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RESEARCH PAPER

Unpacking the Relationship among Perceived Parental Rearing Styles, Perfectionist Tendencies and Self-criticism in University Students

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ABSTRACT

Perceived parental rearing styles and perfectionist tendencies can have significant impacts on a university student's well-being, academic performance, and overall development. This study was conducted with the aim to unpacking the relationship among perceived parental rearing styles, perfectionist tendencies and self-criticism in university students. A cross-sectional research design with stratified random sampling technique was used to investigate the relationship. The sample consisted of 300 participants that were selected from 3 different universities within the age range of 18 to 25 years. A 100 participant were chosen from each university on the basis of strata. Egna Minnen Betraffande Uppfostran Scale (Perris et al., 1980), perfectionist tendencies scale and self-criticism scale were used to collect data from the participants. The results revealed that emotional warmth by parents is positively correlated with perfectionist tendencies whereas it is negatively correlated to self-criticism. Work related perfectionism has a negative relationship with self-criticism and perfectionism towards self and others have a positive relationship with self-criticism. In conclusion, different parenting styles can influence how students perceive themselves and their abilities. Authoritative parenting tends to foster positive outcomes, while authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful parenting may contribute to various challenges.

| **KEYWORDS** | Perceived Parental Rearing Styles, Perfectionist Tendencies, Self-Criticism, University Students |

Introduction

The start of university life is a crucial period for the students as the great transition phase is starting (Blichfeldt & Gram, 2013). As they start becoming familiar with their disciplinary areas, they also are becoming active participants of socialization process (Sogari et al., 2018). Research on the student transition in the university life clearly states the importance of this period in student's academic life as those students who perform poorly in their early years of university life may disengage at an early age of the university life due to several factors such as poor career choices, not being able to get admission in their preferred university, lack of financial resources, etc. (Gibney et al., 2011).

This university transition period may bring a lot of stressors for the late adolescents as they are leaving the security of the family environment and dealing with the new demands of the outside world and strenuous academic challenges (Sogari et al., 2018). Erikson's lifespan theory of psychological development depicts that late adolescent usually counter developing a safe and balanced sense of self identity through this period of time (Hutchison et al., 2016). As they are breaking free some barriers and jumping into the adulthood to achieve the sense of independence (Ferrer-Wreder & Kroger, 2019). A well-structured identity frame provides the feeling of purpose and becomes the basics for effectual coping and transformation to the environment (Savickas et al., 2009). Differences

in identity orientation may play as a student's strive to deal with the transition in university (Sogari et al., 2018).

Effect of parenting on children, there have been many parental theories to justify the concept (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). Baumrind identifies a theory where he explained three parenting styles: Authoritarian parenting, Authoritative parenting and Permissive parenting style (Baumrind, 2005).

Authoritarian parenting is known for its strict rules and regulations which characterize high demands from parent's side (Sarwar, 2016). In Authoritarian parenting, children are expected to tail all the rules set by parents without being spared of any negotiation and expectation. Authoritarian parents do not find it necessary to explain the reasons behind the developed rules (Ihmeideh & Shawareb, 2014). As parents are high on demands in these styles, they are not much responsive to their children and expect them to follow each gesture and rule made by their parents without making any faulty error yet they make it really opaque for the children to understand what they are supposed to do and what not. Parents who exhibit this style are usually described as dictatorial (Kuppens, & Ceulemans, 2019).

Second major style is known as the Authoritative parenting style. Like authoritarian parenting style, this style also makes rules and guidelines for the children however it is much more autonomous. Authoritative parents are very much reactive to their children and listen to their needs (Huver et al., 2010). Parents who follow authoritative style do expect from their children, but they are also very much responsive and provide warmth to them in ad adequate manner. Even when children fail to meet their expectations, these parents are more nurturing understanding and forgiving (Ihunwo, 2022). Children who experience authoritative parenting styles are more autonomous, have more self-control and are more self-regulatory (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Parents who practice this style are warmer and more responsive to their children providing their children with affection and demand mature decisions (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000).

Permissive parents, contrary to authoritarian and authoritative parents, do not set any rules and regulations for their children. They make very few demands and are very lenient, avoid confrontation and allow considerable self-regulation (Ihunwo, 2022). Even though permissive parents can be extremely loving, affectionate, and responsive, they do not expect much from their children and don't offer much in a way of advice and guidelines (Sumargi et al., 2020). In addition to the above mentioned three styles, the fourth style is known as the uninvolved parenting style. This parenting style has a very few demands, low responsiveness and a very little communication between parents and a child (Huver et al., 2010).

