

## Paternal malparenting and offspring personality disorders: Mediating effect of early maladaptive schemas

Naila Batool,<sup>1</sup> Humaira Shehzadi,<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Naveed Riaz,<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Akram Riaz<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

**Objective:** To examine the mediating role of maladaptive schemas between permissive/authoritarian parenting by fathers and personality disorders, including histrionic, antisocial, narcissistic and depressive attitudes among adults.

**Methods:** This cross-sectional study was conducted at the University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan, and comprised university students. Data was collected by administering the parental authority questionnaire, the young schema questionnaire and the personality diagnostic questionnaire. SPSS 23 was used for data analysis. The study was completed in one year. It was started from June 2014 and ended in June 2015.

**Results:** Of the 200 participants who were handed the questionnaires, 100(50%) returned it fully filled up. Of them, 87(87%) were women and 13(13%) were men. All scales had greater than 0.70 alpha reliability coefficients. The values of skewness for all scales ranged from 0.10 to 0.86. Permissive parenting style had positive correlation with histrionic ( $p < 0.05$ ), narcissistic ( $p < 0.05$ ) and antisocial personality disorders ( $p < 0.01$ ). Authoritarian parenting had positive correlation with early maladaptive schemas ( $p < 0.01$ ) and depressive personality disorder ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles led to personality disorders among offspring in the adult phase of their lives.

**Keywords:** Permissive / authoritarian paternal parenting, Maladaptive schemas, Histrionic, Antisocial, narcissistic, Depressive personality disorder. (JPMA 67: 556; 2017)

### Introduction

Studies found that neglecting behaviour by parents and lack of parental love, warmth and care or encouragement in the early years of childhood make offspring prone to personality disorders in adulthood. Research<sup>1</sup> shows that aversive behaviour of parents may be connected with various personality disorders, including histrionic, antisocial and depressive attitudes. Mistreated children are vulnerable for lifelong dysfunctional personality characteristics in general<sup>2</sup> and personality disorders in particular.<sup>1</sup> Researchers<sup>3,4</sup> clearly demonstrated that personality disorders among adults are primarily caused by heredity and environmental factors. In this regard, parenting styles are mainly important, which are central and most investigated environmental factors contributing to the development of personality disorders. A fairshare of research shows connections between parenting styles and personality disorders.<sup>5-7</sup> Children brought up under low warmth and negative parenting — either permissive or authoritarian — are more vulnerable to develop personality disorders later in the life.<sup>8</sup> A good deal of research confirms the

role of negative parenting styles in the occurrence of personality disorders.<sup>9-11</sup>

Parenting styles are both directly and indirectly linked with personality disorders. The direct effect of parenting in the development of personality disorders is proved by the consistent research.<sup>9-11</sup> Several studies have indicated that early maladaptive schemas are highly correlated with perceived parental malpractices in adults.<sup>12-14</sup> As far as the indirect effect is concerned, it is noticeable that negative parenting develops maladaptive schemas among adults and these early maladaptive schemas lead towards the development of personality disorders. The research also reveals the fact that early maladaptive schemas are significantly linked to personality disorders in adults.<sup>15,16</sup> The current study investigated among other things the mediating role of early maladaptive schemas between perceptions of parental rearing styles and personality disorders symptoms.<sup>5</sup> We hypothesised that maladaptive schemas will mediate between negative parenting styles, i.e. permissive or authoritarian, and personality disorders among adults including histrionic, antisocial, narcissistic and depressive attitudes.

