese parents) have been variously described as "authoritarian", "controlling", "restrictive" and "hostile" (Lin & Fu, 1990; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992)

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Baumrind (1978), permissive parents are somewhat receptive to their children's needs, with some being more responsive than others. These parents have low expectations for their children's maturity and tolerance for misbehaving. When it comes to socializing their children, permissive parents are typically contemptuous and uninterested.

### ***Attachment style***

The theory of attachment is now being utilized as an approach to studying relationships between romantic partners. Attachment theory originally had been studied to explain the needs and behaviours between caregivers and their infants. John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Bretherton, 1992) developed the theory of attachment. Bowlby and Ainsworth discovered that there is more that a caregiver provides to an infant than basic needs. There are three main styles of attachment i.e. secure, avoidant and anxious/ambivalent. The attachment style infants have with their caregivers characterises people throughout their entire lives.

Shaver and Mikulincer characterize adult attachment style as "systematic patterns of anticipation, needs, emotions, emotion-regulation strategies, and social behaviour" in intimate relationships (2002, p. 134). Adult attachment style is very influential in one's life: many researchers have found associations between adult attachment style and social functioning (Sheinbaum et al., 2015), maternal caregiving behaviour (Selcuk et al., 2010), emotional intelligence (Samadi & Pour, 2013), mental health (Widom et al., 2018), and the intergenerational transmission of psychopathology (Guttman-Steinmetz & Crowell, 2006), among other things.

**Secure attachment style** The Quality of caregiving is sensitive and loving. Individuals with a secure attachment style are more readily able to form long-lasting and healthy relationships with others. They're more likely to trust their partners and become emotionally available to them (Dr Derrig, 2022).

**Anxious attachment style** Quality of caregiving is insensitive and rejective. An anxious attachment style is a form of insecure attachment that forms between a baby and an inconsistent caregiver. A partner with an anxious attachment style can be occupied with concerns that their loved one will abandon them, they may seek constant reassurance that they're safe in their relationship. According to Kranenburg and IJzendoorn 2009, 19% of adults have an anxious attachment style.

**Avoidant attachment style** the quality of caregiving is insensitive and inconsistent. Adults with an avoidant attachment style can be seen as self-reliant and emotionally guarded. They're unlikely to seek emotional comfort or understand how to conform to their partner. According to Kranenburg and IJzendoorn 2009, 23% of adults have an avoidant attachment style.

According to Connolly and Konarski (1994) and Harter (1999), personal and reciprocal relationships between couples can foster a sense of belonging and boost self-worth by making both persons feel wanted. Research indicates that high-quality relationships are linked to increased confidence, self-esteem, and social skills (Pearce et al., 2002; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2001).

Ketterson and Blustein investigated the influence of parent-adolescent attachment in career exploration. Although it does not explicitly address romantic relationships, it emphasizes the

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need for stable attachments with parents in the developmental processes of young people, which may indicate comparable impacts on romantic attachments (Ketterson & Blustein, 1997).

### *Operational Definition:*

- **Perceived Parenting style:** The term conveys the views of adults about their parental behaviour during their childhood when they were growing up.
- **Romantic Relationship:** Individuals acknowledge ongoing voluntary interactions commonly marked by expression of affection, love and intimacy.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Aim:*

The study aims to investigate the Impact of perceived parenting style on the attachment style of adults involved in a romantic relationship. Specifically, the study aims to examine the association between perceived parenting styles and attachment styles of adults in a romantic relationship.

### *Objectives:*

To Examine the Relationship Between Perceived Parenting Style and Adult Attachment Style.

### *Hypothesis.*

**H1:** There is a significant correlation between the perceived parenting style and attachment style of adults in romantic relationships.

### *Variables*

- **Independent Variable:** Perceived parenting style
- **Dependent variable:** Attachment style in adults

### *Sampling design*

For the study, 150 Adults aged 21-30 years who were in a romantic relationship were chosen from the Delhi- NCR region. The sample consisted of boys (n 1 = 33) and girls (n 2 =77). Equal stratification was done based on individual engagement in a romantic relationship. The sample was selected using a convenience sampling technique where the easily available adults were included in the study.

### *Inclusion criteria*

- Adults within the age range of 21-30 years.
- Adults who are in a romantic relationship.
- Mothers' parenting style is considered.
- Adults who are residents of Delhi NCR region.

