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# PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP QUALITY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND INTERPERSONAL FUNCTIONING AMONG PAKISTANI ADOLESCENTS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

The central context for the development of emotional and social competencies is parent/teen interactions. The present cross-sectional study aimed at assessing the relationship between perceived quality of family relationship, emotional intellegence and interpersonal functioning in 204 school going children of age 10-19 years of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan using purposive sampling technique. They filled out a demographic form, a 15-item parent–adolescent relationship measure covering shared activities, connectedness and hostility, the 30-item Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form, and the 32-item Functional Idiographic Assessment Template-Questionnaire Short Form. In SPSS 27, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, multiple regression, independent-samples t tests and one-way analyses of variance were used to analyse data. Global trait emotional intelligence (r = .33-.38) and some of the interpersonal-functioning dimensions were positively correlated with parental relationship dimensions. The regression models in the thesis were found to predict well-being (B = .218, p = .041) and self-control (B = .272, p = .012), while shared activities predicted sociability (B = .185, p = .033), interpersonal intimacy (B = 1.255, p = .020), and interpersonal conflict scores (B = .558, p = .042). Hostility had a positive correlation with global trait emotional intelligence (B = .143, p = .013), emotionality (B = .246, p < .001) and disagreement (B = .814, p = .048); but these effects need to be confirmed against the original scoring key and the SPSS output. There was significant gender differences found throughout most of the emotional-intelligence and interpersonal areas but no significant difference was found for socioeconomic status. Global trait emotional intelligence and well-being was related to birth order. The results overall reflect the importance of parent-adolescent relationship quality in the emotional and relational development of teens, but cannot be used to draw causal inferences due to the cross-sectional, self-report design.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time of qualitative changes in emotions, cognition and social functioning. As youth grow older, they become more independent, are exposed to greater complexity in their peer relationships and are faced with more sophisticated challenges in emotion management, perspective taking, conflict resolution and intimacy (Batool et al., 2022; Batool et al., 2025). The ability to perceive, understand, use and regulate emotion as a

component of emotional intelligence is, therefore, closely related to adjustment in this developmental period (Bibi et al., 2024; Parveen et al., 2025). In particular, the concept of trait emotional intelligence is related to emotion-related self-perceptions that are part of personality and has been measured mostly using self-reports. Adolescent adolescents who had higher emotional intelligence scores showed greater interpersonal support (Barragán Martín et al., 2021; Llamas-Díaz et al., 2022; Parker et al., 2021), family functioning, academic performance, and psychological adjustment. Emotional and relational skills are one of the first and longest-lasting contexts for learning in the family. Adolescents have repeated opportunities to describe emotions, manage their emotions, resolve conflict, and model positive emotions as they develop a sense of being warmly supported, heard, engaged, and connected (Batool et al., 2023; Tehreem et al., 2024; Qayyum et al., 2025). On the other hand, interactions that are critical, hostile, or emotionally unavailable can jeopardize trust, and adaptive emotion regulation. Research of the last decade highlights how the relationship quality varies throughout adolescence and that it may be bi-directionally related to adolescents' behaviors and adjustment, as well as how parenting styles are bi-directionally related to social skills through adolescents' affective experiences (Donker et al., 2021; Mastrotheodoros et al., 2020; Salavera et al., 2022; Schulz et al., 2023; Afzal & Khan 2026).

