

AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ADOLESCENTS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS

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ABSTRACT

Parenting style plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' psychological and emotional development. This study examined the relationship between authoritative parenting and emotional intelligence among adolescents, with Big Five personality traits investigated as mediating mechanism. Using a cross-sectional survey research design, data were collected from 400 secondary school students across 12 educational institutions in Abbottabad, Mansehra, and Haripur, with equal representation across sector (public/private) and gender, through convenience sampling. Authoritative parenting was measured using the Urdu translation (Babree, 1997) of the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991), personality traits using the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Chisti & Kamal, 2002), and emotional intelligence using the Scale of Emotional Intelligence (Batoool & Hayat, 2018). Results indicated that authoritative parenting significantly predicted emotional intelligence, and that this relationship was partially mediated by personality traits, suggesting that parenting style shapes emotional intelligence both directly and through its influence on personality development. These findings highlight authoritative parenting as a key contributor to adolescents' emotional competence, and identify personality development as a pathway through which the family environment shapes emotional intelligence.

I. INTRODUCTION

During adolescence, a period marked by intense cognitive, emotional, and social transformation, parental influence stands as a primary developmental factor. Through their distinct parenting styles, parents exert substantial influence on their children's emotional development, temperament, personality, and psychological well-being (Charulatha & Sinha, 2023). Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined parenting styles as the constellation of approaches parents employ to interact with their children, fostering emotional bonds and conveying their perspectives across a range of issues. Building on the frameworks proposed by Baumrind (1978) and Maccoby and Martin (1983), parenting is classified along the dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness into four styles. Authoritative parents provide support and warmth while maintaining clear rules and consistent discipline (Chen et al., 2022). Authoritarian parenting, by contrast, is characterized by high strictness and low responsiveness, with parents relying on rigid rules and harsh punishment rather than dialogue. Permissive parents exercise minimal behavioral control, granting children considerable autonomy in decision-making, while neglectful parents show low involvement and limited attention to the child's needs, prioritizing their own concerns over parenting responsibilities (Marianowicz-Szczygieł, 2023).

Beyond shaping the emotional climate of the family, parenting also plays a substantial role in adolescents' development of emotional intelligence, the capacity to identify and regulate emotions in oneself and others, encompassing impulse regulation, appropriate emotional expression, and empathic responsiveness (Cameron et al., 2020). Personality represents a second critical influence on adolescent emotional development. Goldberg (1993) described personality as the distinctive manner in which individuals think and feel, giving rise to characteristic behavioral patterns in their interactions with the environment (Anglim et al., 2020). The Big Five Model (BFM) provides the dominant framework for understanding personality traits: agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience (Costa & McCrae, 2008). Agreeableness reflects cooperation, kindness, and forgiveness toward others, along with a tendency toward conflict avoidance (Wilmot & Ones, 2022). Conscientiousness reflects adherence to standards and values, marked by precision and behavioral discipline. Extraversion is associated with sociability, assertiveness, and verbal fluency, while neuroticism reflects diminished emotional stability and self-control (Zell & Lesick, 2022). Openness, per McCrae and Costa (1987), reflects a readiness to entertain new ideas, consider diverse perspectives, and embrace unconventional thinking and experience (Lika, 2024). The relationship between personality traits and emotional intelligence remains an area warranting further investigation. Existing evidence suggests that emotional intelligence is most strongly associated with extraversion and neuroticism, and less strongly associated with openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Siegling et al., 2015), a pattern that underscores the need for further empirical clarification, particularly regarding how these traits may function jointly with parenting influences to shape emotional intelligence in adolescence. Pakistani adolescents face a range of developmental stressors, including identity uncertainty, low self-esteem, and limited access to mental health support, that may be compounded by inconsistent parenting practices and inadequately understood personality influences on emotional functioning (Hamdani et al., 2022).

Authoritative Parenting and Personality Traits

A substantial body of evidence links parenting style to the development of personality traits during adolescence. A meta-analysis of 11,061 adolescents across 28 studies found that authoritative parenting was positively associated with openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, and negatively associated with neuroticism, whereas indifferent or neglectful parenting showed the inverse pattern, and authoritarian parenting was positively associated with neuroticism (Tehrani et al., 2024). This pattern has been replicated across diverse cultural samples. Among Spanish adolescents, authoritative parenting was associated with significantly higher extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability relative to authoritarian and neglectful parenting (Cuadri et al., 2025). In an Indonesian adolescent sample, authoritative parenting showed significant positive correlations with openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, and a significant negative correlation with neuroticism, indicating that greater authoritative parenting corresponded with stronger expression of adaptive personality traits. Findings from an Indian young-adult sample similarly showed authoritative parenting to be a significant positive predictor of agreeableness and conscientiousness, while authoritarian parenting positively predicted neuroticism and negatively predicted extraversion.

