

**Role of Perceived Parenting Style, Prosocial Behavior and Happiness in University Students**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The current study examines the relationships between perceived parenting styles, pro-social behavior, and happiness in university students, focusing on their correlations and predictive impacts. A co relational study design was adopted, involving a sample of 300 university students. The research aimed to see the correlation between perceived parenting styles and happiness, assess regression effects of parenting styles and their subscales, evaluate whether parenting styles predict happiness, and check the mediation role of pro-social behavior in these relationships. Data were collected and three standardized questionnaires as Perceived Parenting Style scale by (Divya & Manikandan, 2013) which included subscales for perceived parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive), Helping Attitude Scale (Nickell, G., 1998) which was used as pro-social behavior, and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills, P. & Argyle, M., 2002) was used to assess happiness. The procedure involved gathering self-reported responses from participants, ensuring anonymity and ethical considerations. Results revealed significant positive correlations between authoritative parenting and both pro-social behavior ( $p < .441$ ) and happiness ( $p < .332$ ), while authoritarian parenting styles demonstrated negative associations i.e., ( $p < -.256$ ) and ( $p < -.301$ ). Regression analysis identified authoritative parenting as a significant predictor of happiness, whereas authoritarian and permissive styles had variable effects. Mediation analysis highlighted pro-social behavior as a key intermediary, enhancing the influence of positive parenting on happiness outcomes as it successfully explains 10.7% of happiness variations through its fit statistics which show  $R = 0.327$  and  $R^2 = 0.107$ . These findings emphasize the importance of structured parenting practices, which foster emotional well-being, empathy, and social competence. Perceived parenting styles, pro social behavior and happiness are studied among the university students using demographic and situational factors. Core hypotheses concern the correlations among these variables, parenting styles' predictive effect on happiness, and the mediating effect of pro-social behavior. The research shows that parenting styles strongly affect how university students feel happy and behave positively towards others. From the researched styles of parenting, it shows that authoritative parenting works best because it uses both high responsiveness and high demandingness. To help students develop better overall they need support from education leaders and policy makers along with their parents and it is recommended to Promote authoritative parenting style and also integrate family support programs in educational institutions.*

**Keywords:** Perceived parenting styles, pro-social behavior, subjective happiness, authoritative parenting, emotional well-being, cultural influences, and resilience.

**INTRODUCTION**

It is crucial to understand the relationship of perceived parenting Styles, pro-social and happiness to gain insights on how familial dynamics in previous years shape college students' well-being. Working on current research and citing it as a proof of this subject significance, this introduction elaborates on these core concepts and their connections. According to Parra et al., (2023), there are four main types of parenting styles: two major types of child rearing practices that were identified include the permissive, the authoritative, the authoritarian and the uninvolved. Authoritative parenting demands and pays attention, and generally it is associated with positive outcomes such as enhances social competencies, enhanced academic

accomplishments, and enhanced psychological health (Tariq, A. & Akhtar, S. 2024). It creates a positive parenting environment, which fosters the children's autonomy and self-regulation aspects that can have benefits in the well-being and life satisfaction of university students (Stavrulaki et al., 2021; Varma et al., 2018). Authoritative parenting is characterized by highly demanding expectancies, low warmth or responsiveness, strict disciplinary measures and emphasis is placed on punctuality and obedience. It has high requirements and proportionately low payoff.

The negative consequences are lower self-esteem, increased level of worry, and less effective positive social skills are often attributed to this technique. Consequently, while permissive home environments may have the potential for producing the kind of persistent pro-social behavior being discussed in this paper, they might not achieve this because of the absence of structure. Uninvolved Parenting or passive parenting tends to lack focus or observation while having low expectations. Tapping on self-organizing maps, parents who are not interested provide little advice and affection, which is non-beneficial. As pointed by (Varma et al., 2018), children who grow up in such households have common issues of serious emotional disturbances including poor academic performance, inadequate pro-social behavior, and high levels of distress.

