

A Study on the Relationship between Parental Parenting Styles and Adolescent Attachment Decision Making Styles

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Abstract: *This study investigates the associations between perceived parenting styles, attachment orientations, and decision - making styles among adolescents. Employing a cross - sectional, correlation research design, data were collected from 197 eighth - grade students (111 boys and 86 girls) Participants completed self - reported scales measuring perceived parenting styles, attachment styles, and decision - making styles. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between parental responsiveness and secure attachment, highlighting the crucial role of parental warmth and support in fostering secure attachments during adolescence. Conversely, a significant correlation was found between parental control and fearful attachments, indicating the adverse effects of harsh and inconsistent parenting practices on attachment patterns. . These findings underscore the importance of responsive parenting in nurturing secure attachment bonds and advocate for culturally sensitive approaches to understanding parenting styles. Further research is warranted to explore parental influences on adolescent decision - making across diverse cultural contexts, with implications for tailored interventions aimed at promoting positive outcomes in adolescents' development.*

Keywords: Adolescence, Parenting styles, Parenting control, Parenting responsiveness, Attachment styles, Decision making, Decision making styles

1. Introduction

Adolescence represents a critical juncture in human development, marked by profound transformations across biological, cognitive, psychological, and social domains (Ogwo, 2013; McKinney, Donnelly & Renk, 2008). This transitional phase is characterized by a quest for autonomy and identity, coupled with the consolidation of social responsibilities (Ogwo, 2013). Central to understanding adolescent development is attachment theory, pioneered by Bowlby, which underscores the enduring influence of emotional bonds on psychological well - being (Bowlby, 1973a, 1977; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bretherton, 1985). At the same time, adolescence is a period where decision - making skills become increasingly critical, as individuals navigate the complexities of autonomy and make pivotal life choices (Miller & Byrnes, 2001; Deniz, 2006). Within the context of family dynamics, perceived parenting styles play a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' attachment orientations and decision - making processes (Armstrong, 2013).

Parenting styles have evolved from early conceptions of affectionate parenting to more nuanced dimensions focusing on parental responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1991). Baumrind's conceptual model identifies authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles based on varying levels of responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Attachment theory, initially proposed by Bowlby, emphasizes the importance of secure caregiver relationships in fostering emotional security and regulating proximity - seeking behaviors across the lifespan (Bowlby, 1979). Decision - making processes during adolescence involve cognitive operations, critical thinking, and problem - solving, influenced by family dynamics and social relationships

(Kambam & Thompson, 2009; Brown et al., 2011).

Traditional approaches to studying parenting styles often prioritize parental perceptions, overlooking the significance of considering children's perceptions of their parents (Mora - Ríos et al., 1999). This study aims to explore how adolescents' perceived parenting styles, particularly in terms of responsiveness and demandingness, relate to their attachment orientations. Additionally, while previous research has examined specific domains of decision - making during adolescence, such as career and academic choices, there is a dearth of literature on the influence of parenting styles on adolescents' decision - making styles per se (Martinez, 2007; Kamaruddin & Mokhlis, 2003; Cenkseven - Önder, 2012). This study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the holistic impact of perceived parenting styles on adolescents' attachment orientations and decision - making processes.

Based on existing research, we predicted that adolescents who perceive their parents as responsive will tend to develop secure attachment styles, whereas those who perceive their parents as controlling will likely exhibit preoccupied, dismissing, or fearful attachment styles. Additionally, we anticipated that adolescents who perceive their parents as controlling may demonstrate heightened vigilance in decision - making processes, while those who perceive their parents as responsive may display tendencies toward defensive avoidance or irrational decision - making. Thus, this study aims to explore the intricate relationship between perceived parenting styles, attachment orientations, and decision - making behaviors among adolescents, aiming to uncover potential patterns and associations.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a cross - sectional, correlation research design to examine the associations between perceived parenting styles, attachment styles, and decision - making styles among adolescents. Cross - sectional studies offer insights into the relationships among variables at a specific point in time, allowing for the exploration of associations (Gray, 2009). Correlation research, on the other hand, focuses on understanding the relationships between two or more variables and the extent to which they co - vary (Arthur et al., 2012)

2.1.1 Sample and Sampling Method

The sample comprises eighth - grade students aged between 13 to 15 years, drawn from a school in Mumbai Suburbs. A total of 197 students (111 boys and 86 girls) were selected using a simple random sampling method to control for potential confounding variables.

