

## **Secondary School Students' Perceived Parenting Style and Students Emotional Reactivity**

*Syeda Javaria Imran<sup>1</sup>, Fakhra Aziz<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*PhD Scholar Institute of Education, Lahore College for University*

<sup>2</sup>*Assistant Professor, Lahore College for University*

Email; [Fakhraaziz@hotmail.com](mailto:Fakhraaziz@hotmail.com)

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The present study aimed to examine the effect of secondary school students' perceived parenting style on their emotional reactivity. The population consisted of all secondary school students enrolled in public high schools of Lahore city. Two schools were selected purposively and adopted, and research instruments were distributed among 400 students who were randomly selected. The response rate was 88%. Three hundred and fifty-three students completed the parental style questionnaire and Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were used to analyze the data. Authoritative parenting style was revealed as the most common parenting style. Further, it was found to have a more significant effect on positive emotional reactivity than the permissive parenting style. Authoritative and permissive mothers and authoritative fathers have a significant effect on emotional reactivity. It can be concluded that authoritative mothers have a more strong influence on the students' emotional reactivity.

**Key Words:** *Parenting Style, Emotional Reactivity, Secondary School Students*

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### **Introduction**

There is a wide range of studies on outcomes related to parenting styles. Topics of academic achievement, social and emotional problems, cognitive functioning and behavioural problems, all have been vital areas of inquiries in different contexts and in different parts of the world. Parenting is considered as a complex phenomenon. It includes different behaviours in different combinations. Parenting style based on how parents respond to the needs and want of children and how they supervise and discipline them. These parenting styles deeply effect on children. Spera (2005) differentiates between parenting practices and parenting styles. The combinations of explicit

conduct that parents adapt to make their children social are considered parenting practices. Parenting style is the emotional /caring tender environment in which parents brought up their kids (Spera, 2005). So, it is one of the most difficult questions that which is the best parenting style in Pakistani culture to make our children socially and emotionally strong. Most researchers who are investigating parenting styles, depending on the concept of Diana Baumrind. This approach to parenting style is used to confine the diversity of parental control and socialization (Baumrind, 1991). Parenting style includes two dimensions: Parental responsiveness and Parental demandingness. On the basis of parental

responsiveness and demandingness, parenting styles are categorized into four styles which are authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, lenient parenting style and negligent parenting style (Maccoby, 1983).

Authoritative parents are smart. They motivate their kids to be independent but also show them their limits about their behaviour and actions. They give some freedom to their kids but the final decisions rely on them. Their kids are confident to participate in a discussion and know that their views are also important for others. As a result, they are confident and independent (Kopko, 2007). Authoritarian Parents are highly dominating and controlling. They are cold and rigid. They impose their kids to obey them without listening to their point of views. Children of authoritarian parents become stubborn (Woolfolk, 2010). The parents who are lenient are very relaxed. They are submissive and believe in listening to their kids. They just want to follow their kids and fulfil their needs and demands. In response, children take their decision on their own without asking their parents (Kopko, 2007). It was seen that uninvolved parents were not warmed and do not place demands on their children. these parents had very few interactions with their children, uninvolved parents. They are not demanding towards their children and are a bus in their own lives. These parents

are not concerned with their children so their kids keep themselves busy and not bother their parents (Kopko, 2007). A Plethora of research is present on emotions, emotional stability and emotional regulation, but only a little research has focused on emotional reactivity. Emotional reactivity is considered as the first component of emotional regulation. Emotional regulation is a wide term which includes taking initiative, regulation strategies or controlling the incident, strength and emotion occurrences. Emotional regulation can be defined in terms of balancing the inner emotional reactivity, whether positive or negative. We can explain it as arousal of emotions and emotional regulation and it can be elaborated as coping, balancing or managing the emotions (Karrass, Walden, Graham, & Kia N, 2005). Emotional reactivity refers to the extent to which an individual experience emotions (Nock, Wedig, & Elizabeth B. Holmberg, 2008). Davidson classified it as (a) valence (b) activation (c) intensity and (d) duration (Davidson, 1998). Emotional reactivity includes valence which is positive and negative emotions. Emotional reactivity is sometimes considered as a negative emotion but there are also positive emotions as well. It experiences the common and strong emotional stimulus and its reaction. The threshold of emotional