Some of the things which fall under the category of pro-social behaviors include acts of generosity such as sharing, donating and showing kindness or compassion in a voluntary manner hence helping others. Indeed, these actions have a significant, positive effect on both social achievement and other aspects of welfare because it promotes social integration and the development of healthy social bonds in societies at large (Sharma & Tomer, 2018). In this case, parental rearing is relied on since children from authoritative families tend to display higher degrees of empathy, collaboration, and altruism due to nurturing from childhood for comprehension and moral development (Parwez et al., 2023; Emagnaw & Hong, 2018). It is fully understood that these parents are gentle and tolerant, but they have no strict rules for their children, which can lead to an inability to control their impulses and self-discipline, more specifically, these children will not be able to attend school and other such functions frequently (Shafique et al., 2024).

Subjective well-being is also considered as one of the essential aspects of human well-being and mental health directly affecting the quality of life and university students in particular. It is often quantified with several indicators including subjective well-being and satisfaction with life. As a student at a university, one is exposed to different challenges and possibilities. The kind of parenting those students was exposed to in their early childhood and adolescence greatly impacts student happiness, though in many cases it is not given much attention (Stavrulaki et al., 2021). Evaluations and self-reported happiness in university students who are brought up under authoritative parenting style where parents are highly responsive and demanding after socialization are likely to be happier. As a student at a university, one is exposed to different challenges and possibilities. The kind of parenting those students was exposed to in their early childhood and adolescence greatly impacts student happiness, though in many cases it is not given much attention (Stavrulaki et al., 2021).

Drawing from parental modelling perceptions, it is evident that children's psychological and emotional development is not only shaped during childhood, rather into their early adulthood. Evaluations and self-reported happiness in university students who are brought up under authoritative parenting style where parents are highly responsive and demanding after socialization are likely to be happier. Similarly, children who grow in homes with indifferent and neglectful parents who display low demands for the child and lack of sensitivity, many interpersonal and psychological challenges are likely to face.

### **Hypothesis**

- i. There is a significant correlation between perceived parenting styles, pro-social behavior, and happiness in university students.
- ii. Perceived parenting styles (authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style) would be significant predictor of happiness in university students.
- iii. Pro-social behavior would be a significant predictor of happiness in university students.
- iv. Pro-social behavior acts as mediator in perceived parenting styles and happiness in university students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A correlation research design was used in this study.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Sample of 300 Student Participants (220 female and 80 male) was chosen. The data for this study were obtained from university students in Sialkot city, with the participants' ages ranging from 18 to 30 years and convenience sampling technique is utilized in this research.

### **Perceived Parenting Style scale by (Divya & Manikandan, 2013)**

The "Perceived Parenting Style Scale" developed by Divya and Manikandan (2013), measure the perception of the children about their parent's behavior. It measures perceived parenting style of the subject with regard to three dimensions such as authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. It consists of 30 items in which responses were elicited in a five-point Likert scale each subscale contains 10 items each.

### **Helping Attitude Scale (Nickell, G., 1998)**

This is a 20 items scale measure the beliefs of participants like beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that are linked with helping. Each item is answered on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### **Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills, P. & Argyle, M., 2002)**

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University. This scale contains 29 items and of 5 Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### **Procedure**

The data collection process encountered both expected and unforeseen challenges. To address these issues, a letter of permission was issued to the university administration, which helped resolve any concerns promptly. The letter was presented to the relevant authorities along with assurances of confidentiality. The study received approval from the University of Management and Technology, Sialkot, through its psychology department. After securing approval, data collection began. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants beforehand. On the first page of the questionnaire, participants were provided with a brief introduction to the study, emphasizing that all information would be kept strictly confidential and used exclusively for research purposes. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation. Participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire carefully, ensuring that no questions were left blank. The questionnaire was administered in the presence of the researcher, and nearly all participants completed the questionnaires on-site. The process took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to finish.

### **Ethical Consideration**

All safe tools were utilized before conducting research and its all-related finding processes. This procedure gave researcher a positive way to properly investigate about findings in a better way. First of all, before conducting study research explains all the circumstances to participants/individuals who took part in this to help out for research. Author gives them surety for putting their data confidential and also follows all the rule and regulations of institution or any organization from where he/she was getting data. In short, each and every ethical consideration for research findings properly arranged before data collection processes.

