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“From Home To Hostility: How Parenting And Attachment Shape Aggression In Young Adulthood (Male & Female)”

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Abstract:

Parenting style plays a crucial role in shaping young adults' emotional and behavioral development. It affects both how attachment patterns form and how aggression is expressed. This study examined how parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive), attachment styles (secure, avoidant, dismissive, anxious, and ambivalent), and aggression (physical, verbal, anger, and hostility) relate among young adult males and females aged 18–25.

Data were collected from a sample of 100 participants. Tools were used: the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), the Attachment Style Questionnaire (APQ-SF), and the Buss–Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ). Results from Pearson correlation analysis indicated several statistically significant positive relationships ($p < .001$). Authoritarian parenting was moderately correlated with anxious attachment ($r = .451$), while ambivalent attachment was positively associated with avoidant ($r = .491$), dismissive attachment ($r = .400$), and physical aggression was both moderately correlated with dismissive ($r = .347$) and ambivalent attachment ($r = .403$). Verbal aggression correlated with both dismissive attachment ($r = .343$) and physical aggression ($r = .689$) whereas, anger moderately correlated with avoidant ($r = .337$) and strongly correlated with physical aggression ($r = 0.577$). Moreover, hostility showed strong associations with physical aggression ($r = .760$) and anger ($r = .641$), as well as moderate correlations with authoritarian parenting ($r = .328$), avoidant ($r = .352$), and ambivalent attachment ($r = .451$) and lastly, dismissive attachment is strongly correlated with avoidant attachment ($r = 0.534$).

Overall, the results suggest that insecure attachment patterns and authoritarian parenting behaviours are closely tied to increased aggression and hostility. Encouraging supportive parenting and secure attachment may help reduce aggression among young adults.

Key words: Parenting Styles, Attachment Styles, Aggression, Insecure Attachment, Young Adults.

1)Introduction:

Parenting plays a vital role in shaping an individual's emotional and social development throughout life. The way parents interact with and respond to their children influences how children form relationships, regulate emotions, and behave in social contexts. Parenting style, therefore, serves as an important factor in determining the quality of attachment and behavioral outcomes seen later in life. Research has shown that parental warmth, responsiveness, and control contribute significantly to the development of secure or insecure attachment styles (Bowlby, 1988; Ainsworth, 1979). Similarly, maladaptive or inconsistent parenting practices have been linked with emotional dysregulation, frustration, and increased levels of aggression among young individuals (Baumrind, 1991; Buss & Perry, 1992).

Attachment style, formed through early interactions with caregivers, continues to influence relationships in adulthood. Individuals with secure attachment tend to display greater emotional stability and lower aggression, whereas those with insecure attachments (anxious, avoidant, or ambivalent) may struggle with trust, self-worth, and impulse control (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Moreover, gender differences often emerge in emotional expression and relational behaviour, making it relevant to study how parenting experiences differently affect male and female young adults.

The present research aims to examine how different parenting styles affect the attachment styles and aggression levels among young adults, with a specific focus on gender differences. Understanding these relationships can provide valuable insight into the long-term impact of early parental influence on emotional and behavioral patterns in adulthood.

2)Review of Literature:

