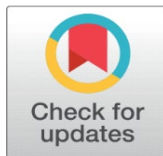


EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN RELATION WITH PARENTING AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Dr. Ashwini B. P. ¹

¹ Associate Professor, PG Department of Studies in Psychology, Maharani's Arts College for Women, Mysore, Karnataka, India



DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.6488](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.6488)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2024 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical developmental phase characterized by emotional reactivity and the expansion of social roles. This study investigates the relationship between parenting styles, emotional regulation, and prosocial behavior among adolescents. A sample of 300 adolescents aged 13–18 years was surveyed using standardized scales for parenting style, emotional regulation, and prosocial behavior. Results revealed that authoritative parenting was positively correlated with higher emotional regulation, which subsequently predicted prosocial behavior. Findings indicate that emotional regulation mediates the relationship between parenting and prosocial behavior. The implications emphasize the importance of supportive parenting practices in enhancing adolescent well-being.

Keywords: Emotional Regulation, Prosocial Behavior, Parenting Styles, Adolescents, Mediation

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence represents one of the most rapid and critical stages of human development, characterized by significant physical, psychological, and social changes (Steinberg, 2020). Emotional regulation plays a pivotal role in maintaining psychological well-being and fostering adaptive behaviors.

Emotional regulation refers to a range of complex skills that can be used to assist with day-to-day adaption as well as contact with other people. According to Shapiro's research, emotional regulation is a necessary component of resilience. It is essential to the development of adolescents' mental health because it lays the groundwork for enhanced social functioning (Hsieh S, Yao ZF, Yang MH, 2021)

Prosocial behavior is indeed a universal social phenomenon. These behaviors are voluntary and include acts of kindness, helping those in need, cooperating with others, and showing compassion (Du Yusang, 2020). Prosocial behavior, defined as voluntary actions intended to benefit others, reflects moral and social development during adolescence (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Parenting, as a primary socialization agent, exerts profound influence on both emotional and social outcomes (Baumrind, 1991).

Prosocial behavior is indeed a universal social phenomenon. It involves acts intended to benefit others without any direct personal gain for the perpetrator. These behaviors are voluntary and include acts of kindness, helping those in need, cooperating with others, and showing compassion. [9]

Prosocial behavior is a kind of behavior in line with social expectations, which can form and maintain a good relationship between people, so as to make the stable development of society. Recent research indicates that the connection among age and prosocial behavior is more intricate [1]. Caplan proposed that children's prosocial intentions become counter balanced by self-interest or other inhibitory factors with their ages [2].

Parenting style, as defined by Bee & Boyd (2010), is a "constellation of attitudes that form the context in which parenting behavior occurs". According to Nisha (2017), a mother and father have an inherent and equally important responsibility to foster the expansion and maturation of their offspring. They provide knowledge, instruct the children, and guide the activities that the children participate in.

Authoritative parenting, which combines warmth with consistent discipline, has consistently been linked to positive adolescent outcomes including emotional competence and prosociality (Steinberg, 2001). In contrast, neglectful or authoritarian parenting may hinder adaptive regulation and social functioning. While research in Western contexts is extensive, studies exploring these dynamics in Indian adolescents remain limited. This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing how parenting relates to emotional regulation and prosocial tendencies, with a focus on possible mediating mechanisms.

2. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

- **Primary objective:** Examine relationships between parenting style, adolescent emotional regulation, and prosocial behaviour.
- **Secondary objective:** Test whether emotional regulation mediates the link between parenting style and prosocial behaviour.
- **Hypotheses: H1:** Authoritative parenting will be positively associated with adolescents' emotional regulation and prosocial behaviour.
- **H2:** Authoritarian and permissive parenting will be negatively associated (or less positively) with emotional regulation and prosocial behaviour.
- **H3:** Emotional regulation will mediate the relationship between parenting styles (particularly authoritative) and prosocial behaviour.

3. METHOD

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study adopted a correlational quantitative research design to explore the association among parenting styles, emotional regulation, and prosocial behaviour among adolescents. This design was chosen as it allows researchers to identify patterns and strength of relationships between psychological constructs without manipulating variables, thereby maintaining ecological validity.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure balanced representation across gender, socio-economic status, and school type (government and private). The final sample comprised 300 adolescents aged between 13 and 18 years, with equal representation of boys ($n = 150$) and girls ($n = 150$).