### Subjects and Methods

The survey-based study was conducted at the University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan, and comprised university students. The sample size was finalised by

.....  
<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Haripur, Haripur, <sup>2,3</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, <sup>4</sup>Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

**Correspondence:** Muhammad Naveed Riaz. Email: m\_naveed313@yahoo.com

keeping in view the consideration of sample size in social sciences. Data was collected through purposive sampling. Only young adults were included. Students of all other age groups were excluded. The participants provided the information on their early maladaptive schemas, personality disorders and the parenting styles of their fathers. Thus two parenting styles of fathers were cross-rated by their adult offspring. Written informed consent was taken from the participants. They were given the right to withdraw from the research at any stage. Data was collected from classes in the presence of the teacher in order to increase the return rate. The researcher provided proper instructions regarding the completion of scales and responded their queries. No time limit was set for participants. No incentive was given to participants for taking part in the research. Respondents were requested not to leave even a single question unanswered.

Parental Authority Questionnaire<sup>17</sup> measures three parenting styles, out of which only two styles were included in this research, including authoritarian and permissive parenting style of fathers. An Urdu-translated<sup>18</sup> version of this scale was used for collecting data from fathers. Items of this scale were responded on a five-point rating scale. Young Schema Questionnaire<sup>19</sup> measures 18 maladaptive schemas which were developed among adults due to the inappropriate parenting. In this research, overall schemas were studied. This scale was translated in Urdu by the researchers themselves. A five-point response pattern was used in this scale. The scale was purchased from the authorities concerned and then written permission was obtained for its first-ever use in Pakistan. Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire<sup>20</sup> was used to measure 12 personality disorders of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR). However, only four personality disorders were investigated in this research including histrionic, antisocial, narcissistic and depressive. True-false response format was used in this scale. This scale was also

translated into Urdu by the researchers of the present study. The scale was used for the first time in Pakistan to measure personality disorders. The principal author of the scale granted permission for the translation of this scale. In all these scales, low and high scores were taken to measure these constructs. SPSS 23 was used for data analysis. Initially descriptive statistics, skewness and reliability coefficients were computed for all scales. Hierarchical regression analysis was applied for testing the mediation hypothesis regarding the mediating role of maladaptive schemas between paternal malparenting and personality disorders among adults.

## Results

Of the 200 participants who were provided with the questionnaires, 100(50%) returned it fully filled up. Of them, 87(87%) were women and 13(13%) were men.

All scales had greater than 0.70 alpha reliability coefficients. The values of skewness for all scales ranged from 0.10 to 0.86. Permissive parenting style had positive correlation with histrionic  $r(98) = 0.20(p < 0.05)$ , narcissistic  $r(98) = 0.23(p < 0.05)$  and antisocial personality disorders  $r(98) = 0.31(p < 0.01)$ . Authoritarian parenting had positive correlation with early maladaptive schemas  $r(98) = 0.27(p < 0.01)$  and depressive personality disorder  $r(98) = 0.28(p < 0.05)$ . Early maladaptive schemas had positive correlation with histrionic  $r(98) = 0.21(p < 0.01)$ , antisocial  $r(98) = 0.38(p < 0.01)$ , narcissistic  $r(98) = 0.52(p < 0.01)$  and depressive personality disorder  $r(98) = 0.60(p < 0.01)$ . Histrionic personality disorder had positive correlation with antisocial  $r(98) = 0.35(p < 0.01)$ , narcissistic  $r(98) = 0.47(p < 0.01)$  and depressive personality disorder  $r(98) = 0.25(p < 0.05)$ . Antisocial personality disorder had significant correlation with narcissistic  $r(98) = 0.42(p < 0.01)$  and depressive personality disorder  $r(98) = 0.21(p < 0.05)$ . Narcissistic personality disorder had significant correlation with depressive personality disorder  $r(98) = 0.39(p < 0.05)$  (Table-1).