- Baumrind (1991) developed the classic model of parenting styles, identifying three main types: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Her framework has guided decades of research, with later findings showing that authoritarian parenting, characterized by high control and low warmth, often leads to greater aggression in children and adolescents. In contrast, authoritative parenting, which balances warmth with appropriate discipline, has consistently been linked to better emotional and social adjustment in young people (John & Sharma, 2020).
- Grych and Kinsfogel (2010) examined how family aggression relates to later romantic relationships. Their study found that adolescents exposed to aggressive family environments were more likely to develop insecure romantic attachments, which in turn increased the risk of dating violence. These findings highlight how early exposure to aggression within the family system can shape future intimate relationship dynamics.
- Whale, Green, and Browne (2019) focused on the role of attachment in emotional regulation. They found that adolescents with insecure attachment styles often struggled with managing anger and hostility, which led to higher levels of aggressive behaviour. Their findings underscore the importance of secure attachment in developing effective coping strategies for emotional stress.
- Khalwati, Setyowati, and Febriana (2025) studied parenting styles among adolescent inmates and reported that authoritarian parenting was the most common style experienced by this group. The study further showed a strong link between authoritarian parenting and violent behavioural tendencies, suggesting that punitive and rigid parenting practices may reinforce cycles of aggression.
- Sil and Bhattacharyya (2024) added a cultural perspective to this discussion, studying young adults in Kolkata. Their research revealed that patriarchal values, when combined with insecure attachment, were significantly associated with higher aggression. This study highlights how broader cultural and social ideologies interact with psychological factors to influence aggressive behaviour.
- Riyaz, Chakraborty, and Soni (2025) examined how parenting styles shape coping mechanisms in adolescents. Their findings suggested that those who perceived their parents as punitive or overly strict tended to adopt maladaptive coping strategies, such as retaliatory behaviours, which contributed to

aggression. Conversely, adolescents who experienced positive and supportive parenting were more likely to develop adaptive coping strategies.

- Singh and Sharma (2023), along with Hallit et al. (2022), demonstrated the protective role of secure attachment in adolescence. Their findings showed that secure attachment helps adolescents regulate emotions effectively, build healthy peer relationships, and resist tendencies toward aggressive behaviour. These studies consistently reinforce the idea that secure attachment acts as a buffer against the development of aggression.
- Muris,et.al(2004) they examined relationships between self-reported attachment style and parental rearing behaviors, and anger/hostility, on adolescents by using a single item measure of attachment style; (b) a questionnaire measuring perceptions of parental rearing behaviors; and (c) two scales assessing anger and hostility. They found adolescents who defined themselves as avoidantly or ambivalently attached displayed higher levels of anger/hostility than adolescents who classified themselves as securely attached. Furthermore, perceived parental rearing was also related to anger/hostility. More specifically, low levels of emotional warmth and high levels of rejection, control, and inconsistency were accompanied by high levels of anger/hostility. These findings highlighted how family environment factors such as attachment style and parental rearing are involved in the development of anger/hostility in youths.
- Akhtar(2012) investigated the effect of parenting styles of parents on the attachment styles of undergraduate students. Parental Authority Questionnaire and Adult Attachment Scale was used. Results showed there was significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style of parents and anxious attachment style of students. There was significant relationship between permissive parenting style of father and mother with avoidant and anxious attachment style respectively. Authoritative parenting style has no significant relationship with any attachment style.
- Matthews (2023) examined how parenting styles and family environment influence adolescent aggression. The study found that permissive parenting was significantly associated with higher aggression, while authoritarian parenting showed no significant correlation. Positive family environment factors—such as balanced cohesion, balanced flexibility, effective communication, and family satisfaction—were linked to lower aggression, whereas negative factors like unbalanced disengaged, rigid, or chaotic environments increased aggression. Overall, variables including parenting styles and family environment predicted aggression, with unbalanced disengaged and unbalanced enmeshed environments being the strongest predictors. These findings highlight the importance of parenting practices and a supportive family environment in managing adolescent aggression.
- Maalouf,et.al (2022) investigated the association between attachment dimensions and anger expression (trait anger, hostility, physical aggression, and verbal aggression) among a sample of Lebanese adolescent participants by using the adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (A-RQ) and The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ). They found that A higher fearful attachment style was significantly associated with more anger. A higher secure attachment style was significantly associated with less anger. Higher preoccupied and dismissing attachment styles were significantly associated with higher hostility. This study provides a more informed understanding of how variations in anger expression are linked to the processing of interpersonal interactions, which are the hidden facets of attachment systems.

3)Methodology:

3.1) Problem to be Studied:

Exploring the Relationship Between parenting style, Attachment Style and Aggression among young adults: A Quantitative Study

3.2) Aim:

To investigate the relationships between parenting styles, attachment patterns, and aggression in young adults, and to examine how specific parenting and attachment styles influence different forms of aggressive behaviour.