There may be overlap between the maternal and paternal contributions, but not exact. Typically, mothers have been assumed to be the main emotional-socialization agents and fathers to engage in the process by involvement, participation, support and special interaction patterns. It is important, therefore, when writing a complete account, to take into consideration the adolescents' relationships with both parents, not one relationship as the indicator of the family system. It is particularly important to consider this question in a collectivistic context because family interdependence, parental authority, and expressions of emotions might be different than in the more Westernized countries where most measures and theories have been created. Rehman (2024), Liu and Zhang (2025), and Shah (2026), in the indigenous studies of Asian and Pakistani context considering the parenting, emotional intelligence and adolescent interpersonal functioning leads toward the more pessimistic and effective relationship building. Inter-personal functioning is multi-dimensional. It contains intimacy, bonding, differences, managing differences, emotional experience and expression. Importantly, the interpretation of a score will vary depending on how the instrument is scored: On the FIAT-Q-SF, higher scores are considered an increased level of interpersonal difficulty. Hence, it may be advisable not to presume better functioning for positive correlations between parental variables and FIAT-Q-SF scores until the item coding and reverse scoring are confirmed and coding errors are ruled out. However, recent longitudinal evidence suggests that there is a significant relationship between Trait EI and quality of interpersonal relationships (Parker et al., 2021). The literature review of parenting, emotional intelligence or adolescent relationships is huge, but still there are limited studies which explore the parental relationship dimensions, emotional intelligence and interpersonal functioning in one model in the context of Pakistan. In the present study, the above gaps were filled by exploring (a) the relationship between the dimensions of relationships and the dimensions of emotional intelligence and interpersonal functioning, (b) how the dimensions of relationships predict the dimensions of emotional intelligence and interpersonal functioning, and (c) the differences between the genders, birth orders, and socioeconomic status.

### Hypotheses

1. Higher-quality parental relationships would be associated with emotional intelligence and interpersonal functioning.
2. Parental relationship dimensions would significantly predict adolescents' emotional intelligence.
3. Parental relationship dimensions would significantly predict adolescents' interpersonal functioning.
4. Emotional intelligence and interpersonal functioning would differ by gender, birth order, and socioeconomic status.

## II. METHOD

### Participants

A quantitative- cross sectional correlational design was used. The data were obtained from the schools and community in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The design does not allow the determination of associations and group differences at one time but does not provide temporal ordering or causality. 204 adolescents (10–19 years of age) were sampled, using a purposive sampling method. Those who participated were enrolled in school,

resided in Islamabad or Rawalpindi for at least three years, had at least one adoptive or biological parent who gave consent and had a reading ability in either Urdu or English. Eligible participants were the ones who were living in Islamabad or Rawalpindi for three years or above, reading Urdu or English by attending school, living with at least one adoptive or biological parent, and who provided consent with parental consent. Individuals who were diagnosed with a psychological, developmental, neurological or chronic physical condition that required ongoing medical treatment were excluded and those who were unable to complete the measures or for whom consent or assent was not obtained.

**Table I: Participant characteristics (N = 204)**

| Characteristics | Category | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 108 | 52.9 |
| | Male | 96 | 47.1 |
| Age group | 10-15 years | 131 | 64.2 |
| | 16-20 years | 73 | 35.8 |
| Birth order | Firstborn | 95 | 46.6 |
| | Middle-born | 67 | 32.8 |
| | Last-born | 42 | 20.6 |
| Socioeconomic status | Lower | 24 | 11.8 |
| | Middle | 102 | 50.0 |
| | Elite | 78 | 38.2 |
| Family structure | Nuclear | 149 | 73.0 |
| | Joint | 55 | 27.0 |

*Note.* Age labels and counts are reproduced from the thesis. The narrative elsewhere described the lower category as 11-15 years; verify the intended range before submission.

## Measures

Demographic sheet. The data on the variables of age, gender, socioeconomic status, family structure, and parents' education were collected from the participants. **[I]** Parent-adolescent relationship measure. This thesis is a 15-item measure for shared activities (4 items), connectedness (6 items) and hostility (5 items) on a five-point scale. In other countries, the measure is referred to as the Child-Parent Relationship Scale-Short Form, and is defined as closeness and conflict. The title, source, respondent, item key and scoring method of these instruments should be checked before submitting, as they are in different dimensional structures. The internal consistency (α) of the subscales reported ranged from .52 to .77. **[II]** The T.E.I.Q.-S.F. is a trait-based measure of EI. The TEIQue-SF is composed of 30 items in a seven-point self-report format and yields a global trait emotional-intelligence score, as well as scores for the four scales: higher scores indicate more positive emotion-related self-perceptions: Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality, and Sociability. For this sample, α = .69 for the overall score, and ranged from .59 to .64 for the subscales. **[III]** Functional, Idiographic Assessment Template-Questionnaire—Short Form. The FIAT-Q-SF comprises of 32 items measured on a scale of one to six and evaluates: interpersonal intimacy, disagreement, connection, conflict, emotional experience, and emotional expression. According to the thesis, the higher the scores the more difficult interpersonal. The internal-consistency coefficients reported in this sample were generally low (α's ranged from .43 to .65) and this suggests that several of the findings for the subscales should be interpreted with caution.

