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## The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Happiness with the Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence

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### ABSTRACT

The current study sought to investigate the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the correlation between parenting style and happiness. The research method adopted was correlational and descriptive in nature. The population of the study was all the male and female high school students studying in the school year 2014-2015 in Noorabad Mamasani. The sample of the study was 345 high school students chosen through multistage random cluster sampling. For the purpose of data collection, use was made of three questionnaires, namely Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire by Petrides and Furnham and Parenting Style Questionnaire by Baumrind. The findings showed that parenting styles could predict happiness. In addition, the two variables of self-awareness and optimism could act as mediators between the internal variables of authoritarian and authoritative styles and happiness. Generally speaking, it could be said that in addition to parenting styles, emotional intelligence plays an important role in happiness.

**Key Words:** Happiness, Parenting Style, Emotional Intelligence

### INTRODUCTION

Happiness is a basic human emotion and everyone experiences it, depending on the circumstances. However, defining happiness is not as easy as experiencing it. Theoreticians have defined happiness in different ways. What all these definitions have in common is the positive feelings. Happiness refers to increased positive emotions, satisfaction with life and reduced negative feelings [1]. The person who enjoys more happiness, is more peaceful and feels more secure, is able to make decisions more easily, is capable of doing better jobs, participates more, enjoys a healthier and more energetic life and finally is more satisfied with his/her life [2].

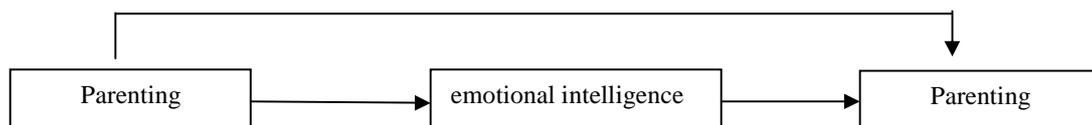
Most researchers and intellectuals believe that the ability to be happy and satisfied with life, is one of criteria for positive mental health. Happiness as one of the variables in discussions of positive psychology, is associated with benefits for married life, the level of income, pregnancy, socialization and creativity [3]. Happiness is the result of one's judgment about how to spend life. This kind of judgment is not imposed on the individual from the outside, rather it is an internal state which is influenced by positive emotions and has emotional, cognitive and social components [4]. Thus, happiness is built on personal attitudes and perceptions and refers to a state that is pleasant

and enjoyable and stems from positive emotions and satisfaction with life [5]. The research evidence accumulated clearly suggests that feeling of happiness generates energy, joy, movement and dynamism, acts as a shield protecting individuals against stress and problems and can guarantee physical and mental health [6].

Given the movement of positive psychology and the emphasis laid on happiness, it is necessary to gain insights into the factors contributing to it. Among other things, these factors include parenting styles [7] and emotional intelligence [8]. Thus, family and parenting styles have important consequences in the psychosocial health and a wide range of behaviours including mental well-being, health and educational issues of young adolescents [9, 10]. Baumrind made use of the perspective of the control exercised by parents to identify three parenting styles. These styles are: authoritarian style, which involves obligatory and tough regulations and is associated with low acceptance rate; authoritative style which is a combination of logical care and loving and involves enforcing laws while being cognizant of acceptance of the behavior and permissive style which is associated with lower levels of control [11]. Each parenting style is associated with different consequences for parents. However, the authoritative style is the best parenting style. Children of authoritative parents can achieve better personal, educational, social and emotional results [12, 13]. These children assume more responsibility, are more self-sufficient and motivated and are more cooperative with their peers [14]. Authoritative parenting style brings about development of more positive psychological well-being, positive self-assessment, higher levels of self-esteem, adjustability, and happiness [15]. The studies carried out into parenting styles have invariably shown that parents who are too tough in parenting have children who have difficulty to relate to their peers and are aggressive. On the other hand, parents who adopt warm and caring parenting styles have children with fewer social problems [16].