3.3) Objectives:

1. To examine gender differences in perceived parenting styles, attachment patterns, and aggression levels among young adults.
2. To explore the relationship between different parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) and attachment patterns (secure, anxious, ambivalent, dismissive, avoidant).
3. To analyse how attachment styles are associated with various types of aggression (physical, verbal, anger, hostility).
4. To determine specific relationships between parenting styles and insecure attachment patterns.
5. To investigate the direct association between parenting styles and aggression.
6. To examine the interrelationships among different forms of aggression.

3.4) Hypotheses:

- i) **H₁:** There will be a significant difference between males and females in their perceived parenting styles, attachment patterns, and levels of aggression
- ii) **H₂:** Parenting styles will be significantly related to attachment styles among young adults. Specifically, authoritative and permissive parenting will be positively associated with secure attachment, whereas authoritarian parenting will be related to insecure attachment patterns (avoidant, anxious, or ambivalent)
- iii) **H₃:** It is expected that different attachment styles will be meaningfully related to levels of aggression. Individuals with secure attachment are likely to show lower tendencies toward aggression, while those with insecure attachment patterns—particularly ambivalent and anxious types—are expected to display higher levels of aggressive behavior
- iv) **H₄:** Specific parenting styles will show distinct relationships with particular insecure attachment patterns. For example, authoritarian parenting will be positively related to anxious attachment, while inconsistent or neglectful parenting may relate to avoidant or dismissive attachment
- v) **H₅:** Insecure attachment styles will be differentially related to types of aggression: dismissive attachment with verbal aggression, ambivalent attachment with physical aggression, and avoidant attachment with anger and hostility
- vi) **H₆:** Certain parenting styles, particularly authoritarian parenting, will be directly associated with higher levels of aggression (hostility, anger) in young adults, independent of attachment style
- vii) **H₇:** Different forms of aggression (verbal, physical, anger, hostility) are positively interrelated and may form a higher-order aggression construct

3.5) Participants:

The sample consisted of young adult males and females from Kolkata, aged between 18 and 25 years. Participants were selected through a convenient sampling method. All participants were pursuing higher

education or were recent graduates. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the study.

3.6) Measures:

1. Parenting Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991) –

This scale assesses three distinct parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. It consists of 30 items rated on a Likert scale, with higher scores indicating a stronger presence of the respective parenting style. The PAQ has demonstrated good reliability and validity in previous research.

2. Attachment Style Questionnaire – Short Form (ASQ-SF; Feeney, Noller & Hanrahan, 1994) –

This questionnaire measures different patterns of attachment such as secure, avoidant, dismissive, anxious, and ambivalent. It evaluates how individuals perceive relationships and emotional closeness in adulthood.

3. Aggression Questionnaire (AQ; Buss & Perry, 1992) –

The AQ measures four components of aggression: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. It provides a comprehensive assessment of both overt and covert aggressive tendencies.

3.6) Procedure:

Participants were approached individually and briefed about the purpose of the research. After obtaining consent, the questionnaires were administered either in printed or online form. Participants were instructed to respond honestly and were assured of anonymity. The collected data were then scored and tabulated according to the respective manuals of each scale.

3.7) Statistical Analysis:

Data were analysed using Descriptive Statistics, Independent Samples t-test, and Pearson's r Correlation. Descriptive statistics were used to understand the mean and standard deviation of each variable. The t-test was used to examine gender differences in parenting styles, attachment, and aggression. Pearson's correlation was conducted to explore the relationships among parenting styles, attachment patterns, and aggression levels.