## **RESULTS**

**Table 1**

**Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N=300)**

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>(f)</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Age		
18 to 21	166	55.3
22 to 25	84	28.0
26 to 28	60	16.7
Education Level		

Bachelors	188	66.0
Masters	102	34.0
Gender		
Male	80	26.7
Female	220	73.3
Family Setup		
Nuclear	209	69.7
Joint	91	30.3
Birth Order		
1 to 2	170	56.7
3 to 4	88	29.3
5 to 6	42	14.0

Note. f = Frequency and % = Percentage

The result of the above table shows the description of demographic characteristics of sample (N=300). The whole sample was separated into three age groups: 18 to 21, 22 to 25, and 25 to 28. The table showed that the most of the sample population belongs to age range 18 to 21 and the frequency of age range 18 to 21 was 166 and the percentage was 55.3.

**TABLE 2**

**Means, Standard Deviations and Inter-correlations between Perceived Parenting Style scale, Helping Attitude Scale and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire among University Students (N = 300)**

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	PPSS	APPSS	ANPPSS	PPPSS	HAS	OHQ
APPSS	40.65	6.20	–	–	-.406**	-.241**	.441**	.332**
ANPPSS	24.84	7.98	–	–	–	.425**	-.256**	-.301**
PPPSS	24.69	6.73	–	–	–	–	-.135*	-.109
HAS	77.35	7.90	–	–	–	–	–	.315**
OHQ	117.04	14.96	–	–	–	–	–	–

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation, APPSS = Authoritative Perceived Parenting Style subscale, ANPPSS = Authoritarian Perceived Parenting Style subscale, PPPSS = Permissive Perceived Parenting Style subscale, HAS = Helping Attitude Scale, and OHQ = Oxford Happiness Questionnaire.

\*p< .05, \*\*p< .01, \*\*\*p< .001.

Table 2 shows the correlation between dependent variable i.e., happiness as oxford happiness questionnaire and independent variables i.e., perceived parenting styles (authoritative perceived parenting style, authoritarian perceived parenting style, permissive perceived parenting style) and prosocial behavior as helping attitude scale and to show their connectivity with each other that how they influence.

**TABLE 3**

**Regression coefficients of different subscales of Perceived Parenting Style Scale on Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (N=300)**

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Adj. R2</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>95% CI</i>
Model 1							

Constant	84.52	5.42	15.60	.000			[73.85, 95.18]
APPSS	.800	.132	6.071	.000	.107	.110	[-.541, 1.059]
<b>Model 2</b>							
Constant	131.07	2.70	48.531	.000			[125.75, 136.38]
ANPPSS	-.565	.104	-5.454	.000	.088	.091	[-.768, -.361]
<b>Model 3</b>							
Constant	123.02	3.27	37.58	.000			[116.57, 129.46]
PPPSS	-.242	.128	-1.89	.059	.009	.012	[-.494, .010]

This table demonstrates how Perceived Parenting Style Scale (PPSS) together with Helping Attitude Scale (HAS) modified Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) ratings for 300 participants.

OHQ scores prove more positive when parental approach is APPSS ( $B=0.800$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) yet ANPPSS shows negative effects on scores ( $B=-0.565$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Data shows that Permissive Parenting Style (PPPSS) Neal has a slightly negative impact ( $B=-0.242$ ,  $p=0.059$ ). The results show HAS produced a substantial increase in happiness scores ( $B=0.597$ ) with  $p$  values less than 0.001. These variables show modest effect on happiness according to model fit statistics where  $R^2$  measures from 0.012 to 0.110.

**TABLE 4**

**Perceived Parenting Style (PPSS), Helping Attitude Scale (HAS), and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) (N = 300)**

Variables	B	CI 95%		SE	t	p	R2	Adj. R2
		UL	LL					
Constant	70.854	54.93	86.77	8.091	8.757	.000		
HAS	.597	.392	.802	.104	5.738	.000	.099	.096

Note. CI = Confidence Interval

**TABLE 5**

**Mediation Analysis of Perceived Parenting Style (PPSS), Helping Attitude Scale (HAS) and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) (N = 300)**

Dependent	Independent	B	SE	t	p
OHQ	PPSS	-.112	.071	-1.59	.114
	HAS	.594	.104	5.72	.000

Note. SE = Standard Error

The table shows that Perceived Parenting Style (PPSS) and Helping Attitude Scale (HAS) impact the scores of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ). Helping attitudes emerge as crucial factors which impact happiness more than perceived parenting styles when it comes to understanding happiness behaviors. The model successfully explains 10.7% of happiness variations through its fit statistics which show  $R = 0.327$  and  $R^2 = 0.107$ .

