

Impact of Parenting Styles on Social Anxiety among Young Adults

Balkees Razia A R^{1*}, Rajeshwari R²

ABSTRACT

Social anxiety which is characterised by constant apprehension amid social scrutiny has a great impact on the disruption of psychosocial functioning among the young adults. Although the environmental and biological factors have a role to play in its etiology, the parenting styles such as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful, have distinctive roles in the development of emotional regulation and competence that develops social competence. In this research, perceived maternal and paternal parenting styles were linked with the level of social anxiety in young adults (Age 20-25) of Indian descent hoping to fill the gaps in cultural and developmental literature. This was a quantitative correlational study where 154 participants were used in the survey using Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS). Both maternal and paternal Pearson correlations indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between authoritarian parenting and social anxiety ($r = .19, p = .02$). Regression analyses showed the trend of maternal authoritarianism predicting higher levels of social anxiety ($B = 0.83, p = .06$), but the total model was not significant, ($R^2 = .05, p = .28$). A two-way ANOVA established the non-existence of an interaction effect between the maternal and paternal style ($p = .61$) implying that parenting congruence was not a factor. Major findings support the priority of maternal parenting in acquisition of social anxiety, coherent with the attachment theory that advocates early parental care. The implications on clinical practice show that family-based interventions should be aimed at changing maternal responsiveness and autonomy support. These are limited by the designs such as cross-sectional and biases in the self-report.

Keywords: Parenting Styles, Social Anxiety, Emerging Adulthood, Authoritarian Parenting, Attachment Theory

Social anxiety is a common psychopathology that involves a fear and avoidance of social life sessions with most cases accompanied by severe distress and loss of everyday efficiency (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Even though the genetic predisposition and the peer pressure and environmental stressors can be regarded as the factors which can lead to the development of the social anxiety, parenting styles were identified as one of the principally important early child factors. The internalization of the feeling that one is socially incompetent, of fears of becoming rejected or inflexibly sensitive

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to rejection, and intolerant of social rating are the cardinal symptoms of social phobia and may be caused by some over controlling, emotionally cold, or inconsistent tendencies in parenting. Parenting techniques influence the extent of emotional stability, self-worth, and social competence among children, which also influences their susceptibility to social anxiety problem in their adult ages.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Baumrind's Parenting Styles

Parenting Styles proposed by Baumrind can be traced back to Diana Baumrind -a clinical and developmental psychologist whose Parenting Styles were presented in 60s and 70s of the past century on the basis of her observations related to the system of family and development of children at the early periods of their life. Baumrind (1966, 1967) established the fact that there were three original parenting styles and those were: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive on the bases of two most significant factors i.e; responsiveness (warmth, support), demandingness (control, expectations). After having set up such dimensions Baumrind was able to conclude that they interact in such a way as to provide distinct styles of parenting which influence the personality, self-autonomy, self-regulation and competence in social affairs of the individual in question. She thinks that it is possible to say that the most desirable developmental outcome is indeed occasioned by authoritative parenting (high responsiveness and high demandingness).

Attachment Theory

Proposed in the middle of the 20 century by John Bowlby, the theory of attachment was constructed on the basis of the psychoanalytic findings under the influence of the ethological researches (especially those by Konrad Lorenz). According to Bowlby, the consistent care given reaches up to stable attachment whilst the irregular or not caring does will cause insecure form of attachment example to include anxious, avoidant or disorganized attachment. The attachment theory that was founded by Bowlby and further built up by Ainsworth, when a child has early relationships with the care givers they establish underlying foundations of the internal working models, mental representations which shape the expectations and subsequent actions towards future relationships.

In conclusion, this study examines this significant relationship between perceived parenting styles and social anxiety among young adults, filling a gap in the literature by including this period of the development of an individual. With the help of validated tools (Parental Authority Questionnaire and Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale), it offers an organized treatment for investigation of the way early caregiving impacts on further social functioning. While attachment isn't measured outright in most studies, it remains a really useful way to interpret the psychological processes at play.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Aim: To study the direct effect of maternal and paternal parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) on social anxiety in young people (20-25 years), as well as study parent specific effects and parenting disparities.