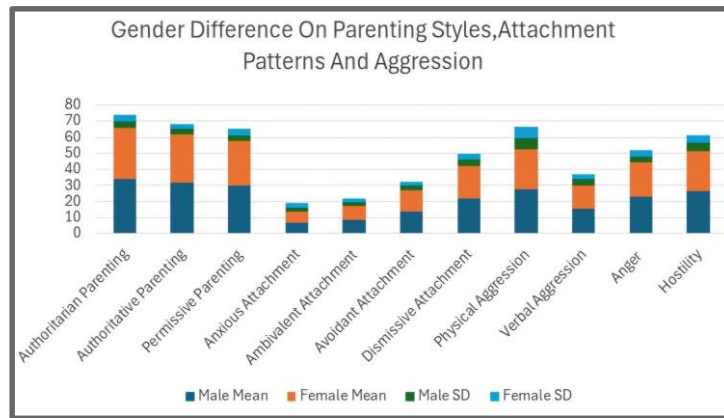
4) Results and Discussion:

The overall data collected have been scored and summarized according to the scoring guidelines of the Parenting Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), Attachment Style Questionnaire (APQ-SF), and Buss–Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ). The parenting style, attachment style, and aggression scores were interpreted based on the established scales rather than mean and standard deviation alone. Mean and standard deviation values were computed for each major variable to determine the central tendency and variability within the data.

The statistical analysis was carried out using **Microsoft Excel**, employing the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation technique to assess the strength and direction of relationships among parenting styles, attachment patterns, and different forms of aggression. Based on the analysis, several significant correlations were found, which are discussed below according to each hypothesis.

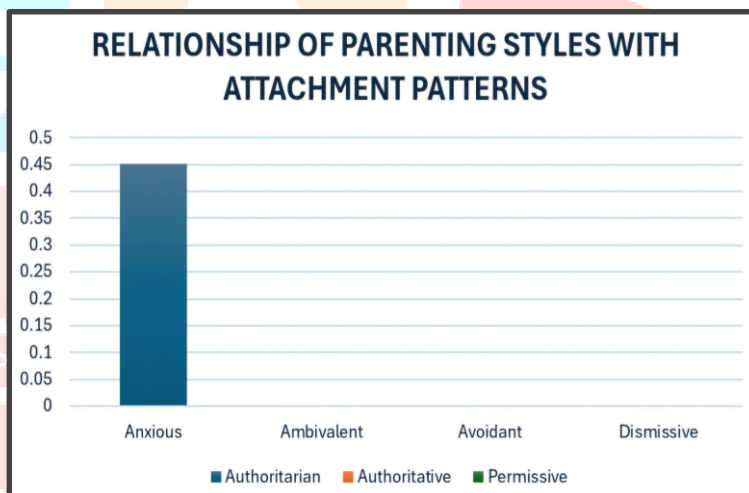
1) **H₁: There will be a significant difference between males and females in their perceived parenting styles, attachment patterns, and levels of aggression**

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in perceived parenting styles, attachment patterns, and aggression levels. The results revealed no statistically significant differences across the main variables ($p > .05$), indicating that both male and female participants perceived their parents' behaviors, attachment patterns, and aggression levels similarly. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.



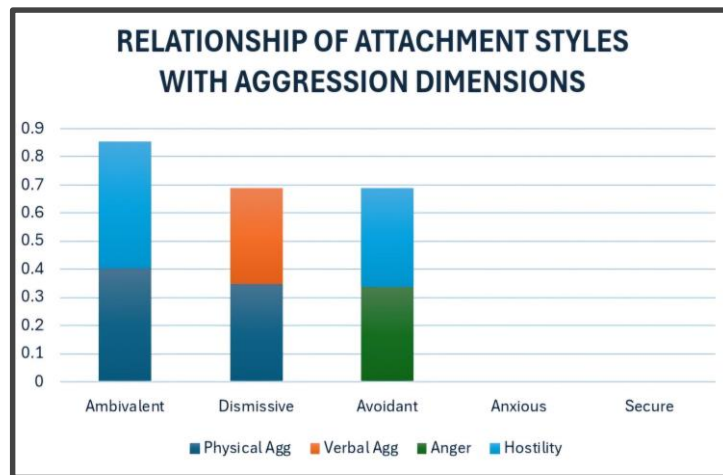
2)H₂: Parenting styles will be significantly related to attachment styles among young adults. Specifically, authoritative and permissive parenting will be positively associated with secure attachment, whereas authoritarian parenting will be related to insecure attachment patterns (avoidant, anxious, or ambivalent)

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was calculated to examine the relationship between parenting styles and attachment patterns. Authoritarian Parenting was positively correlated with Anxious Attachment ($r = 0.451$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher levels of authoritarian parenting were associated with higher attachment anxiety. Authoritative and Permissive parenting did not show significant positive associations with Secure Attachment. Therefore, the null hypothesis is partially rejected.



