

## Perceived Parenting Styles, Aggression, And Academic Performance Among University Students

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### Abstract

This study explores the relationships between perceived parenting styles, aggression, and academic performance among university students, identifying predictors of academic performance. A sample of undergraduate students was recruited using purposive sampling. Data were collected through demographic information sheet, perceived parenting style scale, aggression questionnaire, and academic performance measurement. Significant correlations were found between authoritarian, permissive, and anger/hostility traits. Authoritative parenting showed moderate correlations with general and physical aggression but a weaker correlation with academic performance. Authoritarian parenting was strongly linked to physical and verbal aggression but weakly to academic performance. Permissive parenting was strongly associated with verbal aggression. Aggression was moderately linked to anger/hostility but less with academic performance. Regression analyses indicated that authoritative parenting positively impacts academic performance and reduces aggression, while authoritarian and permissive styles are linked to higher aggression and lower academic achievement. The study's implications were discussed in the cultural context of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Academic performance, aggression, perceived parenting styles, university students

### Introduction and Literature Review

The parenting styles mean parental behavior with three dimensions: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Authoritarian parents are known for their strict rules and high expectations, often lacking warmth and responsiveness (Estlein, 2016). They are marked by high rejection and psychological control. They are demanding and punitive, enforcing strict behavioral standards. This approach is associated with adverse outcomes such as lower self-efficacy, behavioral problems, and rebellion (Gimenez-Serrano et al., 2022). In contrast, authoritative parents combine high expectations with warmth and responsiveness, promoting independence while maintaining clear guidelines. They are rational, warm, and encouraging, promoting child autonomy while setting clear rules. They support open communication and independence. Research links this style to positive outcomes such as self-reliance, social responsibility, and sound adjustment (Yaffe, 2023). Permissive parents are warm and accepting but provide few guidelines and limits. They have high acceptance and promotion of psychological autonomy but lax behavioral control. These parents are non-confrontational and indulgent, allowing children significant freedom. However, uninvolved parenting is characterized by rejection and lax behavioral control (Martinez et al., 2020). Uninvolved parents minimize their effort and time in parenting, often displaying hostility or neglect. This style is linked to coercive practices and poor monitoring, negatively impacting child development. These styles are linked to lower achievement, poor impulse control, and reduced autonomy in children (Smetana, 2017).

Mortazavizadeh et al. (2022) highlighted the link between parenting styles and children's emotional development. This connection is influenced by parental responses to children's emotions, parental emotional expression, and overall emotional development across the lifespan. Understanding emotion-related parenting practices, family dynamics, and interaction patterns is crucial for comprehending the impact of different parenting styles on a child's emotional development. Aggression in children and adolescents is a multifaceted construct that can manifest as physical, verbal, or relational. It is linked to familial environment and parenting styles (Spera, 2005). Children of authoritarian and permissive parents exhibit higher levels of aggression than authoritative parents and lower levels of academic achievement (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019).

Parenting styles have been shown to impact academic achievement significantly. Authoritative parenting, characterized by supportive and nurturing behavior, has been positively correlated with higher academic performance (Brown & Iyengar, 2014). In contrast, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have been linked to poorer academic outcomes. The

interplay between parenting styles, aggression, and academic performance is a complex web of relationships. Aggression can negatively impact academic performance, with studies indicating that aggressive behaviors are associated with lower academic achievement. Conversely, academic success or failure can influence aggressive behaviors. Parenting styles are pivotal in this dynamic, influencing aggression and academic outcomes (Masud et al., 2019).

Pinquart and Kauser (2018) analyzed 428 studies to see how parenting styles affect internalizing and externalizing problems and academic achievement across ethnic groups, regions, and cultural contexts in Western countries. They found that authoritative parenting generally leads to positive outcomes, while authoritarian parenting leads to adverse outcomes globally. However, in Western countries, authoritative parenting is more beneficial for academic achievement in non-Hispanic White families compared to Asian minorities, and authoritarian parenting is less harmful in Hispanic families. The effects of authoritarian parenting are weaker in more individualistic countries. Authoritative parenting is recommended globally, with some tolerance for authoritarian and permissive styles in certain cultures.

