

PARENTING PRACTICES AND WELL-BEING OUTCOMES IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD: ARTICLE REVIEW

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Abstract

The article "Parenting Practices and Well Being Outcome in Young Adulthood" by Khawer Bilal, Urooj Sadiq, and Sukaina Ali (2013) explores the influence of early parental care and overprotection on psychological well-being and self-esteem in young adults aged 18–25. Utilizing a sample of 150 participants from the University of Karachi, the study employed the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12), and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) to measure parenting practices, psychological strain, and self-esteem, respectively. The findings revealed that parental care positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with psychological strain, whereas parental overprotection demonstrated the opposite pattern. This review critically examines the study's methodology, theoretical grounding, and practical implications. Strengths include the use of validated instruments and a clear focus on developmental outcomes, while limitations pertain to sample homogeneity and the cross-sectional design. Implications for counseling, parental guidance, and policy are discussed. The review concludes that understanding parenting practices provides valuable insight into young adults' psychological health and self-concept development.

Introduction

Parenting plays a critical role in shaping children's developmental trajectory, influencing their emotional, social, and cognitive outcomes throughout life (Bowlby, 1969, 1977, 1988). The transition from adolescence to young adulthood represents a period of heightened vulnerability and adaptation, where early experiences of care, warmth, and control can significantly impact psychological well-being (Huppert et al., 2010; Larose & Bernier, 2001). Bilal, Sadiq, and Ali

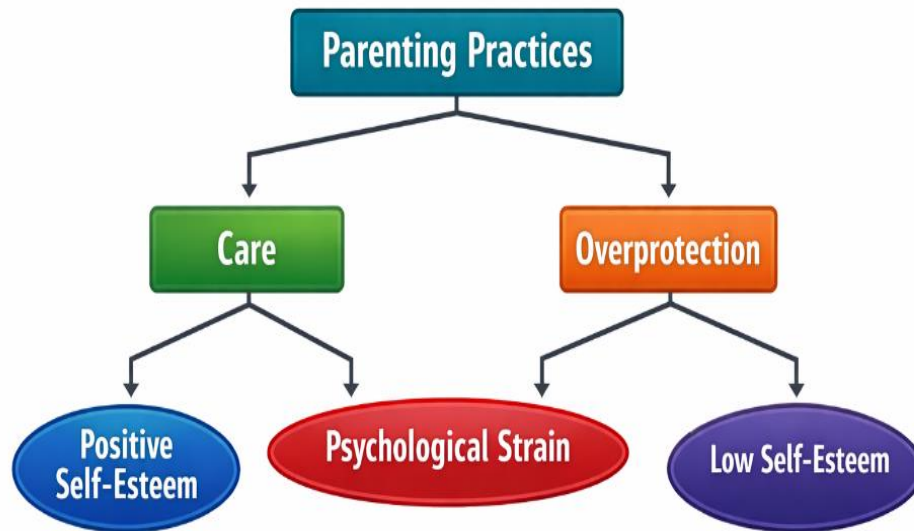
(2013) focus on this developmental stage, investigating how perceived parenting practices—specifically parental care and overprotection—affect psychological strain and self-esteem in young adults aged 18–25.

Understanding these relationships is particularly salient in collectivist and patriarchal cultures, such as Pakistan, where parenting styles often emphasize authority and control, potentially affecting young adults' self-concept and emotional resilience (Herz & Gullone, 1999). By exploring correlations

between parenting practices and well-being outcomes, the study contributes to developmental psychology, mental health awareness, and

interventions aimed at fostering resilience among emerging adults.

Flowchart 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



This flowchart visually represents the hypothesized relationships between parenting practices and psychological outcomes in young adulthood. Parental care fosters positive self-esteem and resilience, while overprotection increases psychological strain and vulnerability.

The article by Bilal, Sadiq, and Ali (2013) aimed to investigate the impact of parental care and overprotection on psychological well-being outcomes—specifically psychological strain and self-esteem—in young adults aged 18–25. The study hypothesized that parental care would positively influence self-esteem and negatively influence psychological strain, whereas parental overprotection would have the opposite effect.

Theoretical & Practical Implications

The study by Bilal, Sadiq, and Ali (2013) offers meaningful insights into how parenting practices influence psychological well-being in young adulthood. Both theoretical frameworks and practical applications emerge from their findings.

1. Theoretical Implications

The study aligns closely with Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1969, 1977, 1988), which shows that early experiences with caregivers shape emotional, social, and cognitive development. Key theoretical contributions include:

a) Parental Care

- High parental care (warmth, empathy, emotional support) was positively correlated with self-esteem ($r = .38, p < .01$).
- Consistent with Bowlby, secure attachment provides a “secure base” that allows children to develop resilience and healthy self-concept.
- Supports the notion that early emotional experiences have long-lasting effects into adulthood, influencing self-perception and coping strategies.

b) Parental Overprotection

- Overprotective parenting was positively correlated with psychological strain ($r = .30, p < .01$) and negatively correlated with self-esteem ($r = -.34, p < .01$).
- Overprotection may limit autonomy, creating dependency and anxiety in adult life.
- Reinforces theories suggesting that intrusive or controlling parenting leads to insecure

attachment, maladaptive coping, and low self-worth.

c) Psychological Well-being as a Mediated Outcome

- Findings demonstrate that parenting behaviors directly affect young adults’ emotional and cognitive outcomes, supporting biopsychosocial models of development.
- Parental warmth and overprotection act as moderating factors that shape psychological strain and self-esteem trajectories.