arousal needed to generate a response and the degree of components of emotional response, both are parts of emotional reactivity (Spinrad, 2004). Adolescence brings many changes in children. Due to hormonal change children face physical, mental and emotional changes. Of this emotional reactivity is one of the most crucial traits in a person's behaviour. It refers to the degree of emotion which a person feels or experiences (Nock, Wedig, & Elizabeth B. Holmberg, 2008). Parenting is a complex phenomenon which affects children's overall behaviour. The Role of parenting is very crucial for children at in adolescence. It is considered the age of physical, mental and emotional development. Deater-Deckard and Dodge (1997) have recommended that the relationship between strict parenting and child anger depends on parenting that whether parenting is carried out in an emotionally stimulated or emotionally controlled manner. It was concluded that strict parenting effects on child anger (Deater-Deckard, 1997). Children's ability to manage their emotions efficiently is an essential ability for successful interactions with their friends, family and other children (Eisenberg, 2002). Rutherford and his colleagues investigated that parents play an important role in the development of emotional regulation in their children (Rutherford, 2015). Morris and his

colleagues introduced a tripartite model on the influence of family on children emotional adjustment and balancing. With respect to this model parents effect on children's emotional adjustment through three ways, Firstly, by observing parent's emotional balancing, parent's emotions during parenting and their family's emotional climate (Morris, 2007). Separately, other researches also investigate the effects of parenting and emotional regulation. Findings implicate that children's emotional regulation is influenced by their parents' emotions and behaviours (Lei Chang, 2003). Guided by this theoretical framework, many other researchers have investigated the effect of parenting on emotion regulation. Their efforts have focused on children's different specifications and context such as poverty, depression, non-social behaviour etc(Morris, Criss, & Houlberg, 2017). Considering these separate researches the present research examines another important component of emotional regulation which is emotional reactivity. There is a lack of literature on this important component of emotional regulation regarding parenting style. So the present research is an effort to investigate the impact of parenting style on secondary school student's emotional reactivity. Pakistan is a multicultural country, where adverse parenting exists in different social,

economic, religious, regional and gender contexts. Some are demanding and some are controlling, some are lenient and some are ignoring. Plenty of research work is present on parenting style and different individual's trait. At adolescence age, emotional reactivity is considered a vital trait to polish through parenting. Many researchers work on parenting style and self-regulation but there is a lack of research on parenting style and emotional reactivity which is the first component of self-regulation and very important in a person's life for developing a good relationship with their peers and friends. Taking into consideration, the significance of the relationship of variables and its impact on whole society, the present study was planned to measure and examine the effect of secondary school students' perceived parenting style and its impact on their emotional reactivity.

### **Objectives**

1. To identify the most common students' perceived parenting style of their parents.
2. To examine the effect of students' perceived parenting style on their emotional reactivity.

### **Research Questions**

1. Which is the most common students' perceived parenting style of their parents?

2. Which is the most common students' perceived parenting style of their mothers?
3. Which is the most common students' perceived parenting style of their fathers?
4. Does students' perceived parenting style affect their emotional reactivity?
5. Whose perceived parenting style, Father's or mother's affect more their emotional reactivity?

### **Method and Procedure**

For this quantitative research, survey technique was used. All secondary school students comprised the population. Purposively two schools were selected. Four hundred secondary students were randomly accessed to collect data. To identify parenting style and its effect on emotional reactivity, two separate questionnaires were adopted. After a comprehensive review of literature and consultation with experts the "*Parenting style scale*" (Gafoor&Kurukkah, 2014) for investigating parenting styles and the *Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale* (PERS) were adopted. The "*Parenting style scale*" was developed by Abdul Gafoor, K & Abidha Kurukkan in 2014. Items of scale based on findings of the Diana Baumrind, so the scale has construct validity in relation to parenting style. The validity coefficient is found to be 0.80 for responsiveness and 0.76 for control subscale. The test-retest

coefficient of reliability of responsiveness variable in the scale is 0.81 and for control, it is 0.83.

In parenting style questionnaire, students respond on the five-point Likert scale as, “5 for strongly agree”, “4 for agree”, “3 for neither agree nor disagree”, “2 for disagree”, and “1 for strongly disagree”. The score was five to one. There were no negative items. First-half items from 1 to 19 of scales were about responsiveness and the last half items from statement no. 19 to 38 were control items. Initially, all scores of control and responsiveness were found out individually.

Scores for both parents was taken separately and the sum of scores of each parent was taken for an overall score of an item. So the scale gives six types of scores for every student, named as mother’s responsiveness, father’s responsiveness, mother’s control, father’s control, parental responsiveness and parental control.

A parent whose scores are above the median in both dimensions control and responsiveness is considered as an authoritative and a parent who scores are below the median in these two dimensions is considered neglectful. The parent who’s

score was high in control dimension and low in responsiveness is authoritarian and permissive in the vice versa. These scores yield parenting style.

The *Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale* (PERS) was able to measure emotional reactivity. This scale was developed by Rodrigo Becerra and Guillermo Campitelli in 2013. It is comprised of 30 items. For all scales, higher scores show higher levels of reactivity in that dimension (Becerra & Campitelli, 2013). The sum responses to all even number statements indicate the overall level of reactivity for negative emotions and some responses to all odd number statements indicates positive reactivity.

