The International Journal of Indian Psychology
ISSN 2348-5396 (Online) | ISSN: 2349-3429 (Print)
Volume 14, Issue 4, October- December, 2026
DIP: 18.01.025.20261404, DOI: 10.25215/1404.025
https://www.ijip.in

Research Paper

# How You were Raised Shapes How You React Perceived Parenting, Conflict Resolution and Emotional Regulation in Young Adults

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## ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between perceived parenting styles, conflict resolution styles and emotional regulation among young adults aged 18–25 years. A quantitative correlational design was used, and data were collected from 109 participants using standardized measures. Findings indicated that authoritative parenting was associated with adaptive emotional regulation (cognitive reappraisal) and constructive conflict resolution (positive problem solving). While, authoritarian and permissive parenting were linked to maladaptive strategies, including expressive suppression, withdrawal, compliance, and conflict engagement. Regression analyses further showed that parenting styles significantly predict emotional and interpersonal outcomes, with authoritarian parenting emerging as the strongest predictor of maladaptive patterns. Overall, the study highlights the important role of parenting styles in shaping emotional and interpersonal functioning in young adulthood.

***Keywords:*** *parenting styles, emotional regulation, conflict resolution styles, young adults, cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression*

Family environment plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's psychological and social development, particularly during formative years. Among the various influences, parenting styles have been consistently identified as a significant factor affecting emotional and behavioural outcomes in children and young adults.

The concept of parenting styles, as proposed by Diana Baumrind, categorizes parenting styles into authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive patterns. One important outcome influenced by parenting styles is the development of conflict resolution styles. Conflict resolution refers to the ways in which individuals manage disagreements and interpersonal challenges. During young adulthood, individuals frequently encounter conflicts in academic, family, and social contexts.

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**Received: April 25, 2026; Revision Received: October 21, 2026; Accepted: October 26, 2026**

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The ability to resolve these conflicts constructively through strategies such as problem-solving, cooperation, and compromises are important for maintaining healthy relationships. In contrast, maladaptive styles such as avoidance or aggression may lead to interpersonal difficulties and reduced relationship satisfaction.

Another psychological outcome shaped by early parenting experiences is emotional regulation. Emotional regulation refers to the processes through which individuals monitor, evaluate, and modify their emotional responses. Effective emotional regulation lets individuals respond to challenging situations in a balanced and adaptive manner, whereas poor emotional regulation is associated with impulsivity, distress, and maladaptive coping strategies.

Although existing research has established links between parenting styles and various psychological outcomes, emotional regulation and conflict resolution have often been examined separately. Moreover, limited attention has been given to how specific parenting styles differentially influence distinct conflict resolution patterns, such as positive problem solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance, in relation to emotional regulation. This gap is particularly relevant in the context of young adulthood, where individuals face increasing emotional and interpersonal demands.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between perceived parenting styles, conflict resolution styles, and emotional regulation among young adults.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on perceived parenting styles has increasingly emphasized the role of individuals' subjective experiences of parental warmth, control, and responsiveness in shaping psychological development. Based on the framework proposed by Diana Baumrind, parenting styles are broadly categorized into authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive patterns, each associated with distinct emotional and behavioural outcomes (Baumrind, 1967, 1971). Authoritative parenting, characterized by high warmth and balanced control, has consistently been linked to adaptive emotional functioning, whereas authoritarian and permissive styles are associated with maladaptive outcomes such as emotional suppression and poor psychological adjustment (Pinquart, 2021).

Empirical evidence supports the long-term influence of perceived parenting on emotional processes. Studies have shown that perceived parental warmth is positively associated with adaptive emotional regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, while psychological control and overprotection are linked to maladaptive strategies such as suppression and avoidance (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Hou et al., 2020). Longitudinal findings further indicate that perceived parental care predicts lower emotional distress and more stable emotional functioning in adulthood (Uji et al., 2014). Cross-cultural and Indian studies also support these findings, demonstrating that authoritative parenting is associated with higher emotional maturity and better emotional expression, whereas authoritarian parenting is linked to anxiety and emotional inhibition (Sharma & Sandhu, 2016; Raval & Walker, 2019).