These parenting styles have been extensively studied for their impact on children's development, with a substantial body of research indicating that authoritative parenting is generally associated with the most favorable outcomes in children, including higher academic achievement and lower levels of aggression (Anjum et al., 2019). The intersection of perceived parenting styles, aggression, and academic performance has been a topic of significant interest in psychological research. The current study adds to this body of knowledge and provides new insights into the complex relationships between these variables. Therefore, it is hoped that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how parenting styles influence aggression and academic performance and, ultimately, to develop more effective interventions and strategies in psychology.

### **Objectives**

- To determine the relationship between perceived parenting styles, aggression, and academic performance among university students.
- To find out the predictors of academic performance among university students.

### **Hypotheses**

- There will be a significant relationship between perceived parenting styles, aggression, and academic performance among university students.
- Perceived parenting styles, aggression, and demographic variables will predict academic performance among university students.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a correlational research design. The sample consisted of undergraduate university students selected through a purposive sampling technique. The G\*Power calculator determines the sample size ( $N = 160$ ) to ensure precision and adequate power to detect actual effects while preventing wasted resources. It also helps to enhance transparency, reproducibility, and adherence to ethical and publication standards.

### **Demographic Data Collection**

A demographic information sheet was used to record key details of participants' personal information such as age, gender, education, birth order, family setup, geographical area of residence, and the current semester's Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

### **Perceived Parenting Styles Scale**

Perceived Parenting Style Scale (Divya & Manikandan, 2013) includes 30 items, categorized into three distinct subdomains: authoritative (items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, and 28), authoritarian (items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, and 29), and permissive (items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, and 30). The scale operates on a 5-point Likert response format, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), to measure students' perceptions of their parents' parenting styles. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the total scale and the subdomains are satisfactory for the current sample.

### **The Aggression Questionnaire**

The Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) has 29 items divided into three subscales encompassing physical aggression (items 1-9), verbal aggression (items 10-14), and anger/hostility (items 22-29), rated on a five-point Likert scale from highly uncharacteristic of me (1) to extremely characteristic of me (5). Items 4 and 7 require reverse coding. Internal consistencies of the total scale and sub-scales on the current sample are satisfactory.

### **Academic Performance Measurement**

The Academic Performance Scale (George & Lucy, 1991) is a unidimensional scale comprising eight items that evaluate class preparation, participation, and assignment interest. Responses are gauged on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the total scale is reported to be satisfactory on the current sample.

### **Procedure**

This study received approval from the Institutional Review Board at the Lahore School of Behavioral Sciences, University of Lahore. After securing the necessary permissions from the scales' authors and relevant authorities, participating students provided written informed consent, ensuring the confidentiality of their responses. The participants completed a set of

booklets, including the demographic information sheet, perceived parenting style scale, aggression questionnaire, and academic performance scale, taking about 25-30 minutes. Following a data normality check forms with missing values or other issues were excluded. The researcher offered psychoeducational support as necessary during the study.

## Results

The current study unfolded the relationship between perceived parenting styles, aggression, and academic performance among university students and investigated the predictors of academic performance in the same population. Results are reported in the following tables:

**Table 1** *Personal Demographic Informational Characteristics of the Participants (N = 160)*

Variables	Categories	f (%)	Variables	Categories	f (%)
Age	19-20 years	77 (48.1)	Area	Rural	130 (80)
	21-22 years	41 (25.6)		Urban	30 (20)
	23-25 years	42 (26.3)	Family System	Joint	69 (43.1)
Gender	Male	91 (56.9)		Nuclear	91 (56.9)
	Female	69 (43.1)	CGPA	Passing	23 (14.4)
Education	BSc (Hons)	52 (32.5)		Average	42 (26.3)
	1-4 semester	106 (66.3)	Living with	Good	95 (59.4)
	5-8 semester	80 (50)		Parents	154 (96.3)
Department	Pure Sciences	80 (50)		Hostels	6 (3.8)
	Social Sciences	80 (50)	Experience of Romantic Love	Yes	45 (28.1)
Number of Siblings	1-4	54 (38)		No	115 (71.9)
	5-8	106 (62)	Want to be like their Parents	Yes	10 (05)
Birth Order	First Born	50 (31.3)		No	98 (75)
	Middle Born	61 (38.1)		Not Sure	52 (20)
	Last Born	44 (27.5)			
	Only Child	5 (3.1)			