### **Data Analysis**

For identification of most prevailing parenting style, frequencies were calculated by using simple descriptive statistics. Further, ANOVA was applied to find out the difference and effect of parenting style on emotional reactivity of students. Tukey post hoc tests were executed to find out where the significant differences were. Frequency tables were used to identify the most common parenting style.

**Table 1**

*Perceived parenting styles of high school students*

Parenting style	Frequency	Per cent
Authoritative	136	38.5
Authoritarian	44	12.5
Permissive	45	12.7
Neglectful	128	36.3
Total	353	100

The frequency table shows that the perceived parenting style of 38.5% students is authoritative while 12.5%,12.7% and 36.3% of students perceived parenting style is authoritarian, permissive and neglectful

respectively. The table shows that the authoritative parenting style is the most common perceived parenting style of secondary school students.

**Table -2**

*Perceived mother parenting style of high school students*

Mother parenting style	Frequency	Per cent
Authoritative	139	39.4
Authoritarian	46	13
Permissive	51	14.4
Neglectful	117	33.1
Total	353	100

The frequency table shows that perceived mother parenting style of 39.4% of students is authoritative while 13%,14.4% and 33.1% of students perceived mother parenting style is authoritarian, permissive

and neglectful respectively. The table shows that the authoritative parenting style is the most common perceived mother parenting style of secondary school students.

**Table-3**

*Perceived father parenting style of high school students*

<b>Father parenting style</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Authoritative	145	41.1
Authoritarian	44	12.5
Permissive	42	11.9
Neglectful	122	34.6
Total	353	100

Frequency table shows that perceived father parenting style of 41.1% students is authoritative while 12.5%,11.9% and

34.6% of student’s father parenting style is authoritarian permissive and neglectful respectively. It shows that the authoritative

parenting style is the most common perceived father parenting style of secondary school students. The differences between the emotional reactivity of

students who had reported different parenting styles of their parents were calculated by applying ANOVA. The results are shown in the table given below.

**Table-4**

*Difference between emotional reactivity of students different perceived parenting styles*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1098.566	3	366.189	5.234	.002
Within Groups	24418.229	349	69.966		
Total	25516.795	352			

The Table shows that parenting style significantly effects on positive emotional reactivity. The F-ratio is 5.234 and this value is significant at a 0.002 level, which is below 0.05. Differences were significant

so the Tukey post hoc tests were executed to find out where the significant differences were. Below Tables shows only significant differences.

**Table-5**

*Difference between students' positive emotional different perceived parenting styles*

(I) parenting style	(J) parenting style	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Authoritative	neglectful	3.584*	1.030	.003
permissive	neglectful	4.127*	1.450	.024

A significant difference between a mean score of positive emotional reactivity of students having perceived their parent's style as authoritative and neglectful at (p=0.003) was found. A significant difference also existed in emotional reactivity of students who reported their parenting style as permissive and neglectful

at (p=0.024). However, there is no significant difference between the authoritarian parenting style with respect to neglectful (p=0.104). From the above table, It can be concluded that the Authoritative parenting style has a more significant effect on positive emotional reactivity as compared to the permissive parenting style.

**Table-6**

*Difference between students' negative emotional reactivity and their perceived parenting style*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	791.874	3	263.958	2.094	.101
Within Groups	44000.048	349	126.075		
Total	44791.921	352			

The Table shows that parenting style has no significant effect on negative emotional reactivity. The F-ratio is 2.094 and this value is significant at a 0.101 level, which

is above 0.05. Hence there is no statistically significant difference between parenting style and negative emotional reactivity.

**Table-7**

*Difference between students' positive emotional reactivity and their perceived mother's parenting style*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1468.563	3	489.521	7.104	.000
Within Groups	24048.232	349	68.906		
Total	25516.795	352			

The table shows that mother parenting style significantly effects on positive emotional reactivity. The F-ratio is 7.104 and this value is significant at a 0.000 level, which is below 0.05. Hence there is a statistically

significant difference between mother parenting style and positive reactivity. So Tukey posthoc test was used to find the differences between groups.

**Table-9**

*Difference between students' positive emotional reactivity perceived mothers parenting style*

(I) mother parenting style	(J) mother parenting style	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Authoritative	neglectful	4.555*	1.041	.000
Permissive	neglectful	4.095*	1.393	.018

It was observed that there is a significant difference between emotional reactivity of students having perceived their mother's parenting style as the authoritative and neglectful at (p=0.000). A significant difference exists between permissive and

neglectful mother parenting style at (p=0.018). It can be concluded that Authoritative mother parenting style has a more significant effect on positive emotional reactivity as compared to Permissive parenting style.