Conflict resolution styles refer to the behavioural patterns individuals use to manage interpersonal disagreements. The dual concern model categorizes these styles into integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising, with integrating and

compromising generally considered more adaptive (Rahim, 1983; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Research suggests that conflict resolution styles are shaped through socialization experiences, including family interactions and observational learning. Young adults often replicate conflict patterns observed in their parents, indicating an intergenerational transmission of relational behaviour (Taylor & Segrin, 2010; Busby & Chiu, 2017).

Parenting styles play a significant role in shaping conflict resolution strategies. Supportive and responsive parenting environments encourage open communication, negotiation, and problem-solving, leading to more constructive conflict styles. In contrast, controlling or emotionally restrictive parenting may lead to avoidance, aggression, or ineffective communication (Ross & Fuertes, 2010; Morris et al., 2011). Attachment-based research further supports this relationship, demonstrating that secure attachment, often fostered by authoritative parenting, is associated with collaborative and adaptive conflict resolution strategies (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Idrees et al., 2021).

Emotional regulation is a central psychological process involving the monitoring and modification of emotional responses. According to Gross's process model, individuals use strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, with reappraisal being more adaptive (Gross, 1998, 2002). Meta-analytic findings indicate that cognitive reappraisal is more effective in regulating emotional responses, whereas suppression is associated with poorer psychological outcomes (Webb et al., 2012).

Importantly, emotional regulation is closely linked to conflict resolution styles. Individuals with higher emotional regulation abilities are more likely to engage in constructive conflict strategies such as collaboration and compromise, while those with poor regulation tend to rely on avoidance or aggression (Jordan & Troth, 2004; Valente et al., 2022). Emotional regulation also enhances flexibility in conflict situations, enabling individuals to adapt their responses based on situational demands (Pandey et al., 2015).

Overall, the literature indicates that perceived parenting styles influence both emotional regulation and conflict resolution styles. However, limited research has examined these three variables together within a single framework among young adults, highlighting the need for the present study.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships between perceived parenting styles, conflict resolution styles, and emotional regulation among young adults. A correlational approach was considered appropriate as the study aimed to assess the direction and strength of associations among variables without manipulating them.

The sample consisted of 109 young adults aged between 18 and 25 years, selected using convenience sampling. Individuals with a history of major psychiatric or neurological disorders and those providing incomplete responses were excluded from the study.

### *Measures*

**1. Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSC)**: The Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSC), developed by Divya and Manikandan (2013), was utilized to evaluate participants' perceptions of their parents' behaviours during their upbringing. This scale includes 30

items and captures three parenting style dimensions: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The dimensions assessed are:

- **Authoritative:** Parenting characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and appropriate control.
- **Authoritarian:** Parenting marked by strictness, high control, and limited emotional responsiveness.
- **Permissive:** Parenting that is lenient, indulgent, and involves minimal rules or expectations.

Higher scores on each subscale reflect a stronger perception of that particular parenting style.

**2. Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI)**: The Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI), developed by Kurdek (1994), was used to examine individuals' methods of handling interpersonal conflict. The instrument consists of 16 items and measures four distinct conflict resolution styles: positive problem solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance. Responses are provided on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating a greater tendency to adopt a specific style.
The four styles identified are:

- **Positive Problem Solving:** A cooperative and solution-focused approach.
- **Conflict Engagement:** Hostile, confrontational, and emotionally intense responses.
- **Withdrawal:** Avoidance or disengagement from conflict situations.
- **Compliance:** Giving in to others to preserve harmony.

**3. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)**: The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), developed by Gross and John (2003), was used to assess strategies of emotional regulation. It contains 10 items and evaluates two dimensions: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Responses are recorded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7). Higher scores indicate greater use of the respective regulation strategy.

- **Cognitive Reappraisal:** Modifying one's interpretation of a situation to change its emotional effect.
- **Expressive Suppression:** Controlling or inhibiting outward emotional expressions.

Cognitive reappraisal is typically viewed as an adaptive strategy, whereas expressive suppression is often linked with less adaptive outcome.

Data were collected from participants recruited from educational institutions and from the general population in Pune, Maharashtra, after obtaining informed consent. The questionnaires were administered in a standardized sequence. Ethical principles, including anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly maintained throughout the study.

Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were computed for all variables. As the data did not meet normality assumptions, Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine relationships among variables. Additionally, simple linear regression analyses were conducted to assess predictive relationships between perceived parenting styles, conflict resolution styles, and emotional regulation.