The demographic profile of the study's participants reveals that most are aged 19-21 (48.1%), with 26.3% aged 23-25 and 25.6% between 21-22. Most (80%) reside in rural areas, compared to 20% in urban settings. Males represent 56.9% of the sample, and females 43.1%. Participants are primarily in their fifth to eighth semesters of BSc (Hons) programs (66.3%), with the rest in the 1<sup>st</sup> to fourth semesters (32.5%). The study fields are evenly divided between pure and social sciences (50% each). Regarding siblings, 62% have 5 to 8 siblings, while 38% have 1 to 4. Birth order varies, with 31.3% being first-born, 38.1% being middle-born, 27.5% being last-born, and 3.1% only children. Families are split between nuclear and joint systems (56.9% each). Academically, 59.4% perform well (good), 26.3% average, and 14.4% pass. Most live with their parents (96.3%), and a few in hostels (3.8%). Regarding personal life, 28.1% have experienced romantic love, but 71.9% have not. Interestingly, when considering following their parents' footsteps, only 5% aspire to do so, 75% do not, and 20% need clarification.

**Table 2** *Psychometric Properties of the Perceived Parenting Styles, Aggression, and Academic Performance Scale (N = 160)*

Variables	K	$\alpha$	Actual	Potential	M	SD	Skew	Kurt
Perceived Parenting Styles	30	.90	50-150	30-150	95.02	15.92	.52	1.37
Authoritative	10	.88	20-50	10-50	37.26	6.76	-.29	-.47
Authoritarian	10	.89	18-50	10-50	30.35	6.38	.48	.24
Permissive	10	.86	10-50	10-50	28.96	8.29	-.16	.07
Aggression	29	.89	45-133	29-140	88.79	16.77	.29	.52
Physical Aggression	9	.88	15-45	9-45	29.95	4.92	.08	.78
Verbal Aggression	5	.87	9-30	5-25	18.55	4.57	.28	-.05
Anger	8	.85	19-65	8-40	39.38	8.40	.35	.32
Hostility	7	.78	11-35	7-35	22.012	4.79	.23	.08
Academic Performance	8	.89	13-40	8-40	30.50	5.79	-.65	-.31

The research revealed high reliability in all psychological variables, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .78 to .90. Parenting Styles, assessed through 30 items, yielded an average score of 95.02. The sub-scales for Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Permissive parenting styles, each comprising ten items, had respective average scores of 37.26 ( $SD = 6.76$ ), 30.35 ( $SD = 6.38$ ), and 28.96 ( $SD = 8.29$ ). Aggression, evaluated using 29 items, had an average score of 88.79 ( $SD = 16.77$ ). Within this, Physical Aggression and Verbal Aggression, assessed through 9 and 5 items, respectively, recorded average scores of 29.95 ( $SD = 4.92$ ) and 18.55 ( $SD = 4.57$ ). The Anger and Hostility scales, with 8 and 7 items, showed average scores of 39.38 ( $SD = 8.40$ ) and 22.012 ( $SD = 4.79$ ). Academic Performance, measured on eight criteria, had an average score of 30.50 ( $SD = 5.79$ ). Skewness and kurtosis across these variables indicated data symmetry and peakness variations, offering insights into scores' distribution and central tendencies across different psychological areas.

**Table 3** Intercorrelations between Perceived Parenting Styles, Aggression, and Academic Performance among University Students ( $N = 160$ )

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Perceived Parenting styles	.55**	.83**	.88**	.57**	.72**	.74**	.92**	.89**	.19*
2. Autorotative		.37**	.09	.37**	.69**	.29**	.44**	.56**	.49**
3. Authoritarian			.53**	.45**	.66**	.68**	.76**	.67**	.08
4. Permissive				.36**	.38**	.72**	.86**	.69**	.09
5. Aggression					.44**	.44**	.45**	.40**	.17*
6. Physical Aggression						.36**	.48**	.49**	.26**
7. Verbal Aggression							.61**	.59**	.09
8. Anger								.84**	.16*
9. Hostility									.18
10. Academic Performance									