## Procedure, Ethical Considerations and Data Analysis

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of Riphah International University. Age-appropriate information was provided to potential participants and parents of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality and withdrawal without penalty. All parents gave written informed consent and adolescents gave written informed assent. Measures were given in quiet classroom, community or individual settings and took about 25-30 minutes to administer. Responses were anonymised, secured and stored and employed for academic research. There was no report of the committee approval number or date in the thesis and these should be added. IBM SPSS Statistics 27 was used for the analyses. Means, frequencies and proportions were used to check for missing values, outliers, and normality with the data. Descriptive statistics for categorical variables were frequencies and percentages, and for continuous variables, means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis. The internal consistency was estimated using Cronbach's alpha. We used bivariate associations between the variables, which were analyzed using Pearson correlations. Emotional-intelligence and interpersonal domains were

predicted by multiple regression models with the parental relationship dimensions as predictors. Demographic differences were explored using independent-samples t tests and analyses of variance (one-way). The alpha (α) value was set at .05 nominal level of significance. A p value is reported if available, but if the p value is reported as .000 a value of less than .001 is reported as p < .001.

# III. RESULTS

### Data Completeness and Descriptive Statistics

The thesis did not report any missing item responses. Distributions were slightly skewed, but ranged from -0.93 to 0.06, and were slightly kurtotic, -0.57 to 1.31. MET score across the world was on average 4.78 (SD = .77). Overall reliability for TEIQue-SF was modest (α = .69) with some subscales showing lower reliability scores, particularly for maternal hostility (α = .52), FIAT-Q-SF conflict (α = .43), connection (α = .54), emotional experience (α = .55) and emotional expression (α = .58).

**Table II: Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency of Principal Study Variables**

| Variables | M | SD | α |
|---|---|---|---|
| Father shared activities | 3.72 | 1.01 | .77 |
| Father connectedness | 3.76 | .87 | .74 |
| Father hostility | 3.02 | .99 | .70 |
| Mother shared activities | 3.72 | 1.01 | .70 |
| Mother connectedness | 3.76 | .87 | .60 |
| Mother hostility | 3.02 | .99 | .52 |
| Global trait emotional intelligence | 4.78 | .77 | .69 |
| Well-being | 4.77 | .94 | .64 |
| Self-control | 4.79 | .94 | .64 |
| Emotionality | 4.75 | .85 | .63 |
| Sociability | 4.78 | .92 | .59 |
| Interpersonal intimacy | 33.48 | 5.75 | .65 |
| Disagreement | 29.23 | 5.30 | .61 |
| Connection | 17.21 | 3.45 | .54 |
| Conflict | 12.47 | 2.89 | .43 |
| Emotional experience | 20.83 | 4.06 | .55 |
| Expressing emotions | 20.24 | 4.65 | .58 |

*Note. α = Cronbach's alpha. Maternal and paternal descriptive values are identical in the source thesis and should be checked against the dataset.*

### Bivariate Associations

The reported dimensions of the father relationship, both positive (shared activities, r = .357; connectedness, r = .382) and negative (hostility, r = .333) were positively associated with global trait EI (all p < .01). The same values of the coefficients were given for the corresponding mother sizes. Global trait emotional intelligence also was associated with positive scores for interpersonal intimacy (r = .616), disagreement (r = .608), connection (r = .487), conflict (r = .536), and emotional experience (r = .628), but not for emotional expression (r = .025). These positive correlations should be understood as not necessarily intended as healthier relationships, since higher FIAT-Q-SF scores signify more difficult relationships.

### Regression Models

The regression coefficients that were reported are summarized here in Table 3. Connectedness accounted for a significant amount of variance in well-being and self-control, while shared activities accounted for variance in sociability, interpersonal intimacy and conflict scores. Hostility foreseen the worldwide trait emotional intelligence, emotionality and disagreement. Identical coefficients, standard errors, confidence intervals and p values for both father and mother models mean that each of these estimates was reported only once in either case in Table 3 until cross tabulation with the SPSS output occurred.