Authoritative Parenting and Emotional Intelligence

Research examining the relationship between parenting style and emotional intelligence remains comparatively limited, though existing findings converge on the emotional significance of responsive, engaged parenting. Familial communication characterized by responsibility and engagement substantially influences children's emotional development, with open parent-child communication facilitating children's recognition of their own feelings (Mokhtar, 2020). Research conducted in Iran identified a positive relationship between nurturing parenting and emotional intelligence, with adolescents raised by authoritative parents demonstrating greater psychological flexibility, a core component of emotional intelligence, alongside improved emotional control, psychological well-being, and behavioral functioning (Nasirzadeh, 2022). Findings have not, however, been uniform: other research has failed to find a significant relationship between perceived parental authority and adolescent emotional intelligence, suggesting that this relationship may be shaped by cultural values and individual temperament (Yim, 2022). Parental warmth has been identified as a particularly critical nurturing mechanism in emotional intelligence development (Cameron et al., 2020). Among Iranian adolescent boys, affectionate and non-restrictive parenting styles were associated with higher emotional intelligence, while affectionless control and neglectful parenting were associated with lower emotional intelligence (Alavi et al., 2017). Parental influence and family structure have

further been shown to shape emotional intelligence development from an early age (Yang et al., 2024), with children's inherent emotional mechanisms being either stimulated or weakened by childhood experience (Rao & Keerthi, 2022). Family-systems research has similarly indicated that parents' responses to a child's emotionality substantially influence the development of emotional intelligence, with both maternal and paternal involvement contributing distinct roles to this process (Aniemeka et al., 2020).

Because emotional capacities are shaped differentially by gender (Deng et al., 2023), maternal and paternal emotional responses tend to differ, jointly and irreducibly shaping children's emotional socialization (Li et al., 2019). Parenting approaches that balance meeting children's basic needs with encouraging independence have been linked to the development of self-confidence, self-regulation, and emotional integrity (Costa et al., 2018). Consistent with this, research examining paternal parenting in India found that greater paternal involvement combined with an authoritative style meaningfully contributed to the development of emotionally intelligent adolescents (Mousavi & Juhari, 2019). Within the Pakistani context, parenting practices diverge from Western patterns, shaped by the country's collectivist cultural and religious orientation, wherein parental authority commands substantial deference and children are socialized toward loyalty and compliance (Masud et al., 2019).

Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence

Personality traits capture stable cognitive, emotional, and behavioural patterns that shape how individuals engage with their emotional experiences, and effective emotional regulation depends on both emotional understanding and an appreciation of these individual differences (Taneja et al., 2020). A substantial body of research has established a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and personality characteristics (Gkintoni et al., 2022). Alghamdi et al. (2017), examining university students in Saudi Arabia, identified extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience as key correlates of emotional intelligence, while finding no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and either conscientiousness or neuroticism. Similarly, Yusoff et al. (2014), studying academics in administrative roles at the National University of Malaysia, found emotional intelligence to be strongly associated with extraversion, such that higher emotional intelligence corresponded with greater extraverted tendencies, alongside a negative association with neuroticism (Yusoff et al., 2021). This pattern, a positive association between emotional intelligence and extraversion alongside a negative association with neuroticism, has been replicated across multiple studies (Kumar & Tankha, 2023). Notably, the strength of the emotional intelligence–neuroticism association appears to vary by national context: studies conducted in industrialized nations, including Sweden (Hjalmarsson & Dåderman, 2022), the Netherlands (Petrides et al., 2010), and Japan (Abe et al., 2018), identified neuroticism as the strongest negative predictor of emotional intelligence, whereas research in developing countries, including Saudi Arabia (Alghamdi et al., 2017), Malaysia (Yusoff et al., 2021), India (Jamir, 2024), and Pakistan (Naseer et al., 2022), found no significant association between emotional intelligence and neuroticism. Taken together, despite the extensive documentation of associations between parenting styles and personality traits, between parenting styles and emotional intelligence, and between personality traits and emotional intelligence, these relationships have been examined largely in isolation and predominantly within Western, industrialized, or geographically distinct South Asian samples. The present study addresses this gap by testing a mediation model examining the Big Five personality traits as intervening mechanisms between authoritative parenting and emotional intelligence among adolescents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This study was conducted to achieve the following objective:

1. To explore the mediating role of personality traits that affect authoritative parenting style and emotional intelligence among adolescents.