Research Objectives

1. To derive whether solely maternal and paternal parental style precludes social anxiety
2. To make a comparison between the parenting styles of mothers and fathers and social anxiety

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3. To evaluate the effect of the existence of congruence (or discrepancy) between maternal and paternal parenting on the social anxiety of moderates.
4. To examine gender difference in the parenting-anxiety association

Hypotheses

- **H1:** Increased scores on authoritative parenting will be linked with reduced social anxiety levels in young adults.
- **H2:** Rising authoritarian parenting scores will be linked with greater levels of social anxiety in young adults.
- **H3:** There will be no relationship between permissive parenting style and social anxiety.
- **H4:** Maternal parenting styles will have a stronger association with social anxiety than paternal parenting styles.
- **H5:** Young adults with incongruent parenting styles will report higher social anxiety than those with congruent styles.

Population and Sampling

- **Target Population:** The 20-25-year-old young adults in India who were the subjects of parental care during their early stage of development.
- **Reachable Population:** The young adults who fall within this age bracket and are studying in the institutions of higher learning or practicing in the urban and semi urban areas, which implies that they can be reached in data collection.
- **Sample Size:** 160 individuals, conventions proposed by Cohen (1992) regarding multiple regression analysis (medium size of effects), sufficient minimum number of 129 individuals needed in order to attain a power of the repeated measures design ($f^2 = 0.15$; $\alpha = 0.05$; power = 0.80).
- **Sampling method:** The study employs the use of the Simple Random method because it has equal selection probability which decreases the biasness of selection.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Youths aged between 20 -25 years
2. Lived with either a dad or a mum/guardian when reaching adolescent age (12-18 years)
3. Well proficient in English (Can comprehend the questionnaire)

Exclusion Criteria:

1. DSM categorized, or the serious mental disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and the autism spectrum disorder).
2. Cognitive deficits which include validity of response and comprehension.
3. Poor or weak reply to screening interventions.

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Table 1. Methods of Data Collection

Sl. No.	Title of the tool	Author of the tool	Reliability	No. of items	Scoring Scale	Year of Publishing
1	Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)	John R Buri	Internal Consistency $\alpha = .69-.87$ Test-Retest; $r = .77-.89$ (over four weeks)	30	5-p point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) Subscale score range: 10-50	1991
2	Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS)	Michael R Liebowitz	Internal Consistency: $\alpha = .90-.96$ Test-Retest: $r = .83-.93$	24	4- point Likert scale (0= None to 3=Severe)	1987

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Parental Style Comparisons [t-test]

			Statistic	df	p		Effect Size
Permissive_Mother	Permissive_Father	Student's t	-2.32	153	0.021	Cohen's d	-0.187
Authoritarian_Mother	Authoritarian_Father	Student's t	1.27	153	0.206	Cohen's d	0.102
Authoritative_Mother	Authoritative_Father	Student's t	1.83	153	0.070	Cohen's d	0.147

Note. $H_a \mu_{\text{Measure 1}} - \mu_{\text{Measure 2}} \neq 0$

Table 2- Paired Samples t-test Comparing Maternal and Paternal Parenting Styles (N = 154)
 Table 2 shows that, the scores of permissive maternal and paternal parenting were significantly different, $t = -2.32$, $p = .021$, where the mothers scored a tad higher on their permissive parenting behavior. Although the effect size ($d = -0.187$) is very small, this shows that the participants perceived mothers to be somewhat permissive as compared to fathers. The fathers had no distinct difference in authoritarian versus authoritative parenting comparison with mothers in terms of statistical significance. Authoritative difference in parenting was almost significant ($p = .070$), and that difference was marginally more in the mothers, but not enough to say clearly. These findings can only partially substantiate Hypothesis 4, which stated that maternal parenting would have a stronger association with social anxiety in comparison with paternal parenting.