**Table-1:** Psychometric properties of the study variables.

Variable	M	SD	Min-Max	Skew	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Permissive parenting style	29.25	5.61	13-42	-0.23	(.79)	0.10	0.13	0.20*	0.23*	0.31**	0.07
2. Authoritarian parenting style	31.22	6.98	15-48	-0.12		(0.72)	0.27**	0.05	0.04	0.15	0.28*
3. Early maladaptive schemas	251.02	58.54	137-445	0.34			(0.96)	0.21**	0.38**	0.53**	0.60**
4. Histrionic personality disorder	3.66	1.54	0-7	0.10				(0.72)	0.35**	0.47**	0.25*
5. Antisocial personality disorder	2.89	2.52	0-13	0.86					(0.77)	0.42**	0.21*
6. Narcissistic personality disorder	3.42	2.06	0-9	0.31						(0.71)	0.39**
7. Depressive personality disorder	2.79	1.77	0-7	0.49							(0.76)

Note. Alpha coefficients are given in diagonals

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

SD: Standard deviation.

**Table-2:** Mediating role of maladaptive schemas between paternal parenting styles and personality disorders in adults.

Predictors	Model 1 B	Model 2		Outcome
		B	95% CI LL, UL	
(Constant)	2.03*	0.53	[-2.20, 1.63]	Histrionic personality disorder
Permissive parenting style	0.06*	0.05	[-.02, 0.07]	
Early maladaptive schemas		0.01**	[.00, 0.01]	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.11		
F	4.17*	7.78**		
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		0.07		
ΔF		6.12***		
(Constant)	-0.13	-3.33*	[-6.30, -0.35]	Antisocial personality disorder
Permissive parenting style	0.10*	0.08	[0.00, 0.17]	
Early maladaptive schemas		0.02***	[0.01, 0.02]	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.17		
F	5.45*	14.23***		
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		0.12		
ΔF		10.21***		
(Constant)	0.07	-3.68**	[-5.85, -1.51]	Narcissistic personality disorder
Permissive parenting style	0.12**	0.09**	[.03, 0.15]	
Early maladaptive schemas		0.02***	[0.01, 0.02]	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.10	0.35		
F	10.58**	36.82***		
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		0.25		
ΔF		25.63***		
(Constant)	5.65***	0.12	[-2.82, 2.58]	Depressive personality disorder
Authoritarian parenting style	0.07*	0.04	[-0.09, 0.02]	
Early maladaptive schemas		0.18***	[0.01, 0.02]	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.37		
F	4.68*	50.38***		
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		0.32		
ΔF		28.71***		

\*p &lt; .05. \*\*p &lt; .01. \*\*\*p &lt; .001.

CI: Confidence interval.

Regression weights for histrionic dropped from 0.06 to 0.05 and that of antisocial personality disorder from 0.10 to 0.08. However, maladaptive schemas partially mediated between paternal permissive parenting style and narcissistic personality disorder because regression weights fell from 0.12 to 0.09. Maladaptive schemas partially mediated between paternal authoritarian parenting style and depressive personality disorder among adults. The regression weights decreased from 0.07 to 0.04 (Table-2).

## Discussion

Maladaptive schemas build up from unmet or frustrated developmental and emotional needs early in life, and these unfulfilled needs — due to negative parenting styles — lead towards greater risk of psychopathology.<sup>21,22</sup> According to research findings, these maladaptive schemas are the central part of personality disorders among adults.<sup>22,23</sup> The findings of

the present study confirmed the hypothesis that maladaptive schemas mediate between paternal negative parenting styles and personality disorders in offspring. Parental rearing behaviour with offspring during the childhood years — in which many negative schemas are developed due to negative parenting<sup>15,24</sup> — is associated with high risk for offspring personality disorders later in adulthood. Low parental warmth (permissive parenting) and aversive parental rearing behaviour (authoritarian parenting) during childhood years are connected with higher risk for personality disorders in offspring during adulthood.<sup>1,5-8</sup> In a similar scientific inquiry, Johnson et al.<sup>8</sup> confirmed that those adults who suffer from low parental warmth and affection and aversive parenting in their childhood are at higher risk to develop personality disorders in early adulthood. Another study conducted in China found associations between parenting and personality disorders among college students. Conflictive parenting is strongly