II. METHOD

Participants

The sample comprised 400 adolescents aged 13 to 16 years (200 males, 200 females), drawn from 12 educational institutions across Abbottabad, Mansehra, and Haripur, with equal representation from public and private sector schools (6:6 ratio), selected through purposive sampling. Adolescents enrolled in secondary school, residing with both biological parents, were included; adolescents not residing with

both parents, those with a diagnosed mental or developmental disorder, and those residing in orphanages were excluded. The descriptive analysis shows that out of 400 participants; there was an equal representation of both males and females in the data. Forty-eight percent of the participants were between 13 and 14 years old, while the remaining 52% were between 15 and 16 years old. Out of 400, 120 of the participants were from grade 8, 143 were from grade 9, and 137 were from grade 10. As the data were collected from educational institutions, there was equal representation of both private and government schools.

Measures

Authoritative parenting was measured using the Urdu translation (Babree, 1997) of the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991), originally developed to assess Baumrind's (1971) permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parental styles. The authoritative subscale comprised 10 items (4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27, and 30), reflecting high demandingness and high responsiveness, rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Scores on this subscale ranged from 10 to 50, with a cutoff point of 30; higher scores indicated greater authoritative parenting. The subscale was administered separately for mother and father figures, and scores from both forms were averaged to yield a single composite authoritative parenting score. Personality traits were measured using the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI; Chishti & Kamal, 2002), each comprising 12 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater standing on each trait. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Scale of Emotional Intelligence (Batool & Hayat, 2018), comprising 26 items across five factors (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, General Mood, Adaptability), with higher scores indicating higher emotional intelligence.

Procedure

Prior permission was obtained from the heads of participating institutions and the parents/guardians of the adolescents. After confirming willingness to participate, adolescents were briefed on the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Instructions were provided to select the response option that best reflected their experience. Adolescents completed both the mother and father forms of the PAQ to report their perceptions of parenting style; emphasis was placed on honest responding to minimize response bias. Scores from the mother and father forms were averaged to yield a single composite score reflecting adolescents' overall perception of parenting style.

III. RESULTS

Table I: Correlation between Authoritative Parenting, Personality Traits, and Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Authoritative Parenting	--	.49**	.43**	.25**	-.27**	.24**	.19**
2. Extraversion		--	.19*	.22*	-.46**	.54**	.56**
3. Agreeableness			--	.39**	-.20**	.33**	.22*
4. Conscientiousness				--	-.12	-.14*	.47**
5. Neuroticism					--	-.23**	-.22*
6. Openness to Experience						--	.15*
7. Emotional Intelligence							--

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

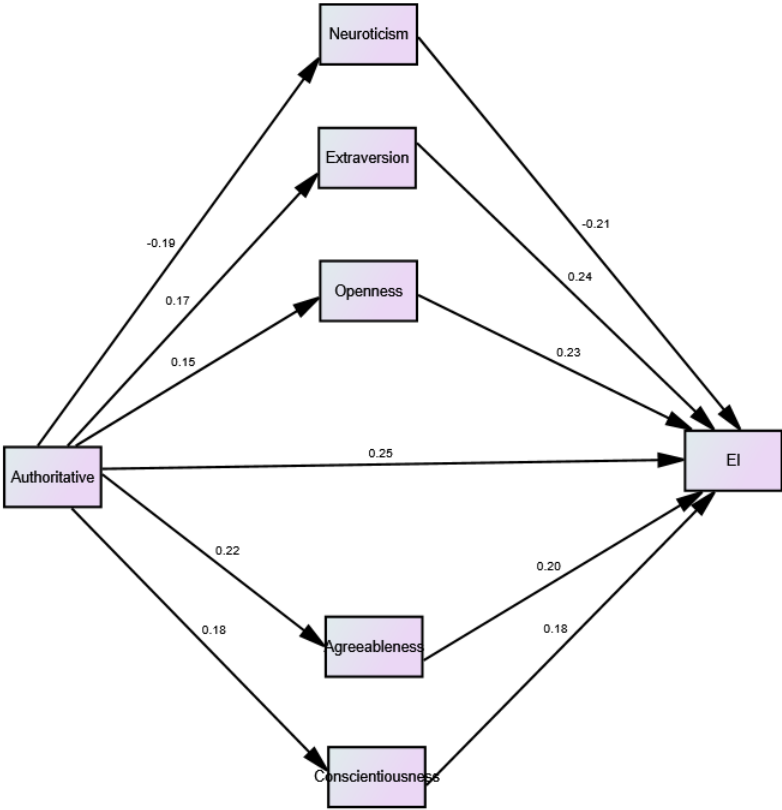
Authoritative parenting correlated positively with extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and emotional intelligence, and negatively with neuroticism. Among personality traits, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were positively interrelated and positively associated with emotional intelligence, while neuroticism was negatively associated with all other variables in the matrix.