### *Exclusion Criteria*

- Individuals below the age of 21 and above the age of 30 years.
- Adults with impairment or disability.
- Adults who live outside Delhi NCR region.
- Only mothers' parenting style is considered.

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### Research Design

The study used quantitative research methodology. In which data was collected through a survey. The purpose of the research study is to assess the impact of perceived parenting style on the attachment style of adults in a romantic relationship. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their names and responses. Then initially 150 participants were selected who met the criteria of being in a romantic relationship from the Delhi- NCR region.

The tool Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and revised Adult Attachment Scale (AAS-R) were distributed through various social media platforms in the format of google forms as well as in person, the data collected online and offline are equally distributed with the distribution and circulation of survey forms, a set of guidelines was also sent to ensure that the data is authentic and trustable for the research. They were asked to fill out the survey form having a total of 48 questions 30 from the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) AND 18 FROM the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (AAS-R). The participants voluntarily participated in the research. The obtained data were scored, tabulated, and put to statistical treatment.

### Tools

**Parental Authority Questionnaire(PAQ):** The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) was created by Buri in 1991. It has 30 items in it that are designed to determine the parents' disciplinary practices perceived by their adult children. PAQ has three subscales namely permissive, authoritative and authoritarian. Each subscale has 10 items for which the scoring goes from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree through five stages (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The highest score in a category is 50. A high score on the subscale reveals the parent's inclined approach toward that parenting method.

**Adult Attachment Scale revised (AASR)** The 18-item Adult Attachment Scale, developed with a sample of undergraduate students, measures adult attachment style dimensions including comfort with closeness and intimacy (Close subscale), comfort with depending on others (Depend subscale), and worry about being rejected or unloved (Anxiety subscale). Each item is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = not at all characteristic to 5 = very characteristic.

### Data Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) is used to analyse the data collected in this research. The data obtained from the questionnaire are entered into SPSS to be analysed. Pearson correlation is used to determine the relationship between Parenting style(independent variable ) and attachment style (dependent variable ).

## RESULT

**Table 1: Correlation between perceived parenting style and adult attachment style subscale.**

Parenting Style	Close Attachment	Depend Attachment	Anxious Attachment
Permissive	-.012	.142	-.158
Authoritarian	-.212**	-.240**	.289**
Authoritative	.014	.056	-.057

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level(2-tailed).

**Table 2: Correlation between perceived parenting style and adult attachment style.**

Parenting Style	Attachment Style (Sig.)
Permissive	.011 (ns)
Authoritarian	.225** (**)
Authoritative	.022 (ns)

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level(2-tailed).

The result was obtained after statistically analysing the data. the numerical values are shown in Table 1. The H1 hypothesis predicted that there would be a significant correlation between the perceived parenting style and the adult attachment style of adults in a romantic relationship. We obtain the correlation between the variables through Pearson correlation statistical analysis. The following are the results obtained.

Permissive parenting style has a non-significant weak negative correlation with the close attachment style subscale (-.012) and a non-significant weak positive correlation of (.142) with the depend attachment style subscale and a weak statistically non-significant negative correlation of (-.158) with the anxious attachment style subscale.

Authoritarian parenting style has a significant negative correlation with the attachment style subscale (-.212;  $p < 0.01$ ) and depends on the attachment subscale (-.240;  $p < 0.01$ ), however, there is a significant positive correlation with the anxious attachment style subscale (0.289;  $p < 0.01$ ). According to Collins, N. L., & Read, S. J. (1990) the score on the close and depend attachment subscale suggests a potential possible leaning towards an anxious or avoidant attachment style.

Authoritative parenting style has a non-significant correlation with the close attachment subscale (.014), depend attachment subscale (.056) and anxious attachment subscale (-.057). Based on the result it is uncertain to determine one attachment style since there is a non-significant correlation with close and depend and anxious attachment style subscale.

Table 2 determines the overall correlation between attachment styles (secure, anxious, avoidant) and Perceived parenting styles (Authoritative, Authoritarian and Permissive). The attachment styles in the given table were coded for data analysis. Based on the statistical data given in the table there is a non – significant correlation between Permissive parenting style and attachment style (.011), a non -significant correlation between Authoritative parenting style and attachment styles (.022) and a strong significant correlation between Authoritarian parenting style and Attachment style (.225,  $P < 0.01$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The present study is conducted to examine how perceived parenting style impacts the attachment style of adults in a romantic relationship. Research by Hammonds et al. suggests that parental relationships likely influence attachment styles, which is critical in self-disclosure within long-distance romantic relationships (Hammonds et al., 2020). It supports the idea that early parental attachment could affect communication patterns in adult romantic relationships.