2.2 Data Collection Instruments

2.2.1 Parenting style

Gafoor & Kurukkan's (2014) Parenting Style questionnaire consists of 38 statements, measuring Perceived Parenting Style of the subjects' parents. Each statement describes how the sample perceives their parents while dealing with the children. The subject read each statement and has to responded on 5 - point scale: "Very right" (5), "Mostly right" (4), "Sometimes right, Sometimes wrong" (3), "Mostly wrong" (2), "Very wrong" (1), for the parents that best describes his/her parents in dealing with them. The score ranges from 95 to 19 on each dimension respectively. The validity coefficient for the original scale measuring responsiveness was determined to be 0.80, while for the Control subscale, it was 0.76. Additionally, the test - retest reliability coefficient for the original scale's responsiveness subscale was calculated as 0.81, and for the Control subscale, it was 0.83.

2.2.2 Attachment style

Relationships Scales Questionnaire (RSQ): The RSQ developed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) 30 - item, 5 point Likert - type scale from "Very much like me" to "Not at all like me" to measure four different attachment styles (secure, dismissing, fearful, and preoccupied). The scores range from 30 to 150. The reliability coefficients of the original scale were assessed using the Retest Method and ranged from .54 to .78. Furthermore, the parallel form validity of the original scale was examined by comparing it with the Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), resulting in correlation coefficients ranging from .49 to .61.

2.2.3 Decision making style

The Melbourne Decision - Making Questionnaire was developed by Mann, Burnett, Radford, and Ford (1997). It is a 3 point likert scale ranging from 0 - "Not true for me" to 2 - "True for me" and has 31 items. The highest score on each subscale would be 10 (except vigilance 12) and the lowest score would be 0. The reliability coefficients for the sub -

scales of the original scale were determined as follows: vigilance (.80), buck - passing (.87), procrastination (.81), and hyper vigilance (.74) (Mann et al., 1998).

2.3 Variables

The variables in the study are

- 1) Parental demandingness/ control
- 2) Parental responsiveness

The variables are

- 1) Attachment styles with four levels
 - a) Secured
 - b) Fearful
 - c) Preoccupied
 - d) Dismissing
- 2) Decision making styles with six levels
 - a) Vigilance
 - b) Hyper vigilance
 - c) Defensive avoidance
 - d) Buck passing
 - e) Procrastination
 - f) Rationalization

2.4 Procedure

After obtaining informed consent from the school principal, participants completed the self - reported scales measuring perceived parental styles, attachment styles, and decision - making styles. The study's purpose was not disclosed to prevent priming effects. Participants were given 30 - 35 minutes to complete the scales, followed by debriefing about the study's objectives.

2.5 Data Analysis

The raw data collected from the research conducted was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) V25. The data was coded, cleaned, checked for errors and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics include means and standard deviations of the variables, while inferential statistics include Pearson correlation analysis.

3. Results

The results for the present study are reported below.

Table 3.1: Descriptive statistics for parenting styles

Parenting styles	Mean	SD
Parental Control	79.04	8.20
Parental Responsiveness	78.49	8.56
Note. SD: Standard deviations		

Table 3.1 shows the descriptive statistics for parenting styles based on two dimensions parental control with the mean 79.04, SD 8.20 and parental responsiveness with the mean 78.49, SD 8.56.

Table 3.1.1: Descriptive statistics for attachment styles

Attachment styles	Mean	SD
Secured	2.78	0.60
Fearful	3.19	0.77
Preoccupied	2.93	0.81
Dismissing	3.66	0.60
Note. SD: Standard deviations		

Table 3.1.1 shows the descriptive statistics for four attachment styles secured with mean 2.78, SD 0.60, fearful with mean 3.19, SD 0.77, preoccupied with mean 2.93, SD 0.81 and dismissing with mean 3.66 SD 0.60

Table 3.1.2: Descriptive statistics for decision making styles

Decision making styles	Mean	SD
Hyper vigilance	5.73	1.84
Rationalization	5.05	2.03
Vigilance	8.52	2.01
Defense Avoidance	4.86	1.83
Buck pass	3.80	2.16
Procrastination	4.13	2.35
Note. SD: Standard deviations		

Table 3.1.2 shows descriptive statistics for six decision making styles hyper vigilance with mean 5.73, SD 1.84

rationalization with mean 5.05, SD 2.03 vigilance with mean 8.52, SD 2.01 defense avoidance with mean 4.86, SD 1.83 buck pass with mean 3.80, SD 2.16 procrastination with mean 4.13, SD 2.35.