***Hypotheses***

Based on the review of literature, the following hypotheses were proposed. Regarding parenting styles and emotional regulation, authoritative parenting was expected to correlate positively with cognitive reappraisal and negatively with expressive suppression, while both authoritarian and permissive parenting were expected to show the reverse pattern. Concerning parenting styles and conflict resolution, authoritative parenting was hypothesised to correlate positively with positive problem solving and negatively with conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance; authoritarian and permissive parenting were expected to show the opposite associations. Finally, regarding emotional regulation and conflict resolution, cognitive reappraisal was expected to correlate positively with positive problem solving and negatively with conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance, while expressive suppression was hypothesised to show the reverse pattern across all four conflict resolution styles.

## RESULTS

The study examined the relationships between perceived parenting styles, conflict resolution styles, and emotional regulation among 109 young adults aged 18–25 years. Descriptive statistics indicated that authoritative parenting (M = 37.20, SD = 6.80) had the highest mean compared to authoritarian (M = 26.91, SD = 9.07) and permissive parenting (M = 24.56, SD = 10.34). Among conflict resolution styles, positive problem solving showed the highest mean (M = 14.38, SD = 2.78), while cognitive reappraisal (M = 29.81, SD = 5.87) was higher than expressive suppression (M = 17.34, SD = 6.41) in emotional regulation.

Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that most variables deviated from normality ($p < .05$), and therefore Spearman's rank-order correlation was used for further analysis.

***Table 1 Correlation between Perceived Parenting Styles and Emotional Regulation***

| | **Authoritative Parenting** | **Authoritarian Parenting** | **Permissive Parenting** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cognitive Reappraisal** | .255** | -.273** | -.330*** |
| **Expressive Suppression** | -.398*** | .489*** | .428*** |

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

***Table 2 Correlation between Perceived Parenting Styles and Conflict Resolution Styles***

| | **Authoritative Parenting** | **Authoritarian Parenting** | **Permissive Parenting** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Positive Problem Solving** | .377*** | -.334*** | -.377*** |
| **Conflict Engagement** | -.316*** | .386*** | .307** |
| **Withdrawal** | -.543*** | .620*** | .514*** |
| **Compliance** | -.285** | .299** | .317*** |

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

*Table 3 Correlation between Emotional Regulation and Conflict Resolution Styles*

| | Positive Problem Solving | Conflict Engagement | Withdrawal | Compliance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cognitive Reappraisal** | .458*** | -.466*** | -.393*** | -.278** |
| **Expressive Suppression** | -.366*** | .312** | .407*** | .499*** |

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

Significant correlations were observed between perceived parenting styles and emotional regulation. Authoritative parenting showed a positive correlation with cognitive reappraisal ($r = .255$, $p < .01$) and a negative correlation with expressive suppression ($r = -.398$, $p < .001$). In contrast, authoritarian and permissive parenting were negatively correlated with cognitive reappraisal and positively correlated with expressive suppression ($p < .01$ to $p < .001$).

Regarding conflict resolution styles, authoritative parenting was positively correlated with positive problem solving ($r = .377$, $p < .001$) and negatively correlated with conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance. Conversely, authoritarian and permissive parenting showed positive correlations with maladaptive conflict styles and negative correlations with constructive strategies ($p < .01$ to $p < .001$).

Emotional regulation was also significantly associated with conflict resolution styles. Cognitive reappraisal was positively correlated with positive problem solving ($r = .458$, $p < .001$) and negatively correlated with maladaptive styles. Expressive suppression showed the opposite pattern, with positive correlations with conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance.

Regression analyses indicated that parenting styles significantly predicted both emotional regulation and conflict resolution styles, with authoritative parenting promoting adaptive outcomes and authoritarian parenting emerging as the strongest predictor of maladaptive patterns. **Overall, the findings supported all the proposed hypotheses, as significant relationships were observed in the expected directions across variables.**

## DISCUSSION

The research aimed to examine the relationship between perceived parenting styles, conflict resolution styles, and emotional regulation among young adults. The findings provide clear evidence that parenting styles play a significant role in shaping both emotional and interpersonal functioning.