Table 1 presents the correlation between perceived parenting style (permissive, authoritarian, authoritative) and attachment style subscales (close, depend, anxious). Beginning with permissive parenting, the table suggests a very weak correlation of -.012

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with close attachment and a weak positive correlation with depend attachment (.142) which might indicate a slight comfort with depending on others and a belief that others will be available for them when needed (Collins, N.L., & Read, S.J,1990), Contrarily there is a weak negative correlation with anxious attachment(-.158) which suggests that individuals having permissive parenting style shows slightly lower levels of anxious attachment style. Also, a study done by Millings et al. (2013), found that levels of anxious attachment in romantic relationships are linked with a permissive parenting style.

Individuals with authoritarian perceived parenting styles according to Table 1 show a moderate negative correlation with close and depend attachment styles, suggesting that individuals with authoritarian parenting styles are less likely to form a close attachment style and may exhibit depend attachment style, The Authoritarian parenting style is neither warm nor responsive, Authoritarian parenting demands obedience, and asserts power on children when they don't function according to them, hence proven by many studies how this parenting style hurt children's attachment development, Thompson, Lamb and Estes(1973) conducted a study to analyse the effects of parental control on child development and found out that children raised in authoritarian households tend to have lower levels of emotional closeness.

As shown in Table 1 the findings suggest a strong positive correlation with anxious attachment style, according to a study conducted by Hatamny et al. (2011), the finding shows that there is a significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and anxious attachment style. Further, Maccoby and Martin (1983) investigated the effects of different types of parenting styles on child outcomes and found that authoritarian parenting is associated with a lower level of autonomy and agency, which indicates a moderate negative correlation with depend attachment style. Additionally, Barber (1996) examined the association between parenting styles and anxiety in adolescents and found that authoritarian parenting style is linked with high levels of anxiety, indicating that the adult who perceives the received parenting style as authoritarian parenting may experience high levels of anxiety and insecurity in their relationships.

For individuals who perceive their parenting style as authoritative parenting as shown in Table 1, there is no significant correlation with any subscale of attachment style (close, depend and anxious), which suggests that there is no direct correlation between authoritative parenting style and attachment styles (Table 2), A Study conducted by Jones J.D., Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P.R(2015) discusses the association between parent's self- report attachment styles and parenting. Although they highlight the link between attachment and caregivers' behaviour systems, they also emphasise the link between attachment styles and parenting is not the prime focus of attachment style researchers and various other factors like environment, genetics and social interactions can influence the attachment style of adults.

Hence Based on the statistical findings we will Partially accept the H1 Hypothesis which states that there is a significant correlation between the Perceived parenting style and attachment style of adults in a romantic relationship. The obtained significant correlation between authoritarian parenting style and attachment style provides compelling evidence in support of the hypothesis. However, it is important to acknowledge other factors that could have influenced these results and contributed to the partial acceptance of the hypothesis. The factors may include a Limited sample size along with considering cultural norms, and individual differences. The study addresses the complexities of the relationship between

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perceived parenting style and attachment style and also addresses the research gaps which can be taken for further study.

### CONCLUSION

As per the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn from the study:

- There is a strong correlation between authoritarian parenting style and attachment styles in adults.
- The study shows a partial correlation between perceived parenting style and attachment style,
- According to the result Authoritative parenting style and permissive parenting style shows a non-significant weak correlation with attachment style.
- The study explains the factors that may contribute to the development of attachment style in adults apart from perceived parenting style.
- The study has represented the accumulated data in the form of tables.
- The study aims to explain various domains of parenting and attachment styles.
- The study aims to explain the significance of parenting style and attachment style in forming a healthy romantic relationship.

### Limitations

- A lot of factors were not included in the current research study due to various conditions such as unavoidable obstacles, time constraints, and a lack of essential resources.
- The sample size of 150 may had an impact on the outcomes.
- The study was restricted to individuals who are between 21 – 30 years of age.
- Due to a lack of research based on the present study, very few evidence were included to support the study.
- The study could not include socioeconomic status.
- The parenting style of fathers was not included.
- The study could not include family size.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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