Congruence Effects

Table 3- Two-Way ANOVA Examining Effects of Parenting Style Congruence on Social Anxiety (N = 154)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
ParentingStyle_Mother	7036	2	3518	4.410	0.014
ParentingStyle_Father	1579	2	789	0.989	0.374
ParentingStyle_Mother * ParentingStyle_Father	2137	4	534	0.670	0.614
Residuals	115684	145	798		

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

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Main effect of parenting style (motherly) produced a statistically significant effect on social anxiety $F = 4.41, p = .014$. That is, diverse maternal styles will be linked to markedly varying degrees of social anxiety which affirms previous research that maternal parenting is an influential factor. There was no significant relationship between the overall effect of the parenting style, $F = 0.99, p = .374$. This shows that the paternal style alone did not explain the variation in social anxiety scores of the sample. Most importantly, interaction of maternal and paternal parenting style that was used to test the Hypothesis 5 on congruence was not significant, $F = 0.67, p = .614$. That is, there were no facts showing that the compatibility or incompatibility of maternal and paternal parenting styles has any influence on the level of social anxiety. Such findings partially support Hypothesis 5: even though maternal style appears to be important, no amplifying effect of mismatched parenting styles (i.e., incongruence) on social anxiety occurred. It may be due to complex compensatory interactions among caregivers or that the young adults are more and more putting an increased strain on one parent (mostly the mother) in the building of an inner image of emotional or personal safety, and trust on others as proposed by attachment theory.

Regression Analysis

Table 5.1 Model Fit Summary for Regression Predicting Social Anxiety from Parenting Styles (N = 154)

Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R ²	Overall Model Test			
			F	df1	df2	p
1	0.221	0.0488	1.26	6	147	0.281

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=154

The model accounted for roughly 4.9 percent of the variance in scores of social anxiety ($R^2 = .0488$), and the entire regression model was not significant, $F = 1.26, p = .281$. This means that when considered together, the six dimensions of parenting style do not make any significant prediction of the social anxiety in this sample. This is an important discovery as, even though forms of parenting (such as maternal authoritarianism) were associated with social anxiety significantly, the combined explanatory value falls limited when jointly introduced consecutively into a regression equation. Multicollinearity of parenting styles: Some of the parenting dimensions (e.g. permissive and authoritative) were correlated in a moderate way. This overlap reduces the special contribution each predictor has on the outcome and it is harder to detect the individual effects in a multiple regression where there is overlap.

Table 5.2- Regression Coefficients for Parenting Styles Predicting Social Anxiety (N = 154)

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept	52.5014	22.184	2.3666	0.019	
Permissive_Mother	-0.1811	0.530	-0.3416	0.733	-0.03625
Authoritarian_Mother	0.8270	0.437	1.8915	0.061	0.17831
Athoritative_Mother	-0.0138	0.557	-0.0248	0.980	-0.00264
Permissive_Father	-0.3163	0.501	-0.6312	0.529	-0.07006
Authoritarian_Father	0.1084	0.415	0.2615	0.794	0.02405
Authoritative_Father	-0.0676	0.529	-0.1276	0.899	-0.01384

Authoritarian maternal parenting was also significantly positively correlated with social anxiety ($B = 0.83, p = .061, B = 0.178$). Depending on a statistical margin, it corresponded

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to Hypothesis 2 (H2). It is thus connotated that higher levels of authoritarianism in mothers may be associated at a low level of correlation with higher levels of social anxiety though not at a significant level of $p < .05$. Maternal authoritative parenting ($B = -0.01$, $p = .980$, $\beta = -0.003$) and maternal permissive parenting ($B = -.18$, $p = .733$, $\beta = -.036$) were insignificant predictors of social anxiety and neither had evidence of Hypotheses 1 and 3 respectively. All the parenting styles on the side of fathers (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) were also, non-significant predictors. This resembles the findings of earlier correlations and provides support to Hypothesis 4 (H4) that maternal parenting was more strongly related to social anxiety than paternal parenting even though no maternal predictor was after all significant in the regression model. The low effect sizes and insignificance of the predictors of this model may show that the development of social anxiety may be more complex than involving parenting, that it involves interactions with relationships with peers, personality, and attachment. It may also mean that perceived parenting in young adulthood has a direct influence on very little as far as contemporaneous anxiety symptomatology is concerned or that retrospective perceptions are mediated by mood processes during the contemporaneous retrospective recall.