Emotional intelligence is one factor which could predict people's happiness. Based on the model developed by Sheldon and Lyubomirsky [17], and based on the relevant research findings [8, 18-20], emotional intelligence, as a personality trait, could contribute to happiness. Emotional intelligence, first proposed by Salovey and Mayer [21] is conceptualized in two different ways: first, according to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso [22], it is defined as a series of abilities to process emotional information and second, it is defined by Bar-On [23] as a collection of personality traits and is characterized as a combination of emotional abilities coupled with personality-related, emotional and motivational preparedness. The research findings suggest that emotional intelligence is comprised of self-awareness, self-control, social awareness and social skills, which can help the individual to cope with everyday demands and environmental pressures [24], to promote well-being and to reduce deviant behavior [25] and increase happiness [8]. Thus, emotional intelligence is a fixed psychological ability and includes the interrelationship between emotion and cognition, which results in adaptive behavior [26].

In addition, parenting styles are one of the factors contributing to emotional intelligence. These are a series of methods which individually or interactively affect the individual's development. It is possible to say that parenting style is actually an attempt on the part of parents to socialize their children [27]. In some studies, a relationship has been found between parenting styles and emotional intelligence. The findings suggested that there is a relationship between parenting styles and emotional intelligence [28]. In addition, there is a correlation between parenting style of mother and emotional intelligence with its components in young adolescents [29]. The findings of some studies suggested that all the dimensions of parenting significantly correlate with emotional intelligence and its components [30]. In addition, Khajeh and Shayof [31] and Mohammadyari [32] reported that authoritative parenting style has positive and significant correlation with emotional intelligence and that there is a negative but significant relationship between permissive and authoritarian parenting styles and emotional intelligence. However, given the theoretical foundation of the study and the studies carried out so far, the current study sought to integrate various findings as to the relationship between parenting styles, emotional intelligence and happiness and gain new insights into the issue. Therefore, the current study sought to investigate the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the correlation between parenting style and happiness, according to the conceptual model presented in Figure 1.



In line with the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses could be formulated:

1. Parenting styles could predict happiness.
2. Parenting styles could predict emotional intelligence.

3. The components of emotional intelligence could play a mediating role in the relationship between parenting style and happiness.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The current study is descriptive and correlational in nature. In this study, the variable of happiness is considered as the criterion variable, parenting style as the predictive variable and emotional intelligence is considered as the mediator variable. The population of the study was all the male and female highschool students studying in the school year 2014-2015 in NoorabadMamasani. The sample of the study was 345 high school students chosen through multistage random cluster sampling. To accomplish this, first four girl schools and four boy schools and out of each 2 classes were chosen randomly. Then, all the students in each class were included in the sample. For the purpose of data collection, use was made of three questionnaires, namely Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire by Petrides and Furnham and Parenting Style Questionnaire by Baumrind.

**Oxford Happiness Questionnaire:** This questionnaire developed by Argyle and Lu [33] consists of 29 questions measuring five dimensions of satisfaction, positive temperament, health, effectiveness and self-esteem. The items are in the form of multiple-choice questions and the choices carry the values of 0 to 3 so that ‘never’ carries the value of 0, ‘little’ carries the value of 1, ‘average’ carries the value of 2, and ‘a lot’ carries the value of 3. The sum of all 29 items represents the total score of the questionnaire. Therefore, the scores range from 0 to 87. Argill and Lu (1990), using Cronbach Alpha, established the reliability of the questionnaire which was 0.90 and test –retest reliability within a time interval of 7 weeks was 0.78. concurrent validity of the questionnaire using peer review was 0.43. in the current study, the reliability was 0.76, using Cronbach Alpha.

**Petrides and Furnham’s Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire:** This questionnaire was developed by Petrides and Furnham to gauge emotional intelligence[34]. The short form of the questionnaire consists of four components of optimism, understanding one’s own and others’ emotions, assessment and control of emotions, and social skills. This questionnaire consists of 30 items with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1, completely agree, to 7, completely disagree. Adding up the score of all items comprise the total score of the scale. In the study carried out by Ciarrochi,Chan and Bajgar, the internal consistency of the scale was calculated to be 0.81[35]. In the current study, the reliability was established to be 0.86, using Cronbach Alpha.