Table 3.2: Correlations between parental styles and attachment styles

	Control/demandingness	Responsiveness
Secured	- 0.09	0.15*
Fearful	0.13*	- 0.15
Preoccupied	0.02	- 0.28
Dismissing	0.05	0.96

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 - tailed).

Table 3.2. illustrates correlations between parental styles and attachment styles. Results show significant positive correlations between parental responsiveness and secured attachment style ($r= 0.15, p= 0.05$) which is in line with hypothesis. Significant positive correlations between parental control and fearful attachment styles are also seen ($r= 0.13, p= 0.05$)

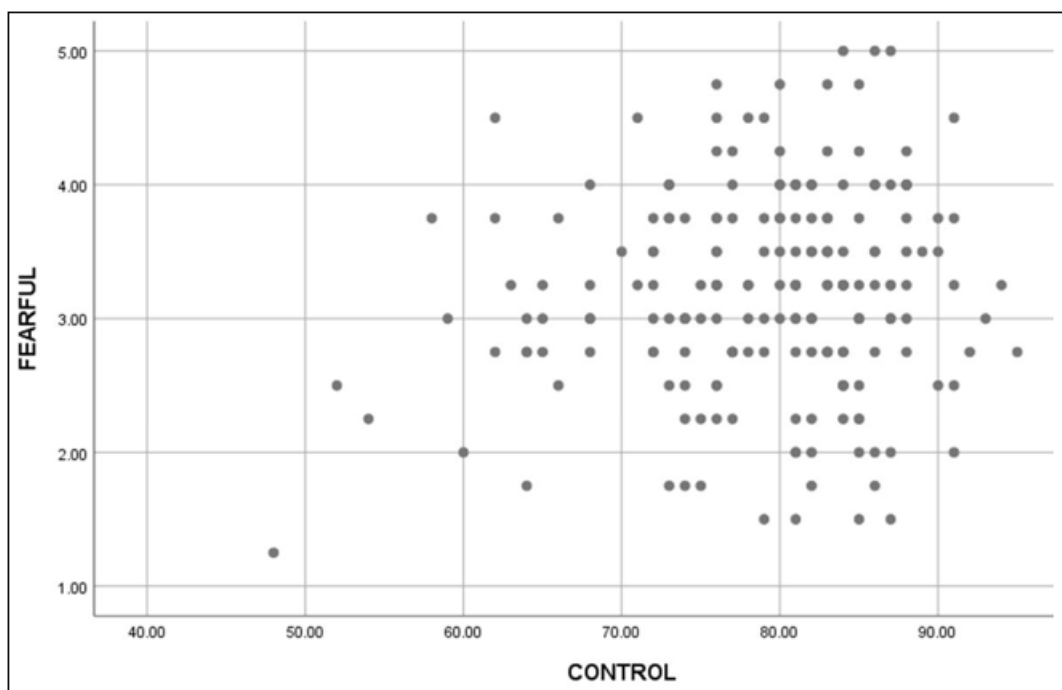


Figure 3.1 (a): Shows a positive weak linear relationship between the secured attachment and parental responsiveness.