CONCLUSION

The findings lead to a delicate understanding of the different functions between mothers and fathers in terms of the psychosocial development of the young adult, specifically around the aspect of social anxiety. The parenting style adopted by the mother becomes a more potent predictor of the manifestation of social anxiety symptoms, which emphasizes the role of maternal emotional support and control in the course of upbringing. No significant interaction of maternal and paternal styles was evident indicating that the influences of each parent might be more noticeable in this cultural and developmental context than the combined effect of both. The findings are direct answers to the research questions in terms of pointing out the differences between maternal and paternal parenting and providing a rationale to doubt the presumed role of parents in terms of interactional effects and their role in development of social anxiety. This theoretically justifies further development of parenting models that would fit asymmetries of parental roles and cultural specificities as well as the circumstances of parent-children relationships in line with such fully integrated models as Attachment Theory and Social Learning theories.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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APPENDICES

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for parenting styles and social anxiety (N=154)

	N	Mean	SE
Permissive Mother	154	29.1	0.465
Authoritarian Mother	154	32.1	0.501
Athoritative Mother	154	32.8	0.445
Social anxiety	154	65.1	2.326
Permissive Father	154	30.1	0.515
Authoritarian Father	154	31.4	0.516
Authoritative Father	154	32.0	0.476

Note. SE- Standard Error, M- Mean

Descriptive statistics of parenting styles, and the score of social anxiety of the mothers and fathers is also illustrated in Table 1, which involves a sample size of 154. Among the maternal styles, the authoritative type recorded the highest mean (M = 32.8), authoritarian style (M = 32.1) and permissive (M = 29.1). Similarly, in paternal parenting, the greatest mean was recorded in authoritative dads (M = 32.0), and then authoritarian (M = 31.4), and permissive (M = 30.1) came closely. The mean of social anxiety was heavy (M = 65.1), and the standard deviation is very large compared to parenting styles dimensions dimensions, showing more people being largely different in regard to social anxiety. These tendencies show an even distribution of parenting styles in general. Although it leans to the authoritative style, this is expected since the theory of the authoritative parenting shows that this parenting style is the more adaptive type of parenting. The descriptive statistics

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generally provides an insight on the distribution and the centrality of the variables to be used as the statistical assumptions to be used in the further analysis such as correlation and regression.

Figure 1: Histogram for Maternal Permissive Parenting

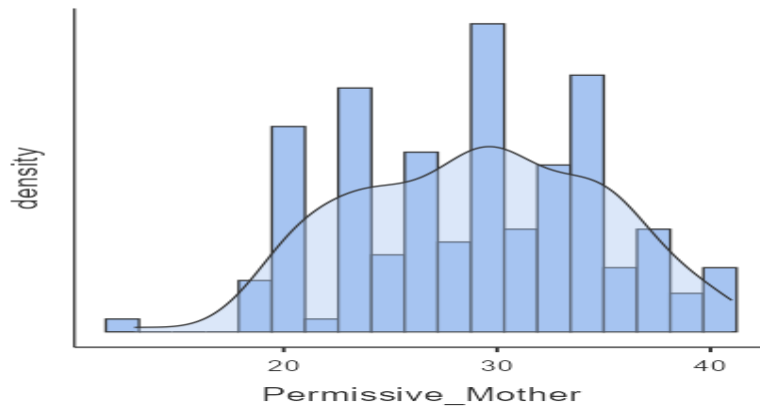
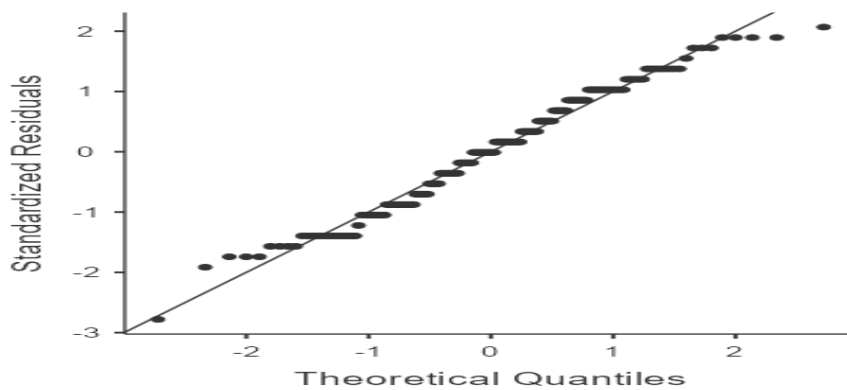


