



Perception Of Links Between Parenting Style And Stress Reduction Strategies Among Young Adult Community

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Abstract: Parenting practices are known to play an important role in how individuals respond to stress and everyday challenges. Previous research has suggested that various parenting styles may have an impact on the development of coping behaviors. In many Indian families, mothers commonly are the child's primary caregivers and they are closely involved in the emotional and daily socialization of the children. Despite the central role of mothers in child development, relatively few studies have specifically explored how maternal parenting styles influence the coping strategies of young adults, particularly within culturally distinct mountain communities. In the Eastern Indian context, empirical research examining this relationship remains limited, especially in geographically unique regions such as Uttarakhand. This gap in the literature is significant, as parenting practices and their psychological outcomes are likely to vary across cultural and environmental contexts. Understanding these variations is essential for developing a more context-sensitive perspective on the influence of parenting on coping mechanisms. The present study therefore tried to analyse the correlation between perceived maternal parenting styles and coping strategies of young adults in Uttarakhand.

The quantitative correlational research design with a sample of 122 young adults was used for the study. Maternal parenting styles were measured with the Parental Authority Questionnaire, in terms of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. Coping strategies were evaluated with the help of the Brief COPE scale that measures problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant coping. Data were screened for normality assumptions, because normality was violated, Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was used to examine associations. The outcomes showed that most maternal parenting styles were not significantly related to coping strategies. However, a weak positive association between perceived authoritarian maternal parenting style and avoidant coping was found.

Index Terms - Maternal parenting styles, Coping strategies, Young adults, Hill communities, Parenting style perception.

INTRODUCTION

Young adulthood represents a critical developmental stage marked by increasing independence and exposure to diverse stressors, making effective coping strategies essential for psychological well-being. Coping, defined as cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage stress, is shaped by both individual and environmental influences, as emphasized in the transactional model proposed by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman. Among these influences, parenting style remains a key factor in socio-emotional development. Parenting style refers to enduring patterns of parental attitudes, behaviors, and emotional responses that shape the family environment and influence self-regulation and stress management capacities (Baumrind, 1966; Morris et al., 2007). According to the framework proposed by Diana

Baumrind, parenting styles are categorized as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive based on varying levels of warmth and behavioural control. Contemporary research continues to support this model, with authoritative parenting being associated with better psychological well-being and adaptive coping among young adults (Jensen et al., 2024), whereas authoritarian parenting has been linked with greater psychological distress and maladaptive coping tendencies (Haghshenas et al., 2024). Permissive parenting, characterized by low behavioural regulation, has shown mixed outcomes, often associated with weaker self-regulatory capacities.

The influence of parenting on coping can be understood through developmental and perceptual processes, whereby early parent–child interactions contribute to the formation of emotional regulation patterns and cognitive appraisals of stress. These early experiences may continue to shape how individuals interpret and respond to stress even in later stages of life. Although a substantial body of research has examined the role of parenting styles during childhood and adolescence, relatively limited attention has been given to young adulthood. This stage is characterized by greater independence in coping behaviors; however, these behaviors may still be influenced by earlier family experiences.

The Indian sociocultural experience influences family dynamics with collectivist values and gender separation of care giving, with mothers being the main caregivers. Evidence has demonstrated that maternal involvement is closely related to caregiving practices and child developmental outcomes and that mothers are at the centre stage of early socialization processes (Batura et al., 2023) in India. Likewise, studies carried out in Indian urban and low-resource areas show that resources, behaviors, and involvement of mothers play a crucial role in shaping the psychosocial development of children and their daily care practices (Peter and Kumar, 2014). In addition, data show that the concept of caregiving in Indian families is organized in terms of gender, and mothers play a central role in child care and development activities, even with extended relatives involved (Suri et al., 2025). Although mothers play the key role, there is little research available that specifically considers maternal parenting effects without considering paternal contributions. Many current sources conceive parenting as a composite variable or pay more attention to childhood and adolescence, which excludes uncovering the specific impact of the mother on young adulthood.

In most Indian families, mothers are the main caregivers, yet little empirical studies have been conducted specifically on maternal parenting styles and coping behaviour of young adults especially in a regional setting like Uttarakhand. The parenting behaviour as well as the coping reaction can be affected by sociocultural elements, family norms and environmental stressors, hence, localized studies are significant. The lack of research in this area limits the ability to have a clear idea of how maternal parenting can be associated with stress-management patterns during young adulthood. Thus, the current research focuses on the analysis of the connection between perceived maternal parenting styles such as authoritative, authoritarian and permissive and the coping mechanisms in young adults of Uttarakhand.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parenting style describes the uniform patterns of attitudes, behaviours as well as emotional reactions that the parents exhibit when they interact with their children. This section reviews research relevant to parenting style.

Parenting Styles

The initial theoretical studies on parenting styles were heavily influenced by the work of Diana Baumrind who discovered three key parental authority patterns which included authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1967). The differences between these styles are mainly in the extent of warmth, behavioural control, and communication that the parents exhibit in their interaction with their children. Authoritative parenting is typified by both warmth and responsiveness with meanwhile clear expectations and regular and consistent punishment. Authoritarian parenting stresses on strict regulations and obedience with a low level of emotional responsiveness whereas in permissive parenting there is high level of warmth but low level of behaviour regulation or control.