associated with personality disorders in offspring.<sup>6</sup>

Permissive parenting is characterised by neglect, lack of guidance and indifference. This neglect leaves the adults at stake and its negative effects are long-lasting as children develop histrionic personality disorder which involves excessive emotionality and attention seeking. The deficits of paternal attention in the personality of children create a vacuum in their personalities and their early maladaptive schemas stimulate them to fill this vacuum by becoming more emotional and attention seekers. Similarly, due to permissive parenting by fathers, children fail to socialise in an appropriate manner and as a result they develop antisocial personality disorder at adult age. Individuals with antisocial personality disorder have disregard for and violation of the rights of others. Because fathers fail to intervene when their guidance and control is required, children develop maladaptive schemas and become antisocial in adult life. Another result of paternal permissive parenting is narcissistic personality disorder characterised by grandiosity, need for admiration and lack of empathy. It is because permissive fathers neither let their children realise their true potentials and personalities nor do they set rules or show supremacy in rearing. Therefore, their offspring develop maladaptive schemas which involve them in self-love and they consider themselves exceptionally good and important. Another form of malparenting is authoritarian parenting characterised by strict, harsh and stringent parenting. Due to the strict rearing by fathers, personality of children is suppressed. Consequently, they develop maladaptive schemas and carry depressive personality disorder at later stages of lifespan. In the same manner, the early maladaptive schemas mediated between authoritarian paternal parenting and depressive personality disorder among adult offspring.<sup>17,25</sup>

Although the study shared applied insights, it still had some limitations which must be addressed in the future researches conducted in the same domain. Firstly, the study concentrated on four personality disorders, other disorders should also be taken under investigation. The study measured role of overall schemas instead of investigating the effect of eighteen schemas which can make this study even more comprehensive. Moreover, the study investigated the entire phenomenon of personality disorders from the lenses of paternal malparenting, inclusion of maternal parenting styles in future research will help in understanding the role of overall parenting in maladaptive schemas and personality disorders. On the basis of larger nation-wide data taken from broader locales, broader generalisations can be made. Demographic differences in the variables should also be

investigated in future scientific studies.

Parental problematic behaviour with their offspring may be associated with higher risk for wide range of personality disorders among offspring.<sup>8</sup> The same hypothesis was tested in the present study. Children are mistreated by parents in two ways i.e. child neglect (permissive parenting) and child abuse (authoritarian parenting) which are also known as omission and commission respectively.<sup>26</sup> Fathers' inappropriate treatment of their children develops maladaptive schemas among youngsters as their cognitions and thought patterns are being developed. These maladaptive schemas lead towards long lasting adverse consequences. These schemas cause distortions in smooth and health personality development and at later stages manifest themselves in the form of personality disorders. Both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles, also known as omission and commission, respectively,<sup>26</sup> have their own issues and parents need to be made conscious about them.

## Conclusion

The present study shed light on the same phenomenon as either side of malparenting by fathers resulted in personality disorders among their offspring at adult age. Parenting may end earlier but its consequences are life-long. The study supported the Young's Schema Theory which posits that due to malparenting, early maladaptive schemas are developed among offspring at early age and these schemas leads towards the development of personality disorder in adult life.

**Disclaimer:** None.

**Conflict of Interest:** None.

**Source of Funding:** None.

## References

1. Jeffrey JG, Cohen P, Chen H, Kasen S, Brook JS. Parenting Behaviors Associated With Risk for Offspring Personality Disorder during Adulthood. *Arch Gen Psych* 2006; 63: 579-87.
2. Petrocelli JV, Glaser BA, Calhoun GB, Campbell LF. Early maladaptive schemas of personality disorder subtypes. *J Pers Disord* 2001; 15: 546-59.
3. Coolidge FL, Thede LL, Jang KL. Heritability of personality disorders in childhood: a preliminary investigation. *J Pers Disord* 2001; 15: 33-40.
4. Torgersen S, Lygren S, Oien PA, Skre I, Onstad S, Edvardsen J, et al. A twin study of personality disorders. *Compr Psychiatry* 2000; 41: 416-25.
5. Thimm JC. Mediation of early maladaptive schemas between perceptions of parental rearing style and personality disorder symptoms. *J Behav Ther Exp Psych* 2010; 41: 52-9.
6. Liu X, Hang Y, Li L. Case-control study of personality disorder in undergraduate students. *Chinese Mental Health J* 2000; 14: 102-5.
7. Stravynski A, Elie R, Franche RL. Perception of early parenting by