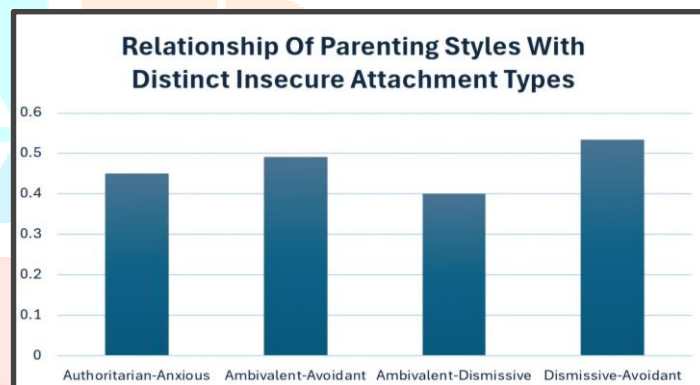
3)H₃: It is expected that different attachment styles will be meaningfully related to levels of aggression. Individuals with secure attachment are likely to show lower tendencies toward aggression, while those with insecure attachment patterns—particularly ambivalent and anxious types—are expected to display higher levels of aggressive behavior

Pearson correlation analysis indicated that insecure attachment styles were significantly associated with higher aggression: Ambivalent Attachment with Physical Aggression ($r = 0.403$, $p < .001$) and Hostility ($r = 0.451$, $p < .001$); Dismissive Attachment with Physical Aggression ($r = 0.347$, $p < .001$) and Verbal Aggression ($r = 0.343$, $p < .001$); Avoidant Attachment with Anger ($r = 0.337$, $p < .001$) and Hostility ($r = 0.352$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.



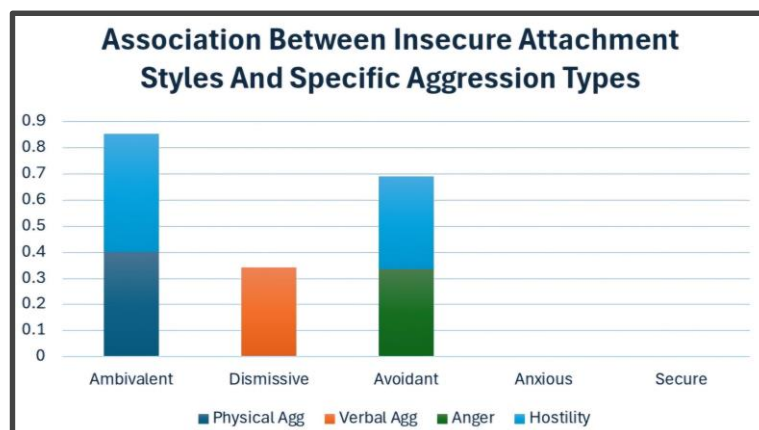
4)H₄: Specific parenting styles will show distinct relationships with particular insecure attachment patterns. For example, authoritarian parenting will be positively related to anxious attachment, while inconsistent or neglectful parenting may relate to avoidant or dismissive attachment

Results indicated that Authoritarian Parenting was positively correlated with Anxious Attachment ($r = 0.451, p < .001$), Ambivalent Attachment with Avoidant ($r = 0.491, p < .001$) and Dismissive ($r = 0.400, p < .001$) attachments, and Dismissive Attachment with Avoidant Attachment ($r = 0.534, p < .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.