The correlation analysis reveals significant relationships between parenting styles, aggression, and academic performance. Parenting styles strongly correlate with authoritarian ( $r = .83^{**}$ ), permissive ( $r = .88^{**}$ ), and anger/hostility ( $r = .92^{**}$ ) traits. Specifically, authoritative parenting moderately correlates with general aggression ( $r = .37^{**}$ ) and physical aggression ( $r = .69^{**}$ ) but less so with academic performance ( $r = .49^{**}$ ). In contrast, authoritarian parenting is strongly linked to physical ( $r = .66^{**}$ ) and verbal aggression ( $r = .68^{**}$ ) but weakly to academic performance ( $r = .05$ ). The permissive style shows strong links to verbal aggression ( $r = .81^{**}$ ). Aggression, in general, is moderately linked to both physical ( $r = .44^{**}$ ) and verbal aggression ( $r = .44^{**}$ ), as well as to anger/hostility ( $r = .45^{**}$ ), but has a weaker relationship with academic performance ( $r = .18^{*}$ ). Physical aggression moderately correlates with verbal aggression ( $r = .36^{**}$ ) and anger/hostility ( $r = .48^{**}$ ) but less so with academic performance ( $r = .26^{**}$ ). Verbal aggression strongly correlates with anger/hostility ( $r = .64^{**}$ ) but has an insignificant link to academic performance ( $r = .09$ ). Anger/hostility shows a low yet significant correlation with academic performance ( $r = .16^{*}$ ). Overall, academic performance has very low correlations with these variables, except for a low link with anger/hostility, suggesting that other factors more significantly influence academic outcomes.

**Table 4** Predictors of Academic Performance among University Students ( $N = 160$ )

Models	Variables	B	SE	$\beta$	t	P	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	Constant	17.12	2.34		7.31	.000	.42	.18
	Authoritative	.36	.06	.42	5.80	.000		
2	Constant	18.58	2.97		6.22	.000	.46	.21
	Authoritative	.47	.09	.55	5.06	.000		
	Anger Hostility	.17	.09	.24	1.69	.002		
	Hostility	-.37	.18	-.25	-1.73	.006		
3	Constant	12.33	3.19		3.87	.000	.54	.29
	Authoritative	.45	.09	.53	4.77	.000		
	Grade	2.37	.58	.32	4.21	.000		
4	Constant	19.63	3.76		5.22	.000	.59	.34
	Authoritative	.43	.09	.50	5.01	.000		
	Physical Aggression	-.20	.12	-.17	-1.72	.001		
	Grade	2.56	.54	.32	4.72	.000		
	Class	-2.97	.87	-.24	-3.38	.001		

The study's results from stepwise regression analyses demonstrate significant relationships between various predictors and the outcome variables across four models, with all models showing statistical significance ( $p < .000$ ). Model 1 indicated a significant positive effect of authoritative parenting style ( $B = .36$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $\beta = .42$ ,  $p < .000$ ) on the dependent variable, explaining 18% of the variance ( $R^2 = .18$ ). Model 2 expanded on Model 1 by including anger and hostility as additional predictors. It showed a more substantial positive effect of authoritative parenting ( $B = .47$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $\beta = .55$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and a more minor yet significant positive effect of anger hostility ( $B = .17$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Hostility, however, had a significant negative effect ( $B = -.37$ ,  $SE = .18$ ,  $\beta = -.25$ ,  $p < .006$ ). This model explained 21% of the variance ( $R^2 = .21$ ). Model 3 introduced grade as a predictor and authoritative parenting. Both predictors were significant, with authoritative showing a positive effect ( $B = .45$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $\beta = .53$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and Grade showing a substantial positive effect ( $B = 2.37$ ,  $SE = .58$ ,  $\beta = .32$ ,  $p < .000$ ). This model accounted for 29% of the variance ( $R^2 = .29$ ). Model 4 further included physical aggression and class. Authoritative parenting ( $B = .43$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $\beta = .50$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and grade ( $B = 2.56$ ,  $SE = .54$ ,  $\beta = .32$ ,  $p < .000$ ) continued to show positive effects. At the same time, physical aggression had a negative effect ( $B = -.20$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $\beta = -.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and class showed a significant negative effect ( $B = -2.97$ ,  $SE = .87$ ,  $\beta = -.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The model explained 34% of the variance ( $R^2 = .34$ ). The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.99) suggests that the assumption of independent errors was met across the models. The F-tests for each model were significant, indicating that the overall models were statistically significant.

