

Research Paper

The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence: An Empirical Study among Husbands and Wives

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the relationship between parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) and emotional maturity among husbands and wives. Using a correlational design, the study examined spousal alignment in emotional maturity and its association with different parenting practices. Results revealed a strong positive correlation between husbands' and wives' emotional maturity, underscoring the dyadic consistency in marital relationships. However, authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles did not demonstrate significant associations with emotional maturity for either gender. In contrast, permissive parenting by husbands showed a positive relationship with wives' emotional maturity and was strongly aligned with wives' permissive parenting. These findings suggest that while emotional maturity is strongly interdependent within couples, its influence on parenting styles is limited, with cultural and contextual factors playing a more prominent role. The results emphasize the nuanced interplay of gender, parenting roles, and emotional functioning in marital and family contexts.

Keywords: Parenting Styles, Emotional Maturity, Husbands and Wives, Gender Differences, Authoritative Parenting, Authoritarian Parenting, Permissive Parenting

Parenting is a crucial determinant of children's emotional and social development, influencing their long-term psychological well-being and interpersonal functioning. Classic typologies of parenting—authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive—have been extensively studied for their impact on children's adjustment and competence. At the same time, emotional maturity in parents is increasingly recognized as an essential factor that shapes both parenting practices and marital dynamics.

Emotional maturity refers to an individual's ability to regulate emotions, respond adaptively to challenges, and sustain healthy interpersonal relationships. Within marital dyads, emotional maturity often reflects relational harmony, mutual support, and shared values. Investigating the interaction between emotional maturity and parenting styles among husbands and wives thus provides insight into how parental roles and emotional competencies intersect within the family context.

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The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence: An Empirical Study among Husbands and Wives

The present study focuses on identifying whether emotional maturity in spouses is linked to their preferred parenting styles, while also examining gender differences and spousal alignment in emotional functioning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on parenting styles has consistently highlighted the beneficial outcomes of authoritative parenting, which combines warmth with reasonable control (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Authoritarian parenting, characterized by strict control and low responsiveness, has been associated with negative psychological outcomes for children (Lamborn et al., 1991; Dwairy, 2004). Permissive parenting, marked by indulgence and leniency, tends to yield mixed outcomes, with some evidence of low self-regulation in children (Baumrind, 1971; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Parallel to these findings, emotional maturity has been studied as a key predictor of interpersonal competence and effective parenting (Mayer et al., 2008). Couples often display dyadic alignment in emotional functioning, suggesting that emotional competencies are shaped within relational contexts (Brackett et al., 2006).

While existing studies link parenting styles to child outcomes, fewer investigations have addressed the relationship between parents' emotional maturity and their parenting practices. Some findings suggest that emotionally mature parents are more likely to adopt supportive and flexible parenting (Gottman & Katz, 2002). However, cultural factors may mediate this relationship, with authoritarian or permissive practices persisting despite emotional competence due to societal expectations (Dwairy, 2004).

This literature underscores the need to examine emotional maturity within couples alongside their parenting styles to better understand how emotional and cultural dynamics interact in family life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and parenting styles among husbands and wives.

Sample: The study included 100 married couples (N = 200 participants) selected through purposive sampling. Efforts were made to ensure variation in age, marital duration, and socio-economic status.

Tools Used:

- **Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS)**– to assess the degree of self-regulation, adaptability, and interpersonal functioning of participants. –
- **Parenting Styles Questionnaire**– to measure authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting approaches.

Procedure: Standardized questionnaires were administered individually to husbands and wives. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality and informed consent, were strictly followed.

The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence: An Empirical Study among Husbands and Wives

Statistical Analysis: Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to analyze the relationships between emotional maturity and parenting styles within and across spouses. Descriptive statistics and significance testing were used to interpret the data.

This methodology enabled the study to capture both individual and dyadic patterns in emotional maturity and parenting preferences.

RESULTS

Authoritative parenting style -

Parenting style has long been recognized as a significant factor in shaping children's emotional maturity and overall psychosocial development. Among the various typologies, the authoritative style—characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and balanced control—has been associated with positive emotional and social outcomes. In the context of marital and family relationships, examining the correlation between emotional maturity (EM) of spouses and their preferred authoritative parenting approaches offers valuable insights into how personality traits and parental roles interact. The present analysis explores the relationship between husbands' and wives' emotional maturity and their respective authoritative parenting tendencies.