**Diana Baumrind’s Parenting Style Questionnaire:** This questionnaire consists of 30 items, and theoretically speaking, it is based on typology of Baumrind’s parenting style. 10 questions are devoted to each style and has a 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire gauges three parenting styles. 10 questions are devoted to authoritarian style, 10 questions to authoritative style and 10 to permissive style. This questionnaire has been adopted in a number of studies and both its validity and reliability have been reported as satisfactory. Buri reported a satisfactory coefficients of reliability for this instrument[36]. These coefficients were reported as 0.78 for authoritative mothers, 0.86 for authoritarian mothers and 0.81 for permissive mothers. Coefficients of internal consistency of each dimension of this instrument were established by Bouri, which were established to be 0.75 for permissive mothers, 0.85 for authoritarian mothers, 0.82 for authoritative mothers, 0.74 for permissive fathers, 0.87 for authoritarian fathers, and 0.85 for authoritative fathers [37]. He also reported the diagnostic validity of the questionnaire to be satisfactory. In the current study, the reliability of the instrument, established through Cronbach Alpha, was calculated to be 0.87.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Coefficient between Variables**

variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Authoritative	24.43	5.55	1							
Authoritarian	26.47	5.63	0.49**	1						
Permissive	27.04	4.92	0.46**	0.52**	1					
Self-awareness	49.18	9.57	0.25**	-0.15**	0.05	1				
Optimism	8.95	2.79	0.20**	0.013	0.04	0.49**	1			
Skill	41.99	9.13	0.23**	0.081	0.05	0.78**	0.49**	1		
Understanding	35.47	6.68	0.18**	-0.17	0.02	0.61**	0.48**	0.60**	1	
Happiness	60.39	17.90	0.46**	0.08	0.25**	0.43**	0.34**	0.40**	0.31	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01

As could be seen in Table 1, the range of correlation coefficient of happiness with the variables of the study is from 0.15 to 0.87. In order to determine the role of each of the variables in the study, based on the theoretical framework adopted and the relevant review of literature, a model was developed, consisting of three external variables (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative), four mediating variables (self-awareness, optimism, social skills and perception of emotions) and one internal variable (happiness). In order to test the hypotheses, use was made of concurrent regression analysis, consistent with Baroon and Keni (1986) and the resultant diagram was drawn as path analysis. The causal model obtained is given in Figure 2. In this diagram, standard coefficients of regression( $\beta$ ) are shown on the paths. In addition, the values of  $R^2$  (variance explained) are shown for dependent variables. Based on the results of the test for the research model (Figure 2), direct effect, indirect effects, and total variance explained are shown for the variables in the study in Table 2.

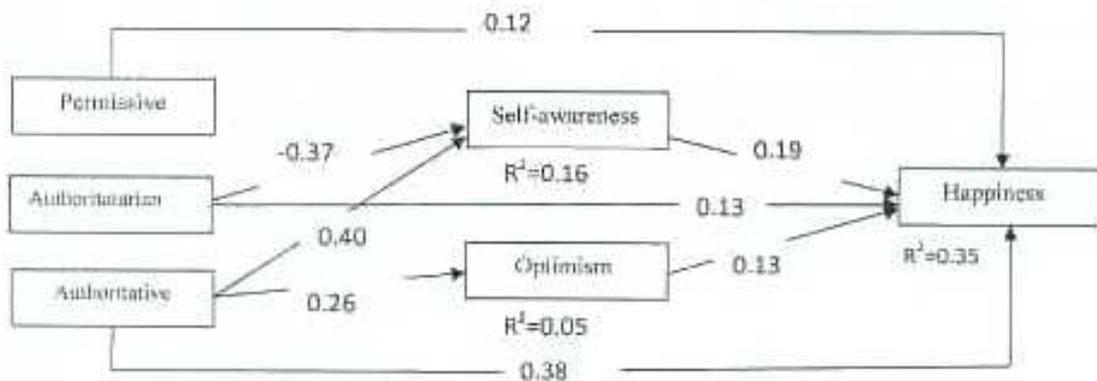


Figure 2. The causal model of the study: the relationship between parenting style and happiness with the mediating role of emotional intelligence

Table 2.direct effects, indirect effects, and total variance explained

Dependent latent variable	Independent latent variables	Standardized causal effects		Total	total variance explained
		Direct	Indirect		
Happinessbased on	Permissive	0.12	---	---	0.35
	authoritarain	-0.13	-0.07	-0.20	
	authoritative	0.38	0.11	0.49	
	Self-awareness	0.19	---	0.19	
	optimism	0.13	---	0.13	
	understanding skill	---	---	---	

$T \geq 1.96$ In this table, path coefficients are reported as standardized ( $\beta$ )

As for the first research hypothesis stating that parenting styles could predict happiness, as seen in Figure 2, the results suggest that permissive style with a  $\beta$  value of 0.12, authoritarian style with the  $\beta$  value of -0.13 and the authoritative style with a  $\beta$  value of 0.38 have a significant role in predicting happiness.