Researchers have shown that parenting styles have often been involved in determining the perfection tendencies in children (Assaad, 2023). Following the concept, children who experience different parenting styles tend to develop temperament according to the parenting styles (Affrunti & Woodruff-Borden, 2015). Perfection tendencies can be defined as setting roles and standards which are beyond reality and devoting oneself compulsively towards those impossible goals. Normal perfectionists are conceptualized to be those whose self-esteem is boosted by performing a task well. They give themselves appreciation on completing a task as expected and find pleasure in their efforts made (change et al., 2021). Researchers have differentiated perfectionism into two terms; positive and negative. Positive perfectionism refers to the behaviors which are directed towards achieving high level goals for the sake of positive consequences (Chen et al., 2009). On the other hand, the negative perfectionism urges to achieve higher goals which are unrealistic to achieve and keep away from negative outcomes i.e. failure (Pishva & Besharat, 2011).

There are two types of perfectionisms, one is known as adaptive perfectionism and the other one is known as maladaptive perfectionism (Burnam et al., 2014). As maladaptive perfectionists, people tend to experience more self-criticism that may later be related to depression (lo & Abbott, 2013). Self-criticism is an intense and persistent relationship with self-characterized by an uncompromising demand for high performance and expressions of hostility when expectations are not met (Halamová et al., 2021). Researchers suggest that self- criticism is highly likely to involve a quality of self-bashing and has adverse effects on our physical and mental health. Self-criticism disrupts people's social environment as it propels people to create interpersonal stress (Chafe, 2018). It interferes with people's ability to experience any positivity in life and to mobilize social support in times of need (Cunningham, 2021). This negative environment grows to cause emotional stress which in turn increases self- criticism (Luyten et al., 2011).

The impossible and higher expectations from the self all the time led to extreme distressing life situations and a person may suffer from long term clinical problems (Flett & Hewitt, 2020). Perfectionism can be dysfunctional and can affect a person's interpersonal as well as emotional suffering (Hewitt et al., 2017). Perfectionism has also been associated with early mortality (Fry & Debats, 2009) and also with higher chances of doing suicide (Flett et al., 2014). They also start to lose interest and enjoyment in their ongoing achievements because they remain dissatisfied with their self (Blatt, 2008). Research has investigated influence of perfectionism on psychological health in the Pakistani culture and the findings indicated perfectionism to be a positive indicator of psychological distress and negative indicator of psychological well- being (Butt, 2010). Perfectionism is also related to perceived stress and fear of negative evaluation (Shafique, 2017). Perfectionism tendencies are reported to be linked to narcissism and aggression with no gender variation presence (Rehman, 2016).

As Pakistan is a collectivistic culture and much is expected from the children in our society. So, it is very much important to understand the role of parents in development of their children. When there is a lot to expect, the self-criticism arises on its own so to understand the onset of self-criticism is to be studied under the limelight of parenting styles.

Hypotheses

- It is hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between parental Emotional warmth and overprotection with perfectionistic tendencies and negative relationship with self-criticism in university students.

- It is hypothesized that there would be a negative relationship between parental rejection and Perfectionistic tendencies and a positive relationship with self-criticism in university students.

Material and Methods

This study was conducted to find out the relationship among perceived parental rearing styles, perfectionist tendencies and self-criticism in BS(Hons.) university students. Inform consent was taken from the participants. Participants were ensured that their data will be kept confidential. Participants were selected on the basis of inclusion criteria specifically university students age range between 18-25 years old. Cross-sectional research design, along with stratified random sampling technique was used to collect data from the participants. The total sample size was (N=300, n=150 men and n=150 women). Data was collected from three different universities of Lahore; Pakistan and 100 participants were selected from each university on the basis of strata.

For measuring parental rearing styles, Egna Minnen Betraffande Uppfostran Scale (EMBU-A) was used. It was developed by Winefield and Tiggemann in (1994) consisted of

27 items. This scale comprised of 3 factors named as emotional warmth, overprotection and rejection. Cronbach Alpha for EMBU-A father is .77 and for EMBU-A mother, it is .76 which shows the internal consistence of the items of the scale.