Methodology

The study used a correlational design with a sample of 150 participants (67 males, 83 females), aged 18–25 years ($M = 21.02, SD = 1.9$). Only participants from middle socioeconomic backgrounds were included to ensure sample homogeneity. The majority of participants lived in nuclear families (71%) and were first-born children (40%), with the remainder spread across joint families and later birth orders.

Table 1 Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	67	45%
Female	83	55%
Family Structure		
Nuclear	107	71%
Joint	43	29%
Birth Order		
First	60	40%
Middle	61	41%
Last	29	19%

1. Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) – Assessed parental care (warmth, empathy) and overprotection (control, intrusion) for both parents.
2. General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12) – Measured psychological strain.

3. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) – Assessed self-esteem levels.

The study reported high reliability for all instruments: PBI ($\alpha \approx 0.80-0.90$), GHQ-12 ($\alpha = 0.94$), RSES ($\alpha = 0.85$), confirming the robustness of the measures.

Results

Table 2.

Pearson's Correlation

Parenting Practice	Psychological Strain	Self-Esteem
Care	-0.26**	0.38**
Overprotection	0.30**	-0.34**

Note: ** $p < .01$

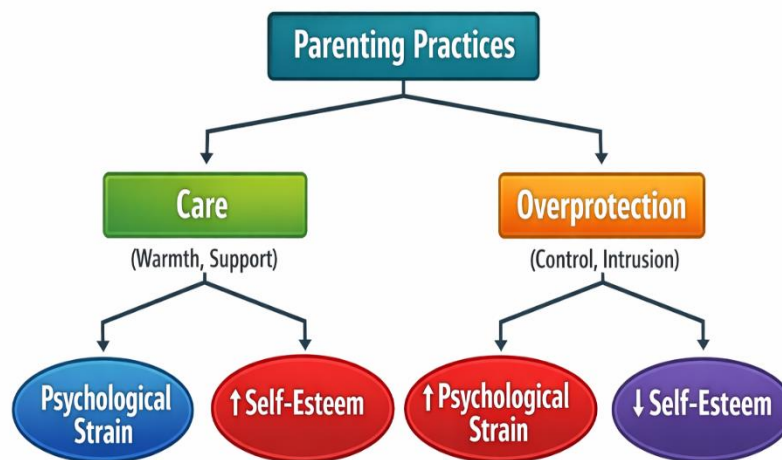
Parental care: Significantly negatively correlated with psychological strain ($r = -0.26$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher perceived care reduces psychological stress.

Parental care: Positively correlated with self-esteem ($r = 0.38$, $p < .01$), indicating that warmth and support from parents enhance confidence and ego development.

Parental overprotection: Positively correlated with psychological strain ($r = 0.30$, $p < .01$), reflecting that excessive control leads to stress and emotional vulnerability.

Parental overprotection: Negatively correlated with self-esteem ($r = -0.34$, $p < .01$), showing that controlling behaviors undermine confidence.

Parenting Practices and Psychological Outcomes

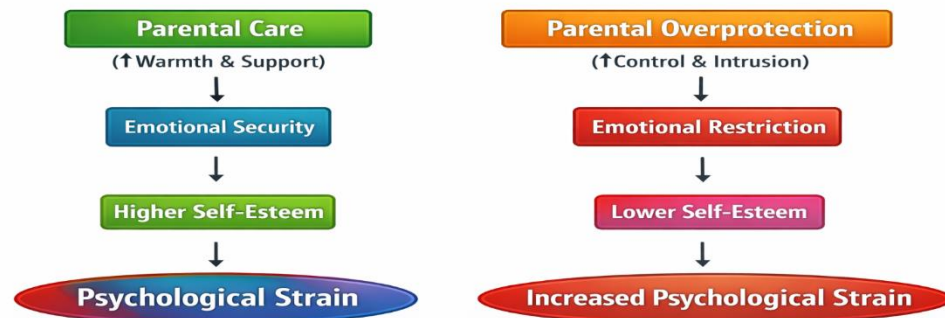


Flowchart 2: Parenting Practices and Psychological Outcomes

This diagram visually represents the correlational outcomes of the study. Care contributes positively to self-esteem and reduces strain, while

overprotection increases stress and reduces self-esteem.

Flowchart 3: Theoretical Model



This flow chart links the study's correlational findings to developmental theory. Parental behaviors act as environmental inputs shaping emotional regulation, self-concept, and psychological resilience in young adulthood.

1. Positive Parenting (Care)

- Promotes resilience and adaptive coping.
- Protects young adults from anxiety, low confidence, and psychological strain.