The second research hypothesis stated that parenting styles could predict emotional intelligence. The results, as presented in Figure 2, suggest that authoritarian and authoritative styles account for 16% of self-awareness. In other words, authoritarian style with the  $\beta$  value of 0.37, the authoritative style with a  $\beta$  value of 0.40 permissive style could predict self-awareness. In addition, 0.05 of happiness could be accounted for with authoritative style. Of all the parenting styles, only authoritative style with a  $\beta$  value of 0.26 could predict optimism. The third research hypothesis was that components of emotional intelligence have mediating roles for the relationship between parenting styles and happiness. Based on the results of Figure 2 and Table 2, the two variables of self-awareness and optimism act as mediators between authoritarian and authoritative style and happiness.

The indirect effect of authoritarian styles on happiness with the mediating role of self-awareness was 0.07 and the total effect was 0.20. The indirect effect of authoritative styles on happiness with the mediating role of self-awareness was 0.11 and the total effect was 0.49. As seen in Table 2, the variance explained by independent variables of permissive, authoritarian and authoritative styles and the variables of self-awareness and optimism was  $R^2=0.35$ .

## DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and happiness with the mediating role of emotional intelligence. The results showed that parenting styles are related with happiness both directly or indirectly. The results are consistent with several findings [7,15,16, 24, 28,32]. In their study, Cripps and, Zyromsk found that the type of parenting styles correlate with a wide range of behaviors such as mental well-being and psychological well-being. Children of parents with authoritative parenting style learn to solve their problems and to have their demands met through dialogue and logical reasoning. Authoritative style leads to positive developments, psychological well-being, positive self-evaluation, high levels of self-esteem, compatibility and intrinsic motivation to learn [15]. In this study, the best consequence, namely happiness, belonged to children whose parents had adopted authoritative parenting style. Authoritative parenting style is the result of affection and control at the same time. Perhaps the positive consequence of authoritative parenting style is due to the fact that children regard control and affection as indications of parents' attaching significance to their children [11]. The results also showed that permissive parenting style has a significant positive correlation with happiness. These results are consistent with the findings of Bloch-Torricco [38]. He found that parenting levels, especially intimacy, are related to later compatibility of adolescents and their self-esteem. In addition, the results showed that there is a significant negative relationship between authoritarian parenting style and happiness. These results are consistent with the findings of many studies [16,39]. In this vein, Carmona and colleagues found that the quality and the closeness of parent-child relationship correlate with behavioral outcomes of children in risky situations [39]. It is possible to say that children of parents with authoritarian parenting style are less able to experience happiness and try to be isolated in the corner of a room, which is due to their being exposed to conflict and tension and being scared to point out their wishes. The second hypothesis was about prediction of emotional intelligence based on parenting styles. Research findings showed that out of parenting styles, authoritarian parenting style has a significant positive correlation with components of self-awareness and optimism. However, there was no significant relationship between parenting styles and other components of emotional intelligence. In addition, authoritarian parenting style had a significant negative relationship with emotional self-awareness and was not able to predict other components. The result is consistent with other findings [28-31]. Based on the results obtained, it is possible to say that each parenting style creates a different emotional atmosphere and thus, can help with the development of emotional intelligence.

The third hypothesis was about the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between parenting style and happiness. The results showed indirect effect of emotional self-awareness and optimism on happiness. The result is consistent with previous findings [17-20]. Parents with authoritative style set very clear principles for themselves and ensure that those rules will be implemented. They coordinate themselves with the feelings of their children and make use of emotional states to find out what makes their children happy or sad. On the other hand, people with emotional intelligence have the ability to identify and control their own emotions, which results in their recognizing their positive and negative emotions and when experiencing negative emotions, they have more adaptability, and thoughtfulness. This flexibility helps to make the environment joyful even when it is not.

## CONCLUSION

Given the findings of the study, it is suggested that educational authorities and other relevant policy makers provide training for parents in advantageous parenting styles. This could prevent a lot of harms associated with improper parenting styles. This in turn can also be effective in making children happy. Having healthy and happy children means a healthy and happy society. In addition, since emotional intelligence can be learned and acquired, parents are recommended to make every effort to teach emotional intelligence to their children.

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