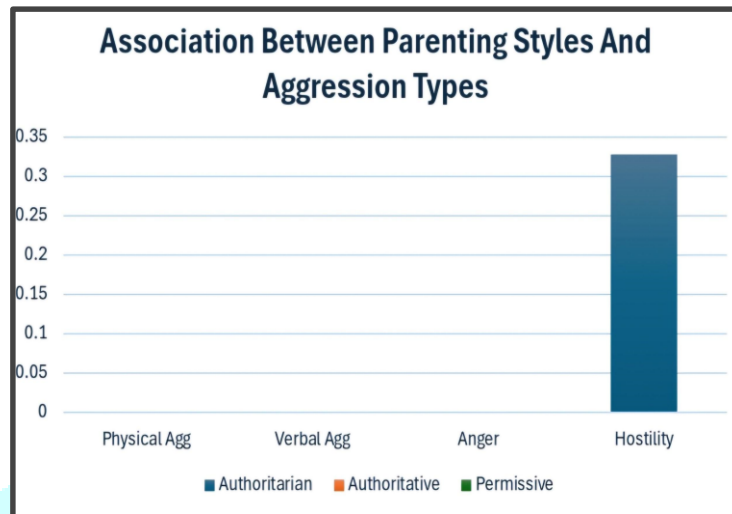
5)H₅: Insecure attachment styles will be differentially related to types of aggression: dismissive attachment with verbal aggression, ambivalent attachment with physical aggression, and avoidant attachment with anger and hostility

Correlation analysis supported these differential relationships: Ambivalent Attachment with Physical Aggression ($r = 0.403, p < .001$) and Hostility ($r = 0.451, p < .001$); Dismissive Attachment with Verbal Aggression ($r = 0.343, p < .001$); Avoidant Attachment with Anger ($r = 0.337, p < .001$) and Hostility ($r = 0.352, p < .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.



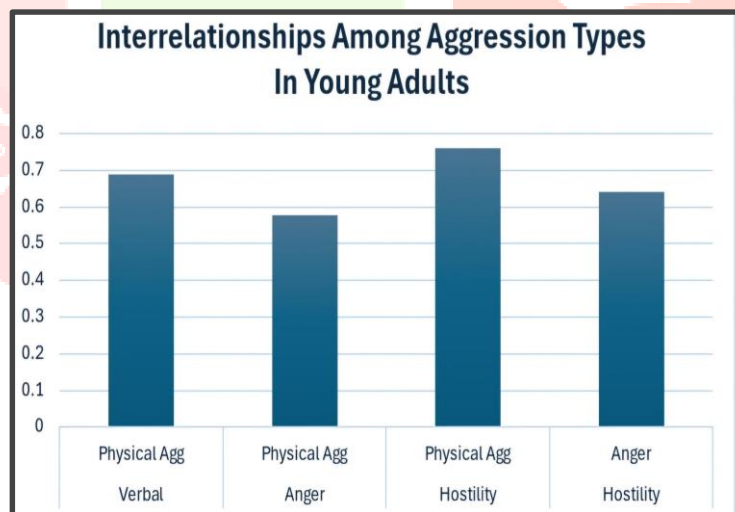
H₆: Certain parenting styles, particularly authoritarian parenting, will be directly associated with higher levels of aggression (hostility, anger) in young adults, independent of attachment style

Pearson correlation analysis indicated that Authoritarian Parenting was positively associated with Hostility ($r = 0.328$, $p < .001$) but not with Anger. This suggests a direct association between authoritarian parenting and hostility but not anger. Therefore, the null hypothesis is partially rejected.



H₇: Different forms of aggression (verbal, physical, anger, hostility) are positively interrelated and may form a higher-order aggression construct

Pearson correlations showed strong positive relationships among aggression subscales: Verbal and Physical Aggression ($r = 0.689$, $p < .001$); Anger and Physical Aggression ($r = 0.577$, $p < .001$); Hostility and Physical Aggression ($r = 0.760$, $p < .001$); Hostility and Anger ($r = 0.641$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that the aggression components are highly interrelated, supporting a unified aggression construct. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.