**Table III: Significant Regression Coefficients Reported for Parental Relationship Dimensions**

| Outcomes | Predictors | B | SE | 95% CI | β | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Global trait EI | Hostility | .143 | .057 | [.030, .255] | .184 | .013 |
| Well-being | Connectedness | .218 | .106 | [.009, .427] | .204 | .041 |
| Self-control | Connectedness | .272 | .107 | [.061, .484] | .254 | .012 |
| Emotionality | Hostility | .246 | .063 | [.121, .371] | .285 | < .001 |
| Sociability | Shared activities | .185 | .086 | [.015, .355] | .203 | .033 |
| Sociability | Hostility | .141 | .071 | [.000, .282] | .151 | .050 |
| Interpersonal intimacy | Shared activities | 1.255 | .534 | [.203, 2.307] | .222 | .020 |
| Disagreement | Hostility | .814 | .409 | [.008, 1.619] | .152 | .048 |
| Connection | Connectedness | 1.153 | .402 | [.361, 1.945] | .294 | .005 |
| Conflict | Shared activities | .558 | .273 | [.019, 1.097] | .197 | .042 |

*Note.* EI = emotional intelligence; CI = confidence interval. Maternal and paternal tables in the thesis are identical. Signs and interpretation of hostility and FIAT-Q-SF outcomes require verification against scoring keys and SPSS output.

### Demographic Differences

A higher score was found for males than females on the global trait emotional intelligence ($t = 3.05$, $p < .001$) and on well-being ($p = .03$), self-control ($p = .01$), emotionality ($p < .001$) and sociability ($p = .01$), for the thesis. There were also five FIAT-Q-SF domain scores that were higher for males. The size of groups in the gender table, however, contradicts the size of groups listed in the demographic table and the t statistic = 1.52 does not support the conclusion that emotional expression is significant. Beware, however, that the size of the groups in the gender table is not consistent with the size of the groups listed in the demographic table, and that the t statistic = 1.52 does not support the conclusion that emotional expression is significant, even though the narrative description of the results says so. These comparisons must not be turned in until verified. Birth-order groups differed in global trait emotional intelligence, $F(2, 200) = 3.16$, $p = .04$, and well-being, $F(2, 200) = 4.96$, $p < .001$. The highest global score was for the first-born participants ($M = 4.88$, $SD = .72$) and the lowest was for the last-born participants ($M = 4.53$, $SD = .77$). Middle born participants had higher levels of well-being than first-born, and first-born participants had higher levels of well-being than last-born participants. The story also mentions that there was a difference in connection scores ($p = .03$), which, again, is not shown in the table of displayed birth-order, and needs to be confirmed. Neither the lower nor the middle socioeconomic status groups nor the elite status group surpassed the other in any of the socioeconomic status comparisons, and none of the comparisons were statistically significant: global trait emotional intelligence, $F(2, 200) = 1.51$, $p = .22$.

## IV. DISCUSSION

The current study focused on the quality of the parent–adolescent relationship, emotional intelligence and interpersonal functioning of adolescents in two cities in Pakistan. Overall, the pattern of the correlations suggests that adolescents' sense of their relationships to their parents is associated with their understanding and regulation of emotion and their functioning in relationships. There was a positive correlation between connectedness and well-being and self-control scores; and shared activities and sociability and interpersonal intimacy scores. The results align with theoretical explanations that assert that supporting parent-adolescent relationships offer a safe environment for the socialization of emotions, self-regulation, and socialization of interpersonal skills (Barragán Martín et al., 2021; Molina Moreno et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2023). Connectedness might be particularly important in the context of the increasing opportunities for students to connect with others through more than just proximity or spending time together. This relationship between the family environment and emotional intelligence, emotional well-being and emotional perceived interpersonal support has also been found in some recent studies (Barragán Martín et al., 2021; Llamas-Díaz et al., 2022; Molina Moreno et al., 2024). A connected relationship can help to build confidence that when adolescents are stressed, they will have support to help them regulate and be well. Shared activities can have various effects in facilitating communication, collaboration and social learning. Shared activities can be understood as a relationship to interpersonal intimacy as can this connection. However,

the positive correlation with FIAT-Q-SF scores for conflicts indicates that all positive coefficients reported should be viewed with caution as beneficial. If the higher the FIAT-Q-SF the more difficult the activity, the coefficient could mean that the more shared activity are combined with the more conflict reported, or it could be a coding/reverse coding error.