Perfectionist tendencies scale developed by Masood and Naeem (2016). Split half technique was used to shorten the scale into 35 items which originally consisted of 70 items by the developer. Cronbach alpha for Perfectionist tendencies scale is .76 which shows that the scale is internally consistent. Self-Criticism Scale developed by Shehzadi and Saleem (2015). This scale consisted 61 items with three sub-scales i.e., work related perfectionism, being critical to self and others, and interpersonal idealism. The internal consistency of the scale was measured through the Cronbach alpha which appeared to be .94.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Internal Reliability of the used Scales

Scales	*a*
EMBU-A (Father)	.77
EMBU-A (Mother)	.76
Perfectionist Tendencies Scale	.76
Self-criticism scale	.96

The Cronbach alpha values have revealed that all three scales have high internal consistency as their Cronbach alpha values are all above .70.

Table 2
Pearson Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations of Parental Rearing Styles and Self-criticism in University Students (N=300)

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Emotional Warmth-F	...	-.36***	.26**	.73***	-.19*	.26**	-.24**
2.Rejection-F	...	...	.17ns	-.23**	.54***	.02ns	.25**
3.Over Protection-F	...	...	...	.21*	.19*	.67***	.13ns
4. Emotional Warmth-M	....	...	...	...	-.34***	.26**	-.28**
5. Rejection-M	...	...	...	...	...	.24**	.28**
6. Over Protection-M	...	......	...	...	...	...	.14ns
7.Self-criticism	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
M	26.92	3.1	6.75	28.81	3.65	9.19	88.37
SD	9.29	2.77	2.73	8.96	3.02	3.15	41.78

Note. df= 299, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, ns= Non significant,

Table 2 showed that the emotional warmth by parents is negatively correlated with self- criticism while rejection by parents is positively correlated with self-criticism.

Table 3
Pearson Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations of Perfectionist tendencies and Self-criticism in University Students

Factors	1	2	3	4	5
1. Work Related Perfectionism	...	.01ns	.44***	.78***	-.23**
2. Being Critical	...	...	.23**	.53***	.44***
3. Interpersonal Idealism	...	...	...	.74***	-.05ns
4. Perfectionistic Tendencies-total	...	...	...	...	.03ns
5. Self-criticism	...	...	...	...	...
M	26.37	10.71	13.93	51.02	88.37
SD	7.23	5.17	4.16	11.56	41.78

Note. df= 299, **p<.01, ***p<.001, ns= Non significant

Table 3 showed that the work-related perfectionism is negatively correlated with self-criticism while being critical is positively correlated with self-criticism.

Discussion

The current study was carried out to examine the relationship among perceived parental rearing styles, perfectionist tendencies and self-criticism in young adults. it was determining that to what extent the perceived parental rearing styles are responsible for inducing perfectionist tendencies and further self-criticism in young adults. Previous literature focused on assembling facts from different cultural background which came on a conclusion that children are most probably to develop unhealthy perfectionism if the parents expose their children towards authoritarian parenting. Children are more likely to develop perfectionism when they are not appreciated for the tasks, they do rather are expected to perform well in each of the tasks given to them (Kawamura et al., 2002).

Controlled behavior by parents towards their children can induce setting of high goals which are unrealistic and non-achievable. Controlled behavior is usually shown in authoritarian parenting style which can cause low self-esteem, no self-reliance in children and hinder them in taking up any challenging task (Frey et al., 2019). Authoritarian parenting style usually highlights the overprotective parental rearing practice by parents. Authoritative parenting which renders emotional warmth by parents tends to provide a platform where the children do know the boundaries but not much is expected from them rather is accepted by parents whatever the outcomes of a task are. Children with authoritarian parenting though are more prone to self-criticism as negative cognitive styles are directly associated with self-criticism and childhood traumas and experiences (Steinberg et al., 1992).

As per the results of the study conducted on perceived parental styles, perfectionist tendencies and self-criticism in young adults, it was unveiled that in our collectivistic culture emotional warmth and over protection by both the parents do result in inducing positive perfectionist tendencies in young adults. According to one cross cultural study conducted on Eastern and Asian sample, putting high demands and expecting much from children without showing them any emotional warmth is directly related to feelings of being criticized, overly concerned about committing mistakes and doubting one's abilities (Ahmad Khosravi et al., 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the aim of this study was to analyze and present the relationship among perceived parental styles, perfectionist tendencies and self-criticism. Each parenting style has its own characteristics and values which shape child's life in psychological and social way. All factors aside but one of the major factors in child's upbringing is their psychological development and psychological control through parenting styles. This psychological intervene help the parents in controlling emotional development in their child which give them the control over their child's needs.

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