2. Negative Parenting (Overprotection)

- Hinders autonomy and emotional development.
- Increases stress, anxiety, and lower self-esteem, consistent with “pathogenic parenting” described by Bowlby (1977).

3. Cultural Context

- In collectivist, patriarchal societies like Pakistan, overprotection is often normalized, which can exacerbate emotional vulnerability among young adults.

4. Overall Implications

- Early parental behaviors are strong predictors of young adult psychological outcomes.
- Interventions aimed at enhancing parental care and reducing overcontrol may improve mental health outcomes.

5. Methodological Evaluation

The study by Bilal, Sadiq, and Ali (2013) employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships between parenting practices and psychological outcomes in young

adults. Below is a detailed evaluation of the methodology.

Strengths

One of the major strengths of the article is its strong theoretical foundation, drawing upon Bowlby's attachment theory (1969, 1988) and Parker's parental bonding model (Parker et al., 1979). The integration of theory with empirical investigation strengthens the conceptual clarity of the study.

The use of well-validated and reliable instruments such as the PBI, GHQ-12, and RSES enhances the credibility of the findings. Additionally, the statistical analysis is clear, appropriate, and well-presented, allowing readers to easily interpret the results.

Another notable strength is the cultural relevance of the study. By examining parenting practices within a Pakistani context, the article contributes to the limited body of indigenous psychological research and highlights how authoritarian and overprotective parenting styles common in collectivistic societies may influence adult well-being.

Strengths in Theoretical & Practical Context

- Combines psychological constructs (self-esteem, strain) with parenting dimensions (care, overprotection).
- Provides evidence for culturally-informed mental health interventions.

- Useful for future research on adult outcomes of early parental behavior.
- **Empirical Evidence:** The study used validated instruments—the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)—ensuring reliable measurement of parenting practices and psychological outcomes.
- **Clear Relationships:** The correlation analysis clearly demonstrated how parental care positively influences self-esteem while overprotection increases psychological strain, aligning with attachment theory.
- **Cultural Relevance:** Conducted in a Pakistani context, the study adds cross-cultural validation to existing theories of attachment and parenting, providing insights for collectivist societies.
- **Practical Applicability:** Findings are highly actionable for parental guidance, counseling, and educational interventions.

Limitations

- Despite its strengths, the study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions about the impact of parenting practices on psychological outcomes. Longitudinal research would be more suitable for examining developmental influences over time. The sample was drawn from a single university using convenience sampling, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the exclusive reliance on self-report and retrospective recall of parenting experiences raises concerns about recall bias and subjective interpretation. The study measured relationships at one point in time, making it difficult to establish causal links between parenting practices and adult psychological outcomes. Participants' perceptions of parenting could be influenced by memory or personal bias, possibly affecting the accuracy of PBI responses. The sample consisted of university students aged 18–25, mostly from middle-class backgrounds. This limits generalizability to rural populations, other age groups, or socio-economic classes. Other potential contributors to adult well-being—peer relationships, romantic partnerships, trauma,

or socioeconomic stress—were not considered. Including these could provide a more holistic understanding.

Without following participants over time, it is unclear how early parental influences interact with life experiences in shaping self-esteem and psychological strain.

Methodological Improvements

To strengthen future research, the following could be considered:

- **Longitudinal Design:** Following participants from childhood into adulthood would allow for causal inference and identification of critical periods where parental influence is strongest.
- **Mixed Methods:** Combining qualitative interviews with quantitative measures could provide richer insights into participants' experiences and perceptions of parenting.
- **Diverse Sample:** Including participants from varied socio-economic, regional, and cultural backgrounds would improve generalizability.
- **Control Variables:** Assessing additional factors like peer support, romantic relationships, trauma exposure, and education levels could clarify unique contributions of parenting practices.
- **Experimental Interventions:** Programs targeting parenting behavior could evaluate the direct impact on children's later psychological outcomes.

Future Research Directions

Based on the limitations and findings, future research could explore:

1. **Long-Term Outcomes:** Examine how parenting practices influence middle adulthood and later life psychological health, including career satisfaction and family relationships.
2. **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Compare parenting effects across individualistic versus collectivist societies to understand cultural moderators.
3. **Attachment Interventions:** Study interventions that enhance secure attachment in childhood and evaluate long-term benefits on adult self-esteem and psychological resilience.

4. Mediators and Moderators: Investigate factors that may mediate or moderate the relationship between parental behavior and adult well-being, such as emotional intelligence, coping styles, and social support.

5. Neurobiological Links: Explore potential physiological correlates (stress hormones, brain development) of parenting practices on adult mental health outcomes.

Conclusion

The study “Parenting Practices and Well Being Outcome in Young Adulthood” (Bilal, Sadiq, & Ali, 2013) makes a significant contribution to developmental psychology and applied mental health research. Conclusion

Overall, the study was well-structured and reliable for examining associative relationships between parenting practices and young adult well-being. While methodological limitations exist—especially the cross-sectional, retrospective, and culturally specific nature—the study provides a strong foundation for understanding how early parenting influences self-esteem and psychological strain in young adults.

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