Similar prudence is necessary in the event of hostility resulting demands. The thesis narrative is of hostility as a negative influence, however the regression coefficients exhibited are positive and their confidence intervals are above zero. A positive coefficient does not necessarily indicate poorer outcomes as this will depend on the way hostility and each outcome were coded. A positive hostility coefficient is generally desirable for global measures of emotional intelligence (EQ) and emotionality; thus, a positive score for this measure does not agree with the interpretation given above unless the predictor was reverse scored. The publications of the results should then be based on an actual examination of item coding, the scale scores and the final regression output. Gender differences reported might be due to culturally patterned emotional socialization, opportunities to express emotions, and/or differential response styles. The contemporary literature also points out that the differences of the sexes could differ depending on the way emotional intelligence has been measured (as ability, as self-concept, as meta-emotional competence: D'Amico & Geraci, 2022). However, the differences in group size, p-values and effect sizes in the present results do not allow for a clear interpretation. Birth-order differences were not widespread, as is the case with birth-order similarities. The birth order differences in global trait emotional intelligence and well-being were statistically significant but most emotional and interpersonal domains were not. The similarity between the groups on socioeconomic status could mean that, among the participants in this study, perceived relationship quality may be more closely linked to emotional and social functioning in the teens than to economic status. The small sample size for the restricted subgroups and the nonprobability sampling also may have limited the power to detect differences in the socioeconomic factors.

### Practical Implications

The results support family-oriented and school-counselling prevention and intervention strategies which build emotional responsive communication, effective conflict management and age-appropriate family activities. Parent programs should involve both parents, and not presume that family time equals family love, listening and respect. School Psychologists and counselors can also assist adolescents in learning emotion labeling & regulation skills, assertive communication, and repair skills. As this is cross-sectional evidence, these recommendations must be considered on a theoretical and/or correlation basis.

### Limitations and Future Research

There are a few caveats to the conclusions. First, the cross-sectional design does not enable us to determine whether or not parental relationships influence adolescent outcomes, adolescent characteristics influence parental relationships, or both. Secondly, the purposive recruitment from Islamabad and Rawalpindi restricts generalizability of results from the population. Third, the measures for all of the major constructs were self-reported by the adolescents, which would make shared-method variance a potential problem as well as social-desirability bias and self-report bias. Fourth, a few of the subscales' reliability coefficients were less than commonly accepted standards for reliability which can influence association and interpretability. Fifth, the groups for socioeconomic and family-structure were not comparable. Last but not least, there are naming and scoring problems, as well as group counts, the double mother/father regression tables, and reporting statistical results, which need to be addressed prior to being submitted to peer-review. Longitudinal, multi-informant designs with language-stratified and gender-stratified probability samples spanning from multiple regions across Pakistan are recommended for future studies to validate measurement invariance across language and gender and to include adolescent, maternal, and paternal perspectives and experiences. If the sample size and measurement quality is sufficient, it is possible to test the direct and indirect relationships between parent-adolescent relationship quality and adolescence interpersonal functioning through the emotional intelligence construct using SEM.

## V. CONCLUSION

The dimensions of parent-adolescent relationship were correlated with the scores of emotional intelligence and interpersonal-functioning for adolescents in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Findings were related to emotional and interpersonal domains and to a measure of connectedness and shared activities; findings related to hostility were statistically significant, but were not directionally confirmed due to scoring issues. There were no significant differences between the socieconomic status and only selective differences between birth-order. The study's findings are important for the local context, but do not use causal terms and the statistical inconsistencies in this manuscript will need to be verified with the raw data and SPSS output prior to submission.

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