**DISCUSSION**

Perceived parenting styles, pro social behavior and happiness are studied among the university students using demographic and situational factors. Core hypotheses concern the correlations among these variables, parenting styles' predictive effect on happiness, and the mediating effect of pro-social behavior. Five secondary hypotheses explore differences in perceptions of parenting styles, helping attitude, and happiness between gender, education level, family configuration, number siblings, and birth order. Results show that students rose under authoritative parenting end up happier and more pro-social, in line with previous research touting warmth and responsiveness for children's psychological well-being. Helping attitudes were significantly higher among females. No differences were found, however, in happiness or parenting perception by family set up, education level, or working status. Helping attitudes were also influenced by

birth order, with students from the 5–6 birth order group scoring near where you would expect later born children to do their ability to develop heightened social skills in order to gain familial attention. The study includes three sets of main hypotheses concerning correlation, regression and mediation.

There is a significant correlation between perceived parenting style, pro-social behaviour, and happiness in university students is the first hypothesis and its important finding is that happy and pro-social life correlates positively with authoritative parenting and negatively with authoritarian parenting. (Arshad, A., & Akhtar, S. 2024). Next, perceived parenting style (permissive parenting style, authoritative parenting style and authoritarian parenting style) would be a significant predictor of happiness in university students is the second hypothesis i.e., regression analyses suggest that authoritative parenting and helping attitudes are important predictors of happiness. Additionally, pro social behaviour mediates the relation between perceived parenting styles, and happiness underlining its contribution in improving well-being. The results can also be placed in the context of existing theories: attachment theory, self-determination theory, and social learning theory.

The findings of this study align with previous research on the impact of parenting styles: Studies of Stavroulaki et al (2021) suggest that authoritative parenting leads to emotional security and self-esteem and also, resilience. Students who grow up with this form of parenting tend to possess good social skills and become able to switch over to new situations. Such outcomes agree with the findings of this study that authoritative parenting produces happier, more empathetic and socially competent students. Shafique et al., (2024) findings revealed that permissive parenting generates immediate happiness because there are no rules and pressure. But this kind of style is rarely adequate to prepare children for lifelong problems. This is consistent with the study findings that students from permissive homes might be inept with discipline and responsibilities, thereby having an effect on their later happiness and pro social behaviour. Literature from Varma et al., (2018) supports the idea that uninvolved parenting leads to emotional neglect. Children brought up in this environment are often anxious, lack any social skills and are usually sad. This is consistent with the finding of this research that uninvolved parenting has a negative effect on students' emotional and social development. The findings of this research have important implications for education, policy, and psychological support.

### **CONCLUSION**

The research shows that parenting styles strongly affect how university students feel happy and behave positively towards others. From the researched styles of parenting, it shows that authoritative parenting works best because it uses both high responsiveness and high demandingness. Students who receive authoritarian discipline learn good conduct but feel stressed as they miss emotional development opportunities. When parents adopt a permissive approach, they create short-term contentment, but their students develop poor self-management skills. By not taking part in their children's lives uninvolved parents permit the worst outcomes which include emotional weakness and weak social abilities. To help students develop better overall they need support from education leaders and policy makers along with their parents.

### **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Promote Authoritative Parenting Practices:** Parenting workshops should emphasize the benefits of the authoritative approach, highlighting the importance of balancing warmth, responsiveness, and clear expectations. Schools and community programs can collaborate to educate parents on how these practices positively influence children's emotional well-being, social behavior, and academic success.

**Design Family-Centered Policies:** Policymakers should introduce policies that prioritize family well-being, such as subsidies for parenting education, family therapy sessions, and mental health awareness campaigns. These policies can help reduce the negative impact of uninvolved and authoritarian parenting styles.

**Enhance Student Support Services:** Universities should provide tailored support for students from challenging family environments. Services like stress management workshops, peer counseling, and emotional skills training can help these students improve their well-being and social adaptability.

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