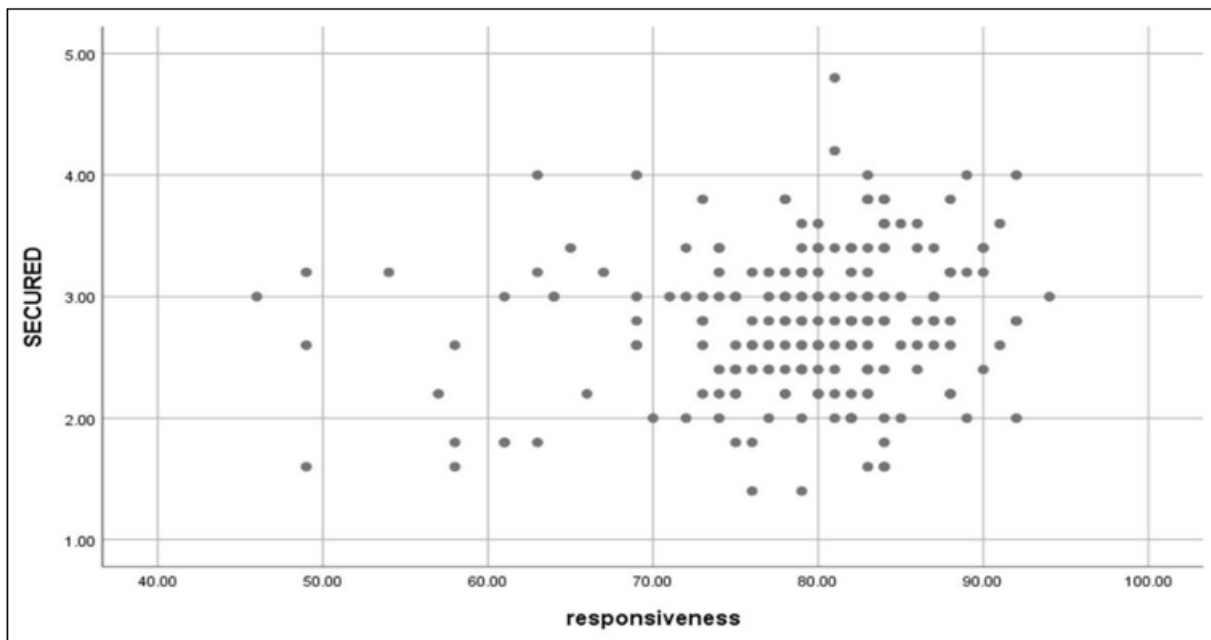


Figure 3.1 (b): Shows a positive weak linear relationship between the fearful attachment and parental control.

Table 3.2.1: Correlations between parental styles and decision- making styles

	Control/ demandingness	Responsiveness
Hyper vigilance	0.06	- 0.05
Rationalization	- 0.02	- 0.02
Vigilance	0.21**	0.10
Defense avoidance	- 0.09	- 0.08
Buck passing	- 0.11	- 0.10
Procrastination	- 0.14*	- 0.12

Table 3.2.1 shows relationships between parental styles and decision-making styles. Results show significant positive correlations with parental control and vigilance ($r= 0.21, p= 0.01$)

Significant negative correlations are seen between parental control and procrastination ($r= - 0.14, p= 0.01$)

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 - tailed).

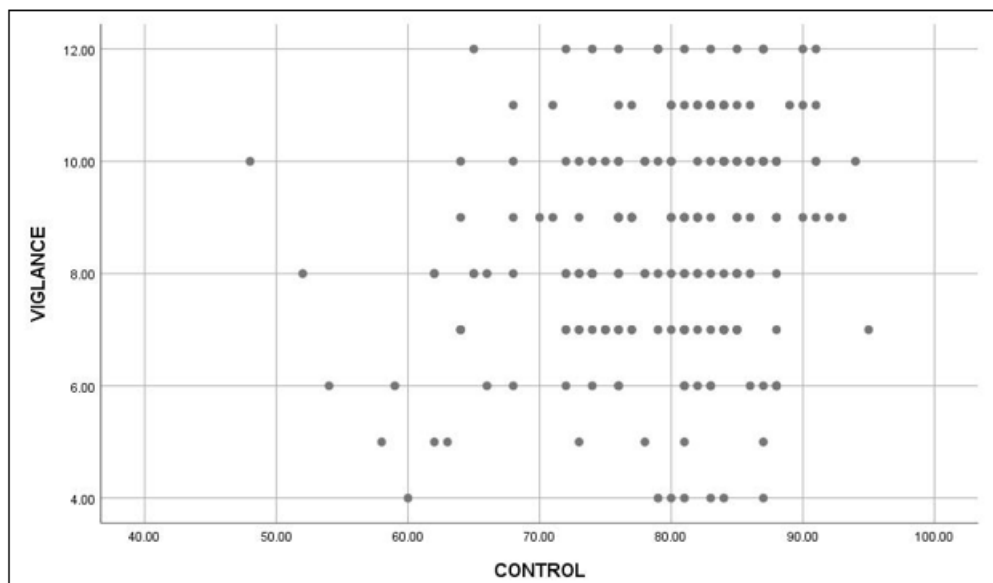


Figure 3.2 (a): Shows a positive weak linear relationship between the vigilance and parental control.