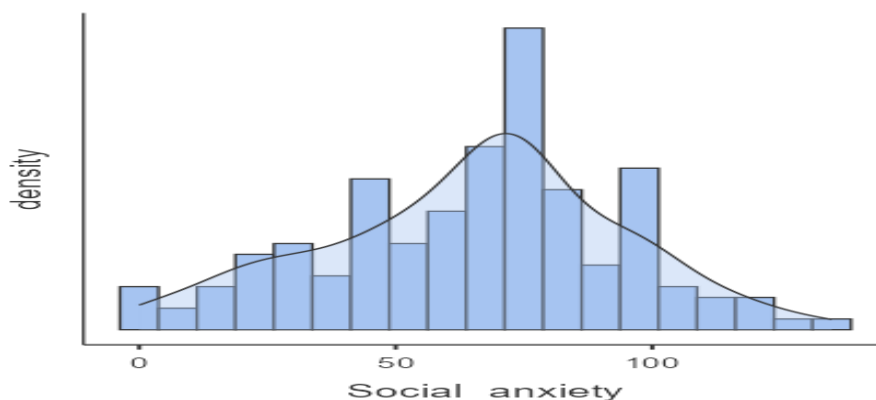
Figure 1 shows a visual inspection of the histogram for Maternal Permissive Parenting which indicate that the scores deviate from normality to some degree.

Figure 2: Q-Q plots for Maternal Permissive Parenting Style



In addition to Figure 1, the quantile-quantile plot of the Permissive Parenting style also show that some data points fall away from the plot line. This also indicates that there is a degree of deviation from the normality.

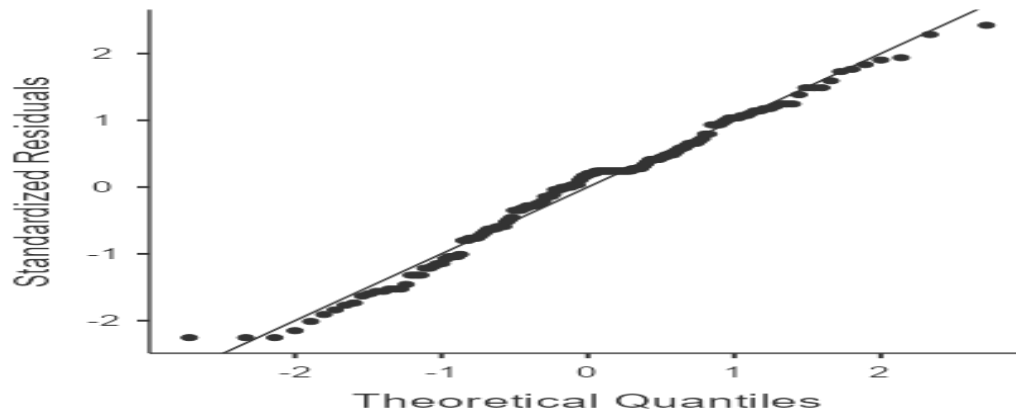
Figure 3: Histogram for Social Anxiety



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Figure 3 shows a visual inspection of the histogram for Social Anxiety which indicate that the scores deviate from normality to some degree.