5) Interpretation:

The results of this study suggest that the way parents raise their children has an important influence on how those children form attachments and deal with aggression later in life. Participants who reported experiencing more authoritarian parenting also showed higher levels of anxious attachment, which means strict or controlling parental behaviour may lead to more insecurity and fear of rejection in relationships. The study also found that insecure attachment styles—such as ambivalent, dismissive, and avoidant—were linked with different types of aggression. For example, ambivalent attachment was related to physical aggression, dismissive to verbal aggression, and avoidant to anger and hostility.

These results show that people who grow up with less consistent or emotionally supportive parenting might have more difficulty managing their emotions, which can sometimes appear as aggressive behaviour. The finding that authoritarian parenting is directly connected to hostility also supports this

idea. Finally, since the different forms of aggression were strongly related to one another, it suggests that all these behaviors may come from a common emotional or behavioral pattern.

In general, the findings highlight how early family experiences can shape emotional responses and behaviour in adulthood. Understanding this connection can help parents, educators, and counsellors encourage healthier communication and emotional support within families.

6)Conclusion:

This study examined the relationships between parenting styles, attachment patterns, and aggression in young adults. Results indicated that insecure attachment patterns are associated with higher aggression, with ambivalent attachment linked to physical aggression, dismissive attachment to verbal aggression, and avoidant attachment to anger and hostility. Authoritarian parenting was positively related to anxious attachment and directly associated with greater hostility, highlighting the influence of harsh parenting on both attachment and aggressive behavior. No significant gender differences were found in perceived parenting, attachment, or aggression, while strong correlations among aggression types suggest they collectively form a broader construct. These findings underscore the importance of promoting secure attachment and positive parenting practices to reduce aggression, and future research with larger and more diverse samples can help clarify these relationships further.

7)Limitations:

Although the present study provides valuable insights into how parenting styles influence attachment and aggression among young adults, it is not without limitations.

First, the sample size was relatively small and restricted to young adults from Kolkata, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other age groups or cultural backgrounds. Future research with larger and more diverse samples could offer a broader understanding of these relationships.

Second, the study relied entirely on self-report questionnaires, which may be influenced by social desirability or participants' subjective perceptions. Responses may not always reflect actual parenting behaviors or attachment experiences. Including qualitative methods or parental reports could provide a more comprehensive picture.

Third, the study used a cross-sectional design, capturing data at only one point in time. Therefore, causal relationships between parenting styles, attachment, and aggression cannot be firmly established. Longitudinal studies would be useful to examine how these variables influence each other over time.

Lastly, other factors such as personality traits, peer relationships, and family environment were not controlled for, which may also play a role in shaping attachment and aggression. Considering these factors in future studies could help in gaining a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between parenting and emotional development.

8)Suggestions for Further Study:

⇒Broader and More Varied Samples:

Future research could involve a larger and more diverse group of participants, representing different cultural, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This would make it possible to see whether the patterns found in this study hold true across various populations.

⇒Gender Differences:

Although this research included both male and female participants, future studies could explore in more detail how gender might influence the links between parenting, attachment, and aggression. It would be interesting to see whether one gender is more strongly affected by certain parenting styles or attachment patterns.

⇒Long-Term and Developmental Studies:

A longitudinal approach could be used to track how parenting experiences and attachment styles develop over time and how they later influence aggression or emotional regulation. This would help clarify cause-and-effect relationships rather than simple correlations.

⇒Exploring Other Parenting Factors:

Further work could also look at additional parenting characteristics such as warmth, communication, or inconsistency. Examining these elements may provide a deeper understanding of how different parenting practices shape behaviour and personality development.

⇒Qualitative Insights:

Including interviews or open-ended surveys could help capture participants' personal experiences and emotions in greater depth. These qualitative findings could complement quantitative results and provide a more complete picture.

⇒Preventive and Educational Programs:

Finally, future researchers might design or evaluate parenting and attachment-based intervention programs aimed at reducing aggression in young adults. Testing such programs could provide valuable practical applications for counsellors, educators, and families.

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