**Table-10**

*Difference between students' negative emotional reactivity mother's parenting style*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	651.807	3	217.269	1.718	.163
Within Groups	44140.114	349	126.476		
Total	44791.921	352			



The Table shows that the mother parenting style has no significant effect on negative emotional reactivity. The F-ratio is 1.718 and this value is significant at a 0.163 level,

which is above 0.05. Hence, there is no statistically significant difference between mother parenting style and negative reactivity.

**Table-11**

*Difference between students' positive emotional reactivity and their perceived Father'*

This table shows that father parenting style significantly affects positive emotional reactivity. The F-ratio is 7.047 and this value is significant at a 0.000 level, which is below 0.05. Hence, there is a statistically

significant difference between father parenting style and positive reactivity. Tukey post hoc test was used to find the differences between groups.

**Table-12**

*Difference between students' positive emotional reactivity having different perceived Father's parenting style*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	679.231	3	226.410	1.791	.148
Within Groups	44112.690	349	126.397		
Total	44791.921	352			

The Table shows significant differences between emotional reactivity of students having different perceived father parenting style. A significant difference between the emotional reactivity of students having

authoritative and neglectful father parenting style at (p=0.000) was found. It was revealed that Authoritative father parenting style has a more significant effect on positive emotional reactivity.

**Table-13**

*Difference between students' negative emotional reactivity perceived Father's parenting style*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	679.231	3	226.410	1.791	.148
Within Groups	44112.690	349	126.397		
Total	44791.921	352			

The table shows that father parenting style has no significant effect on negative emotional reactivity. The F-ratio is 1.791 and this value is significant at a 0.148 level,

which is above 0.05. Hence, there is no statistically significant difference between negative emotional reactivity of students having different father's parenting style.

## Discussion

The key purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful) on emotional reactivity (positive and negative). Emotional reactivity is considered as a component of emotional regulation and previously investigated with emotional regulation but in the present study, the focus is on emotional reactivity rather than emotional regulation. It is not investigated separately with parenting styles before.

Many researchers investigated parenting and emotional regulation together. Morris et al. (2017) investigated that parent's emotional support is associated with effective emotional regulation of children. However, there is a need to demonstrate the emotional reactivity and parenting using specific designs (Morris A. S., Criss, Silk, & Houlberg, 2017). Researchers also suggest that if parents are too harsh or permissive then children may feel difficult in regulating emotions (Morris, S., Cui, & Steinberg, 2013). Bariola et al. (2012) investigated the parent-child emotion regulation from mid-childhood to adolescence period. All these researches support the findings of the present study.

The present study reports the stronger influence of mothers' parenting style on students emotional reactivity than fathers' parenting style. This finding is in line with

Bariola, Hughes and Gullone (2012) who concluded that that children emotion regulation is more closely associated with their mothers than their fathers. Chang, Schwartz, Dodge and University D in 2003 examined the effect of parenting style on students emotional regulation. They narrated that mother's harsh/strict parenting has a stronger effect on emotional regulation than fathers'. Father's harsh/strict parenting strongly effects on child's aggression. This is contrary to present findings which report no effect of authoritative parenting on negative emotional reactivity. Further, Chang, Schwartz, etc (2003) explored gender differences in effects of parenting on emotional regulation of students and reported the stronger effect of father's harsh parenting on sons as compared but this was out of present study's domain.

Previous studies have more focus on emotional regulation rather than emotional reactivity. Present research studies discussed the effect of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful) on emotional reactivity (positive and negative). Findings of the present studies conclude that authoritative parenting style effects more on positive emotional reactivity and mother's parenting style has a more significant effect on emotional reactivity than father parenting style.

## Conclusion

The present study reported “authoritative” as most common parenting style of Pakistani parents as perceived by their children at the secondary school level. It was also found that parenting style either it may be authoritative, permissive or neglectful influence positive emotional reactivity of students while it has no effect on negative emotional reactivity. The extent of influence varies from one style to another style. As Authoritative parenting style has a more significant effect than the permissive parenting style. In contrast the others, neglectful parenting style has no significant effect on any type of positive and negative emotional reactivity. It was also revealed that students emotional reactivity is more influenced by the mother’s authoritative parenting style than their permissive style. The remaining two parenting styles (Authoritarian and neglectful) have no significant effect on the positive or negative emotional reactivity. The same case is reported for father’s parenting styles. In short, most common parenting style reported was authoritative and its association with the positive emotional reactivity of students was also found. Further mothers’ influence was greater than fathers.

## The implication for further studies

Moreover due to the fact that in addition to the parenting style, there are many other

variables which effects on student’s emotional reactivity. In order to more generalize findings in future studies, the effect of other relevant variables such as school environment, home environment, family structure, parental education etc would be more studied at a more assertive method and more advanced processing.

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