Figure 4: Q-Q plots for Social Anxiety



In addition to figure 3, the quantile-quantile plot of the Social Anxiety also show that some data points fall away from the plot line. This also indicates that there is a degree of deviation from the normality

Correlational Analysis

Table 4.1: Correlation between Maternal Parenting style and Social Anxiety

		Permissive_ Mother	Authoritarian_ Mother	Athoritative_ Mother	Social_ anxiety
Permissive_ Mother	Pearson's r	—			
	df	—			
	p-value	—			
Authoritarian_ Mother	Pearson's r	-0.159*	—		
	df	152	—		
	p-value	0.049	—		
Athoritative_ Mother	Pearson's r	0.491***	-0.160*	—	
	df	152	152	—	
	p-value	<.001	0.047	—	
Social_ anxiety	Pearson's r	-0.109	0.194*	-0.081	—
	df	152	152	152	—
	p-value	0.180	0.016	0.321	—

Pearson correlation coefficients are illustrated in Table 4.1 and help to explore any correlation between parenting styles used by their mothers (including permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles) and social anxiety in young adults. Statistically significant positive association of authoritarian maternal parenting with social anxiety ($r = .194$, $p = .016$) was found in favor of Hypothesis 2 which states that such type of parenting relates to more social anxiety. A significant correlation between the permissive parenting and social anxiety was not discovered ($r = -.109$, $p = .180$) and corresponds to the Hypothesis 3, the permissive parenting is not directly linked with social anxiety. •Authoritative maternal parenting had a non-significant negative relationship with social anxiety ($r = -.081$, $p = .321$). Although going in the anticipated direction (in line with Hypothesis 1), the correlation was not significant. Besides, there was a positive correlation between authoritative parenting with permissive parenting ($r = .491$, $p < .001$) as permissive

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and authoritarian parenting showed a negative relationship with each other ($r = -.159$, $p = .049$), showing overlapping and also distinguishing in perception of parenting styles by the participants.

Table 4.2: Correlation between Paternal Parenting style and Social Anxiety

		Permissive_Father	Authoritaria_Father	Authoritative_Father	Social_anxiety
Permissive_Father	Pearson's r	—			
	df	—			
	p-value	—			
Authoritarian_Father	Pearson's r	-0.041	—		
	df	152	—		
	p-value	0.617	—		
Authoritative_Father	Pearson's r	0.549***	0.006	—	
	df	152	152	—	
	p-value	<.001	0.938	—	
Social_Anxiety	Pearson's r	-0.094	0.106	-0.070	—
	df	152	152	152	—
	p-value	0.244	0.192	0.387	—

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

Table 4.2 shows Pearson correlation coefficients that were done to evaluate the relationship between paternal parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative) and social anxiety among the young adults. The paternal parenting styles could not be associated with social anxiety at a significant level. The parenting styles Authoritarian paternal had a positive non-significant correlation ($r = .106$, $p = .192$) with permissive ($r = 0.94$, $p = .244$) and authoritative ($r = 0.70$, $p = .387$) having a negative non-significant correlation. Such findings mean that, contrary to the case of maternal parenting, paternal parenting styles are not statistically correlated directly with social anxiety within this sample. Permissive and authoritative paternal styles correlated positively and highly ($r = .549$, $p < .001$), which indicated that encouragers who perceived their dads as permissive were bound to indicate authoritative parenting practices as well. This convergence can imply the less rigid and more adaptive paternal behavior or the difference in the conceptualization of messages about the blended parenting in young adults. Taken together these results are partially supportive of Hypothesis 4, that maternal parenting style would be more indicative of social anxiety than paternal parenting style. The non-existence of significant relationships here is opposed to what was achieved earlier in maternal parenting i.e. authoritarian mothering that showed a significant positive correlation with social anxiety. Part of this predilection can be described with respect to attachment theory, in which the early relations to caregivers (most of the time more so with their mothers) is given role in shaping them. It also puts a query whether it influences paternal involvement or availability emotionally in developing social anxiety symptoms when the kids grow up.