The results indicated that authoritative parenting was consistently associated with adaptive outcomes. It showed a positive relationship with cognitive reappraisal and positive problem solving, and a negative relationship with expressive suppression, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance. The findings suggests that individuals who perceive their parents as warm, responsive, and appropriately controlling are more likely to regulate their emotions effectively and engage in constructive conflict resolution. This aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by Diana Baumrind, which identifies authoritative parenting as the most developmentally beneficial style. The findings are also consistent with previous

research showing that supportive parenting fosters emotional competence and healthy interpersonal behaviour.

In contrast, authoritarian parenting emerged as a strong predictor of maladaptive outcomes. It was positively associated with expressive suppression, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance, and negatively associated with cognitive reappraisal and positive problem solving. Notably, authoritarian parenting showed particularly strong relationships with withdrawal and emotional suppression, suggesting that individuals raised in highly controlling environments may develop tendencies to avoid conflict or inhibit emotional expression. This may be due to fear of negative consequences or limited opportunities for open emotional communication during development.

Similarly, permissive parenting was associated with less adaptive patterns, including higher levels of withdrawal, compliance, and conflict engagement, along with lower levels of constructive problem solving. Although permissive parenting involves warmth, the lack of structure and guidance may hinder the development of effective emotional regulation and conflict management skills. These findings highlight that warmth alone is insufficient; appropriate control and guidance are also essential for adaptive development.

A key contribution of the study lies in highlighting the role of emotional regulation in relation to conflict resolution styles. Cognitive reappraisal was positively associated with constructive conflict strategies and negatively associated with maladaptive ones, whereas expressive suppression showed the opposite pattern. This supports the process model of emotional regulation proposed by Gross (1998), which distinguishes between adaptive and maladaptive regulation strategies. The findings suggest that individuals who can effectively reinterpret emotional situations are better equipped to manage interpersonal conflicts.

Overall, the results support an integrated understanding in which perceived parenting styles influence emotional regulation patterns, which in turn shape conflict resolution behaviour. Authoritative parenting emerges as a protective factor promoting adaptive emotional and interpersonal functioning, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are associated with maladaptive patterns. These findings underscore the long-term impact of early family environments on psychological and social outcomes in young adulthood.

## CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between perceived parenting styles, conflict resolution styles, and emotional regulation among young adults. Authoritative parenting emerged as the most beneficial style, promoting adaptive emotional regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and constructive conflict resolution behaviours. In contrast, authoritarian parenting was identified as a significant risk factor associated with emotional suppression, withdrawal, and ineffective communication. Permissive parenting, despite its warmth, was also linked to maladaptive outcomes due to a lack of structure and guidance.
The study further highlights the importance of emotional regulation as a key psychological process influencing conflict resolution behaviour. While adaptive strategies facilitate constructive interpersonal behaviour, maladaptive strategies contribute to avoidance, compliance, and conflict engagement

Overall, the findings emphasize the long-term impact of early parenting experiences on emotional development and interpersonal functioning in young adulthood.

### *Implications*

The findings have important practical implications for counselling, education, and family interventions. They highlight the importance of addressing early parenting experiences in psychological practice and promoting adaptive emotional regulation strategies among young adults. Parenting programs should emphasize authoritative practices that balance warmth and discipline. Additionally, training in emotional regulation and conflict resolution can enhance interpersonal functioning and psychological well-being in both educational and workplace settings.

### *Limitations*

The study is subject to certain limitations. The use of self-report measures may introduce response bias, and the reliance on retrospective perceptions of parenting may not fully reflect actual parental behaviour. The relatively small and geographically limited sample reduces the generalizability of the findings. Demographic variables were not explored in depth, which may have provided further insight into the findings.

### *Suggestions For Future Research*

Future research can build on these findings by employing longitudinal designs to examine developmental patterns over time. Further the underlying mechanisms linking perceived parenting styles and conflict resolution styles by examining the mediating role of emotional regulation can be explored. Expanding the sample to include diverse populations and examining contextual factors such as family structure and socio-economic status would also enhance the generalizability and depth of future research.

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***Acknowledgment***

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Thete, S. & Vaidya, S. (2026). How You were Raised Shapes How You React Perceived Parenting, Conflict Resolution and Emotional Regulation in Young Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, *14*(4), 277-285. DIP:18.01.025. 20261404, DOI:10.25215/1404.025