## Discussion

The study's findings show a high correlation between authoritarian, permissive, and anger/hostility parenting styles. It aligns with previous research indicating that parenting styles characterized by high control or permissiveness can lead to heightened aggression in offspring (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2019). The significant association between the authoritarian parenting style



and increased physical and verbal aggression corroborates earlier studies that have linked authoritarian parenting with adverse child outcomes, including higher aggression (Moudgil & Moudgil, 2017). Di Giunta et al. (2022) reported that parental responses to children's negative emotions are linked to parenting styles. Supportive responses enhance social and emotional competence, while unsupportive responses can have adverse effects.

Conversely, authoritative parenting's moderating effect on aggression, without significantly influencing academic performance, offers a nuanced perspective. While authoritative parenting can mitigate aggressive behaviors, it may not directly translate into academic success. This finding adds complexity to existing research that often posits a direct positive relationship between authoritative parenting and academic achievement (Zena & Heeralal, 2021).

The moderate correlations between various forms of aggression (physical, verbal, and anger/hostility) and their lesser association with academic success in the current study highlight the multifaceted nature of these behaviors. It suggests that aggression in university students may be influenced by multiple factors beyond parenting styles, such as peer relationships and individual temperament (Lunkenheimer et al., 2020). Alexander and Harris (2022) reported that high-functioning families exhibit effective problem-solving, clear communication, appropriate emotional displays, and balanced affective involvement.

Interestingly, while verbal aggression strongly correlates with anger/hostility, its negligible impact on academic performance challenges some conventional views in the literature, suggesting further investigation into the specific contexts and dynamics where such aggression occurs. Permissive parenting predicts higher aggression and lower peer attachment (Llorca et al., 2017). Students with higher aggression, characterized by harmful behaviors, often experience poorer physical and mental health, academic progress, personality development, and social adaptation (Brown & Iyengar, 2014). The study also underscores the importance of academic factors, mainly grades, in psychological outcomes, supporting the body of research that emphasizes the role of academic success in overall psychological well-being. However, the negative effects of physical aggression and specific class characteristics, as shown in the final model, indicate that these factors can adversely impact psychological outcomes. It aligns with studies indicating that aggression and socio-economic factors can have long-term effects on psychological health. Lei et al. (2018) found through a meta-analysis of 70 studies involving 33,089 Chinese students that negative parenting increases aggression while positive parenting reduces it. These effects are more potent regarding emotional climate, self-reported styles, specific aggression measures, and Eastern China. The impact varies by education level. The findings highlight the interplay between various parenting styles, emotional dynamics, and academic performance in shaping psychological outcomes. The study particularly emphasizes the positive impact of the authoritative parenting style, reinforcing the importance of nurturing, balanced parenting approaches for undergraduate students' development. These insights contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing psychological development and well-being, suggesting avenues for future research and intervention strategies.

## Conclusion

The study finds significant links between parenting styles, aggression, and academic success. Authoritative parenting moderates general and physical aggressiveness but not academic achievement, while authoritarian parenting increases physical and verbal aggression without affecting academic success. Permissive parenting correlates with verbal aggression. Aggression (physical, verbal, anger/hostility) is moderately connected with academic performance, though verbal aggression does not impact academic success. The study highlights the positive influence of authoritative parenting on psychological traits, while aggressive behaviors negatively impact psychological outcomes. The study underscores the importance of parenting styles, emotional dynamics, and academic outcomes.

## Implications of the Study

Understanding the implications of perceived parenting styles on aggression and academic performance among university students can inform targeted interventions, parental involvement, and support systems within educational institutions. Universities can develop counseling and mentorship programs to address the specific emotional and academic needs of students, particularly those from authoritarian parenting backgrounds. Enhancing mental health services and adopting flexible academic policies can help mitigate the negative effects of certain parenting styles. Encouraging further research and holistic educational approaches can promote a supportive environment prioritizing academic success and emotional well-being.

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