- patients diagnosed avoidant personality disorder: a test of the overprotection hypothesis. *Acta Psych Scand* 1989; 80: 415-20.
8. Johnson JG, Cohen P, Chen H, Kasen S, Brook JS. Parenting behaviors associated with risk for offspring personality disorder during adulthood. *Arch Gen Psych*. 2006; 63: 579-87.
  9. Cheng H, Huang Y, Liu B, Liu Z. Familial aggregation of personality disorder: epidemiological evidence from high school students 18 years and older in Beijing, China. *Psych Res* 2010; 189: 105-9.
  10. Fassino S, Amianto F, Gastaldi F, Abbate-Daga G, Brambilla F, Leombruni P. Personality trait interactions in parents of patients with borderline personality disorder: a controlled study using the Temperament and Character Inventory. *Psych Res* 2009; 165: 128-36.
  11. Kendler KS, Neale MC, Walsh D. Evaluating the spectrum concept of schizophrenia in the Roscommon Family Study. *Am J Psychiatry* 2009; 152: 749-54.
  12. Wright MO, Crawford E, Del Castillo D. Childhood emotional maltreatment and later psychological distress among college students: the predicting role of maladaptive schemas. *Child Abuse Neglect* 2009; 33: 59-68.
  13. Crawford E, Wright MO. The impact of childhood psychological maltreatment on interpersonal schemas and subsequent experiences of relationship aggression. *J Emotional Abuse* 2007; 7: 93-116.
  14. Messman-Moore TL, Coates AA. The impact of childhood psychological abuse on adult interpersonal conflict: the role of early maladaptive schemas and patterns of interpersonal behavior. *J Emotional Abuse* 2007; 7: 75-92.
  15. Ball SA, Cecero JJ. Addicted patients with personality disorders: traits, schemas, and presenting problems. *J Personality Disorders* 2001; 15: 72-83.
  16. Rogosch FA, Cicchetti D. Child maltreatment and emergent personality organization: perspectives from the five-factor model. *J Abnormal Child Psychol* 2004; 32: 123-45.
  17. Buri JR. Parental Authority Questionnaire. *J of Personality Assessment* 1991; 57: 110-9.
  18. Barbree S. Aggressive and nonaggressive children's perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and control [dissertation]. Islamabad: National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, 1997.
  19. Young JE, Brown G. Young Schema Questionnaire: Short Form. New York: 2003.
  20. Hyler SE, Lyons M, Rieder RO, Young L, Williams JB, Spitzer RL. The factor structure of self-report DSM-III axis II symptoms and their relationship to clinician's ratings. *Am J Psychiatry* 1990; 147: 751-7.
  21. McGinn LK, Young JE. Schema-focused therapy. In: Salkovskis PM, Ed. *Frontier of cognitive therapy*. New York: Guilford Press, 1996; pp 182-207.
  22. Young J, Klosko J, Weishaar M. Schema therapy for borderline personality disorder in *Schema Therapy: A Practitioner's Guide*. New York: Guilford Press, 2003.
  23. Beck AT, Freeman A. *Cognitive therapy of personality disorders*. New York: Guildford Press, 1990.
  24. Cukor D, McGinn LK. History of child abuse and severity of adult depression: the mediating role of cognitive schema. *J Child Sexual Abuse* 2006; 15: 19-34.
  25. American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 5th ed. Arlington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013.
  26. Gladding ST. *Counselling: A Comprehensive Profession*. 5th ed. New York: Prentice-Hall, 2003.
-