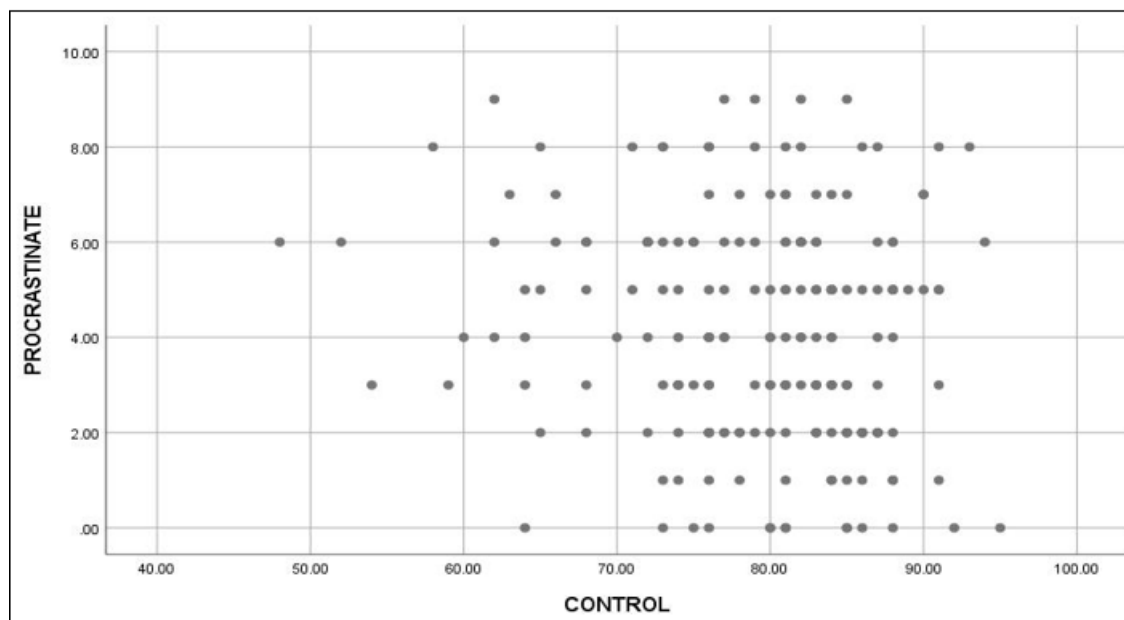


Figure 3.2 (b): Shows a negative weak linear relationship between the procrastination and parental control.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between perceived parenting styles reported by children, their attachment to parents, and its influence on adolescent decision - making styles. Consistent with our hypotheses, parental responsiveness showed a positive correlation with secure attachment styles, aligning with previous research indicating that warmth and support from parents contribute to secure attachment in childhood and adolescence (Kerns et al., 2000; Strayer & Preece, 1999). Conversely, parental control was significantly correlated with fearful attachments, consistent with findings linking parental unavailability and harsh rejection to insecure anxious - avoidant attachment patterns (Moretti & Peled, 2004).

However, contrary to expectations, no significant correlations were found between parenting styles and preoccupied or dismissing attachment styles. This discrepancy suggests that the dimensions of parenting measured in this study may not fully capture those critical to the development of preoccupied attachment during middle childhood. Future research may consider additional aspects of parenting, such as overprotectiveness, to further investigate these associations. Additionally, cultural differences may influence the interpretation of parenting styles, as seen in the contrasting implications of authoritarian parenting between Western and Asian contexts (Chao, 1994, 2000; Chua, 2011).

Furthermore, the study aimed to examine the relationships between parenting styles and decision - making styles. Surprisingly, significant correlations were only observed between parental control and decision - making styles, specifically vigilance and reduced procrastination. The absence of significant correlations with parental responsiveness underscores the potential cultural variations in parenting practices, with strict and controlling parenting being valued in Asian cultures (Chao & Sue, 1996; Steinberg et al., 1994).

While previous research suggests similarities in control levels between authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), differences in the manner of exerting control may impact adolescent outcomes differently. Ethnic differences in the association of parenting styles with adolescent outcomes further highlight the complexity of these relationships, with some ethnic groups demonstrating resilience to negative impacts of parental control (Steinberg et al., 1994).

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the intricate interplay between perceived parenting styles, attachment patterns, and decision - making styles among adolescents. It underscores the need for culturally sensitive approaches to understanding parenting practices and their implications for adolescent development. Future research may continue to explore these relationships across diverse cultural contexts to inform more nuanced interventions and support strategies for adolescents and their families.

5. Summary and Conclusions

This research elucidated significant relationships between parental responsiveness and secure attachment, aligning with previous findings and emphasizing the importance of nurturing secure attachments throughout adolescence. Conversely, fearful attachment was significantly correlated with parental control, highlighting the detrimental effects of harsh and inconsistent parenting practices. However, limited exploration of parental influence on decision - making styles suggests the need for further research considering additional factors such as gender, cultural background, and parental education level.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of responsive parenting in fostering secure attachment bonds and advocates for culturally sensitive approaches to understanding parenting styles. The findings contribute to the existing body of research on parenting and suggest implications for designing effective parenting training programs. Moving forward, future research can delve deeper

into the nuances of parental influence on adolescent's decision - making styles and consider diverse cultural contexts to inform comprehensive support strategies for families and adolescents.

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