Correlations - Authoritative

		H_EM	Authoritative	W_EM	Authoritative
H_EM	Pearson Correlation	1	.129	.616**	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.201	.000	.533
	N	100	100	100	100
Authoritative	Pearson Correlation	.129	1	.099	-.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.201		.326	.352
	N	100	100	100	100
W_EM	Pearson Correlation	.616**	.099	1	.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.326		.714
	N	100	100	100	100
Authoritative	Pearson Correlation	-.063	-.094	.037	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.533	.352	.714	
	N	100	100	100	100

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

The correlation matrix shows several noteworthy findings. A strong positive correlation was observed between husbands' emotional maturity (H_EM) and wives' emotional maturity (W_EM) ($r = .616, p < .01$). This indicates that couples with higher emotional maturity in husbands are also likely to have emotionally mature wives, reflecting a strong dyadic consistency in emotional functioning within the marital relationship.

However, no significant relationships were found between emotional maturity and authoritative parenting style, either for husbands or wives. For example, H_EM and Authoritative ($r = .129, p = .201$) and W_EM and Authoritative ($r = .037, p = .714$) both yielded weak, nonsignificant correlations. Similarly, cross-spouse associations (e.g., H_EM with Authoritative, $r = -.063, p = .533$) were also nonsignificant.

The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence: An Empirical Study among Husbands and Wives

These findings suggest that while emotional maturity between spouses is closely aligned, such maturity does not necessarily translate into adopting authoritative parenting styles. This implies that parenting approaches may be influenced more by cultural expectations, situational factors, or role responsibilities rather than by the underlying emotional maturity of the parents.

Authoritarian parenting style -

Parenting styles often shape children’s psychological and emotional outcomes, with authoritarian parenting—marked by rigidity, high control, and low warmth—frequently linked to negative developmental consequences. Emotional maturity (EM), on the other hand, represents an individual’s ability to regulate emotions, respond adaptively to challenges, and maintain interpersonal balance. Understanding the relationship between authoritarian tendencies in parents and their emotional maturity offers insight into whether rigid parenting styles are associated with personal emotional growth or strain.

Correlations - Authoritarian

		H_EM	Authoritarian	W_EM	Authoritarian
H_EM	Pearson Correlation	1	-.113	.616**	-.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.262	.000	.642
	N	100	100	100	100
Authoritarian	Pearson Correlation	-.113	1	-.005	-.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.262		.964	.623
	N	100	100	100	100
W_EM	Pearson Correlation	.616**	-.005	1	-.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.964		.441
	N	100	100	100	100
Authoritarian	Pearson Correlation	-.047	-.050	-.078	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.642	.623	.441	
	N	100	100	100	100

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

The correlation analysis shows a strong positive relationship between husbands’ emotional maturity (H_EM) and wives’ emotional maturity (W_EM) ($r = .616$, $p < .01$), indicating that couples with emotionally mature husbands are likely to have emotionally mature wives. This reflects a significant dyadic alignment in emotional functioning within marriage.

In contrast, no significant correlations emerged between emotional maturity and authoritarian parenting styles for either husbands or wives. For example, the relationship between H_EM and Authoritarian was weak and nonsignificant ($r = -.113$, $p = .262$), while W_EM and Authoritarian also showed no significant association ($r = -.078$, $p = .441$). Cross-spouse associations (e.g., H_EM with Authoritarian, $r = -.047$, $p = .642$) similarly lacked significance.

These findings suggest that authoritarian parenting style is largely independent of parents’ emotional maturity levels. While emotionally mature individuals are better at self-regulation and adaptive behavior, these qualities do not necessarily translate into rejecting or embracing authoritarian parenting practices. Instead, authoritarian approaches may be more influenced by cultural norms, intergenerational practices, or perceived parental roles rather than individual emotional competencies.