The research relied on standardized psychometric instruments:

Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ) to assess authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) to measure cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression.

Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM) to evaluate altruism, public helping, and emotional prosocial tendencies.

Prior to administration, the tools were pilot-tested on a small sample ($n = 30$) to ensure cultural relevance and clarity of instructions. Reliability coefficients obtained for the study sample were satisfactory (Cronbach's α ranging from 0.81 to 0.89).

Ethical clearance was obtained from the institutional research committee. Informed consent from parents and assent from adolescents were collected before participation. Data collection was carried out in classroom settings by trained assistants, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, multiple regression, and mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro. This combination of analyses enabled the researcher to test both direct and indirect effects of parenting on prosocial behaviour through emotional regulation.

3.2. SAMPLE

Participants included 300 adolescents (150 boys, 150 girls) aged between 13 and 18 years from schools in Mysore, Karnataka. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure gender and socio-economic diversity.

3.3. INSTRUMENTS

- Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ; Robinson et al., 1995) for assessing parenting dimensions (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive).
- Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003) for measuring cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression.
- Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM; Carlo & Randall, 2002) for assessing prosocial tendencies in different contexts.

All instruments demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha > .80).

3.4. PROCEDURE

Permission was obtained from school authorities. Parental consent and adolescent assent were secured. Data was collected in classroom settings under researcher supervision. Ethical considerations including confidentiality and voluntary participation were ensured.

3.5. ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using SPSS v25. Descriptive statistics, 't' test Pearson correlations, and multiple regression were employed. Mediation analysis was tested using PROCESS Macro (Model 4; Hayes, 2013).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics indicated that adolescents reported moderate to high levels of emotional regulation and prosocial behavior. "t" test revealed no significant disparity either with gender or the type of school. Correlation analyses showed authoritative parenting positively correlated with emotional regulation ($r = .48, p < .01$) and prosocial behavior ($r = .42, p < .01$). Authoritarian parenting was negatively correlated with both outcomes, while permissive parenting showed weak associations.

Regression analyses demonstrated that emotional regulation significantly predicted prosocial behavior ($\beta = .45, p < .001$). Mediation analysis confirmed that emotional regulation partially mediated the relationship between parenting styles and prosocial behavior.

These findings corroborate earlier works that highlight the role of parenting in shaping adolescent development (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg, 2001). The results also align with Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory and Bowlby's (1988). Research conducted across different countries and age groups consistently supports the notion that the authoritative parenting style yields better and more positive outcomes for children. Regardless of country and age, this approach has been linked to higher levels of emotional management and lower problematic behaviors (Awiszus, A., Koenig, M., & Vaisarova, J, 2022). Attachment Theory, suggesting that parenting influences social development indirectly through emotional regulation. Importantly, the study adds culturally relevant insights within the Indian adolescent context.

5. LIMITATIONS

- Reliance on self-report measures introduces the possibility of social desirability bias.
- Cross-sectional design limits causal inferences.
- Sample restricted to urban and semi-urban adolescents in Mysore limits generalizability.
- Future studies should adopt longitudinal designs and include rural populations for broader applicability.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that parenting styles, particularly authoritative parenting, play a pivotal role in shaping adolescent outcomes. Adolescents raised in warm, yet structured family environments exhibited higher levels of emotional regulation, which in turn facilitated prosocial tendencies such as helping, empathy, and cooperation.

Importantly, the study establishes emotional regulation as a mediating variable, underscoring its significance as a psychological mechanism through which parenting influences adolescent behaviour. This highlights the need for parents to not only provide guidance and discipline but also model and encourage healthy emotional management strategies.

From an applied perspective, the results can inform school-based interventions, parental training programs, and counselling practices aimed at enhancing emotional competence and social responsibility among adolescents. Policymakers and educators should also recognize that investment in parental education programs can indirectly foster civic-minded and empathetic future citizens.

While the study is limited by its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-report data, it provides valuable cultural insights into the Indian adolescent context. Future research should employ longitudinal methods and explore additional moderators such as peer influence, digital media exposure, and socio-economic challenges.