Table II: Model Fit Indices for the Mediating Effect of Personality Traits in the Relationship between Authoritative Parenting and Emotional Intelligence (N=400)

Model	$\chi^2(df)$	p	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	AIC	BIC
Default Model	271.30(150)	.002	.958	.962	.045	7130.12	7250.45
Saturated Model	0.00(0)	1.00	1.000	1.000	0.000	7100.00	7180.00
Independent Model	2940.58(211)	.001	.000	.000	.180	8100.55	8175.90

The model showed good fit to the data. The default model's chi-square, $\chi^2(150) = 271.30, p = .002$, was significant, but this was expected given the sensitivity of chi-square to sample size and was not treated as a major concern. RMSEA = .045 indicated the model closely approximated the observed data. The default model also showed lower AIC and BIC values than the independence model, further supporting its adequacy.

Figure I: Structural Equation Modelling



Authoritative parenting positively predicted emotional intelligence, both directly and indirectly through the Big Five personality traits. Authoritative parenting was negatively associated with neuroticism and positively associated with extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. All five traits, in turn, predicted emotional intelligence, with neuroticism showing a negative association and extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness showing positive associations.

IV.DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study demonstrated that authoritative parenting positively predicted emotional intelligence among adolescents, both directly and indirectly through its influence on the Big Five personality traits, with all five traits emerging as significant mediators of this relationship. This finding aligns with Shah et al. (2025), who also reported that authoritative parenting significantly predicts emotional intelligence, underscoring the adaptive value of a parenting approach that combines warmth, responsiveness, and consistent discipline.

Authoritative parents may cultivate an environment that supports emotional awareness, self-regulation, and the development of interpersonal skills among adolescents, core components of emotional intelligence (Fayyaz, 2024). This pattern aligns with Baumrind's (1991) foundational assertion that children raised by authoritative parents demonstrate enhanced emotional expression and regulation relative to those raised under authoritarian or permissive conditions. Additional support comes from Al-Elaimat (2018), who found that positive, attentive parenting styles were significantly associated with adolescents' emotional intelligence. Within the Pakistani context specifically, this relationship may reflect a culturally adaptive expression of authoritative parenting, wherein warmth and structure are calibrated to align with prevailing collectivist value systems (Gul et al., 2025). With respect to personality traits, authoritative parenting was associated with lower neuroticism and higher extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, a pattern consistent with the broader parenting and personality literature. Each trait, in turn, predicted emotional intelligence and mediated the parenting–emotional intelligence relationship, with agreeableness emerging as the strongest mediator and conscientiousness the weakest. This mediational pattern suggests that authoritative parenting's contribution to adolescent emotional intelligence operates substantially through its cultivation of prosocial and cooperative tendencies, alongside more modest contributions from self-regulatory disposition (Tehrani et al., 2024).

The direction of trait–emotional intelligence associations observed is broadly consistent with prior correlational research, although these comparison studies examined personality–emotional intelligence associations directly rather than testing personality as a mediating mechanism linking parenting to emotional intelligence. Alegre et al. (2019) reported moderate to strong associations between the Big Five traits and trait emotional intelligence among Spanish college students, with neuroticism emerging as the strongest negative correlate and openness the weakest—a pattern that diverges somewhat from the present findings, in which agreeableness showed the strongest and conscientiousness the weakest mediating contribution. Comparable directional patterns have been reported among Swedish adults, where extraversion related positively and neuroticism related negatively to trait emotional intelligence, alongside associations between conscientiousness and self-regulation and between agreeableness and social well-being (Hjalmarsson & Dåderman, 2021). Cross-national research further contextualizes these findings. Avsec et al. (2009) found that personality traits accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in emotional intelligence among Croatian and Slovene university students, with extraversion and openness emerging as particularly strong predictors, while neuroticism was most closely tied to emotional management and regulation. Similarly, Abe et al. (2018) reported a positive association between extraversion and emotional intelligence and a negative association with neuroticism among Japanese medical students. Because these studies tested direct trait–emotional intelligence associations rather than parenting-mediated pathways, they are best interpreted as evidence that the general direction of trait–emotional intelligence associations replicate across cultural contexts, even as the present study extends this literature by demonstrating that such traits also function as mechanisms through which parenting shapes emotional intelligence.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrated that authoritative parenting and personality traits are closely interconnected in shaping adolescents' emotional intelligence. Authoritative parenting was associated with lower neuroticism and higher extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, and with higher emotional intelligence both directly and through these traits. This underscores the importance of parental warmth, responsiveness, and consistent guidance in fostering the personality characteristics that support adolescents' emotional understanding and regulation.

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