The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence: An Empirical Study among Husbands and Wives

Permissive parenting style -

Permissive parenting, characterized by leniency, indulgence, and minimal enforcement of rules, presents an interesting dimension when studied alongside emotional maturity. Emotional maturity (EM) involves self-regulation, responsibility, and the ability to handle interpersonal relationships effectively. By examining correlations between permissive parenting styles and emotional maturity across husbands and wives, this analysis sheds light on whether emotional competence within couples is aligned with indulgent parenting practices.

Correlations - Permissive

		H_EM	Permissive	W_EM	Permissive
H_EM	Pearson Correlation	1	.186	.616**	.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.064	.000	.597
	N	100	100	100	100
Permissive	Pearson Correlation	.186	1	.241*	.538**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.064		.016	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
W_EM	Pearson Correlation	.616**	.241*	1	.104
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.016		.304
	N	100	100	100	100
Permissive	Pearson Correlation	.054	.538**	.104	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.597	.000	.304	
	N	100	100	100	100

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

The analysis revealed a strong and significant positive correlation between husbands' emotional maturity (H_EM) and wives' emotional maturity (W_EM) ($r = .616$, $p < .01$), consistent with earlier findings across parenting styles. This indicates that emotional maturity tends to align strongly within couples, reflecting marital and interpersonal synchrony.

A notable finding is the significant positive association between husbands' permissive parenting (H_Permissive) and wives' emotional maturity (W_EM) ($r = .241$, $p < .05$). This suggests that when husbands adopt more permissive approaches, their wives report higher levels of emotional maturity. This could imply that leniency from one partner may allow the other greater emotional space to adapt, grow, and regulate emotions.

Additionally, a strong positive relationship was found between husbands' permissive parenting and wives' permissive parenting ($r = .538$, $p < .01$). This indicates alignment in parenting tendencies within the couple, pointing to shared parental attitudes or mutual influence in child-rearing practices.

On the other hand, no significant correlations emerged between wives' permissive parenting and either their own emotional maturity ($r = .104$, $p = .304$) or their husbands' emotional maturity ($r = .054$, $p = .597$). This suggests that wives' indulgent parenting behaviors are relatively independent of emotional maturity levels.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the correlation between parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) and emotional maturity among husbands and wives. The results reveal a consistent and significant positive association between the emotional maturity of husbands and wives across all models, underscoring the dyadic alignment in marital relationships. This suggests that emotional competence tends to co-exist within couples, possibly reflecting shared values, mutual influence, and the relational context of marriage.

When examining specific parenting styles, authoritative parenting showed no significant relationship with emotional maturity for either husbands or wives. This indicates that while authoritative parenting is generally associated with positive developmental outcomes for children, it does not appear to be directly linked with the parents' own emotional maturity in this sample. Similarly, authoritarian parenting, characterized by rigidity and control, also showed no meaningful association with emotional maturity, further supporting the notion that emotionally mature individuals may still adopt strict parenting practices influenced by cultural or contextual norms rather than their emotional dispositions.

The permissive style, however, yielded notable findings. Husbands' permissive parenting was positively correlated with wives' emotional maturity and with wives' permissive parenting. This suggests that a more lenient and indulgent approach by husbands may foster greater emotional openness and flexibility in their spouses, while also reflecting consistency in child-rearing practices across the couple. Interestingly, wives' permissiveness showed no significant association with emotional maturity, highlighting possible gender differences in how parenting practices and emotional regulation interact.

Overall, the results highlight that while spousal emotional maturity is strongly interlinked, its connection with parenting styles is limited and context-dependent. The strongest evidence emerges for permissive parenting, suggesting that leniency in fathers may relate to both spousal maturity and parenting alignment. These findings underscore the need for further exploration of cultural norms and gender dynamics in shaping the interplay between parenting styles and emotional competence.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the intricate relationship between emotional maturity and parenting styles within marital dyads. While husbands' and wives' emotional maturity were strongly correlated, indicating shared emotional competence, its association with parenting styles was largely limited. Neither authoritative nor authoritarian parenting showed meaningful links with emotional maturity, suggesting that these practices may be shaped more by cultural or contextual expectations than by personal emotional regulation. However, permissive parenting—particularly among husbands—was positively related to wives' emotional maturity and aligned with wives' permissive tendencies. These findings emphasize the nuanced interplay of gender, parenting roles, and emotional functioning in family life.

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The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence: An Empirical Study among Husbands and Wives

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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