In conclusion, the research affirms that parenting remains a cornerstone of adolescent development. By fostering emotional regulation, parents can nurture prosocial behaviour that benefits not only individual adolescents but also the wider community.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Awiszus, A., Koenig, M. ., & Vaisarova, J. Parenting Styles and Their Effect on Child Development and Outcome. *Journal of Student Research*, 2022, 11(3).
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Baumrind, D. (1991). The influence of parenting style on adolescent competence and substance use. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 11(1), 56–95.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*. Basic Books.
- Boyd DR, Bee HL. *The growing child*. Allyn & Bacon; 2010.
- Carlo, G., & Randall, B. A. (2002). The development of a measure of prosocial behaviors for late adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 31(1), 31–44.
- Carlo, G., Fabes, R. A., Laible, D., & Kupanoff, K. (1999). Early adolescence and prosocial/moral behavior II: The role of social and contextual influences. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 19(2), 133–147.
- Du Yusang. *Effecting Factors and Intervention Techniques of Children's Prosocial Behavior*, 2020, Oxford, UK

- Eisenberg, N., & Fabes, R. A. (1998). Prosocial development. In W. Damon & N. Eisenberg (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (pp. 701–778). Wiley.
- Eisenberg, N., Spinrad, T. L., & Morris, A. S. (2014). Emotion-related regulation: The construct and its development. *Child Development*, 85(1), 45–64.
- Gross, J. J. (2002). Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences. *Psychophysiology*, 39(3), 281–291.
- Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(2), 348–362.
- Hsieh S, Yao ZF, Yang MH. Multimodal imaging analysis reveals frontal-associated networks in relation to individual resilience strength. *Int J Environ Res Pub Health* 2021;18(3):1123.
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis*. Guilford Press.
- Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (pp. 1–101). Wiley.
- Morris, A. S., Silk, J. S., Steinberg, L., Myers, S. S., & Robinson, L. R. (2007). The role of the family context in the development of emotion regulation. *Social Development*, 16(2), 361–388.
- Nisha K, Jayan C. Perceived parenting styles and mental health of adolescents: The mediating role of difficulties in emotion regulation. *ZENITH Int J Multidiscipl Res* 2017;7(9):79-89
- Robinson, C. C., Mandlco, B., Olsen, S. F., & Hart, C. H. (1995). Authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting practices: Development of a new measure. *Psychological Reports*, 77(3), 819–830.
- Steinberg, L. (2001). We know some things: Parent-adolescent relationships in retrospect and prospect. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 11(1), 1–19.
- Steinberg, L., & Silk, J. S. (2002). Parenting adolescents. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of Parenting* (pp. 103–133). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Laible, D. J., Carlo, G., & Roesch, S. C. (2004). Pathways to self-esteem in late adolescence: The role of parent and peer attachment, empathy, and social behaviors. *Journal of Adolescence*, 27(6), 703–716.
- Hoffman, M. L. (2000). *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(3), 487–496.
- Davis, M. H. (1994). *Empathy: A Social Psychological Approach*. Routledge.
- Fabes, R. A., Carlo, G., Kupanoff, K., & Laible, D. (1999). Early adolescence and prosocial/moral behavior I: The role of individual processes. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 19(1), 5–16.
- Brown, B. B., & Larson, J. (2009). Peer relationships in adolescence. In R. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (pp. 74–103). Wiley.
- Collins, W. A., & Steinberg, L. (2006). Adolescent development in interpersonal context. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (pp. 1003–1067). Wiley.
- Hart, D., Atkins, R., & Fegley, S. (2003). Personality and development in childhood: A person-centered approach. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 68(1), 1–122.
- Wentzel, K. R. (1998). Social relationships and motivation in middle school: The role of parents, teachers, and peers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(2), 202–209.
- Zahn-Waxler, C., Radke-Yarrow, M., Wagner, E., & Chapman, M. (1992). Development of concern for others. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(1), 126–136.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Sample Items from Research Instruments

Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ)

- “My parent explains the reasons behind rules.”
- “My parent punishes me by withholding privileges.”
- “My parent allows me to do whatever I want.”

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)

“When I want to feel more positive emotions, I change the way I’m thinking about the situation.”

- “I keep my emotions to myself.”

Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM)

- “I feel an obligation to help others in need.”
- “I help others to improve my reputation.”

Appendix B: Demographic Information Collected

- Age
- Gender
- Class/Grade
- Type of School (Government / Private)
- Family Type (Nuclear / Joint)

Appendix C: Reliability Statistics

- Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ): $\alpha = 0.83$
- Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ): $\alpha = 0.81$
- Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM): $\alpha = 0.89$