This model was subsequently elaborated by Eleanor Maccoby and John Martin (1983) who theorized parenting behaviour on two important dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness. Their model proposed that parenting styles indicate the general emotional pattern in parent and children relationships that determines the development of children in terms of behaviour and emotion. Additional theoretical elaboration was made by Nancy Darling and Laurence Steinberg (1993) that postulated that parenting style played the role of emotional context under which parenting practices exist. This view holds that

parenting styles generate the way children decipher the behaviors of the parent and consequentially, shapes developmental outcomes in the long run.

Several empirical research studies have investigated the relationship between maternal parenting styles and coping related outcomes. Wolfradt, Hempel and Miles (2003) examined perceived maternal parenting styles and coping behaviour in adolescents in Germany. Their results revealed that authoritative parenting of motherhood was correlated with active coping behaviors (solicitation of social support), whereas authoritarian parenting was correlated with avoidant coping and anxiety. On the same note, studies that have investigated the relationships between parents and adolescents have indicated that authoritative parenting by the mothers is linked to increased self-esteem and proactive coping behaviors among the young adults.

Similar trends have been reported by other studies. A study by Avidan Milevsky et al. reported that teenagers who rated their mothers as authoritative described greater self-esteem and life satisfaction and lesser depressive symptoms. Thakre and Shet (2021) further noted that, authoritative parenting also led to adolescents favouring adaptive coping strategies like problem solving and positive reappraisal as opposed to authoritarian parenting whereby adolescents preferred avoidance-linked coping reactions. In a different study, Das (2022) discovered that authoritative and permissive parenting styles had a positive influence on adaptive emotional regulation strategies including cognitive re-appraisal.

Studies that have been conducted on university students have also investigated parenting environments and coping behaviour relationships. Hama (2023) checked the connection between parenting style and coping style among university students and found that there were significant correlations between the perceived parenting styles and the coping patterns. Moreover, (Williams et al. 2009) have found through developmental research that child temperament interacts with parenting style in later psychological adjustment, the relevance of the consideration of both personal and environmental elements of the developmental outcome.

Other than coping behaviour, parenting styles have been attributed to wider behavioural consequences. Kalyva and Melonashi (2014) discovered that young adults that viewed their mother as authoritative had lower substance use experiences than those who reported living in more permissive or authoritarian parenting settings. These observations help to substantiate more general developmental theories that equal parental warmth and behavioural advice are associated with more desirable psychological adaptation into adulthood.

Coping

Coping strategies refer to the cognitive and behavioural efforts individuals use to manage situations perceived as stressful or challenging. Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman systematically elucidated the concept proposing that coping is a process that varies with the ways in which people perceive stress and capacity to handle it. This section reviews researches relevant to coping strategies.

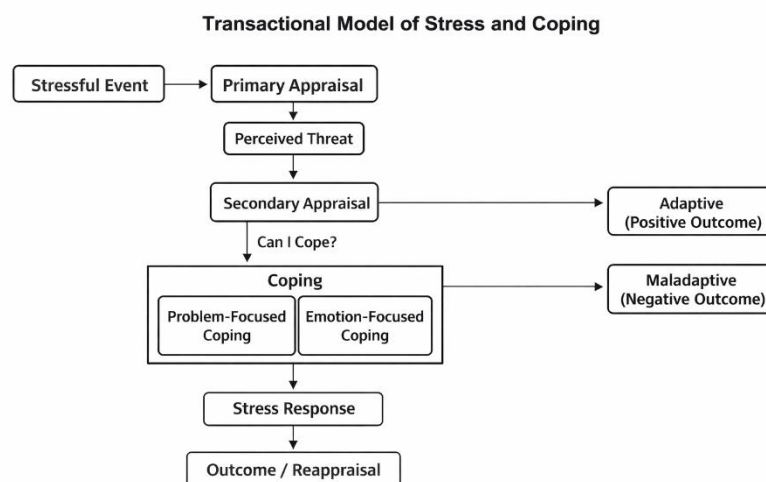


Figure.1 - Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Adapted from Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The processes of coping in themselves have been extensively researched in the transactional model of stress put forward by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984). Coping according to this framework is the dynamic cognitive and behavioural activities that individuals use to cope with demands perceived to be stressful. The COPE Inventory of Charles Carver and colleagues (1989) is one of the most popular coping measurement tools. Due to the huge number of items in the original inventory, a shorter version of the COPE was subsequently created as the Brief COPE to decrease the burden on the participant but maintain good assessment of the coping behaviors.

Empirical studies emphasize the need for coping mechanisms in psychological well-being. Indicatively, according to Sagone and De Caroli (2014), students who exhibited greater resilience in universities were likely to adopt positive coping skills of problem solving and social support seeking, compared to avoidance-based coping skills, which had negative effects on the psychological well-being. Equally, Liu et al. (2019) established that some of the parenting behaviors were indirectly associated with the risk taking behaviour via their effects on the efficacy of coping among young adults. Research undertaken in the high stress environment has also shown the role played by coping strategies. A study of healthcare providers in the COVID-19 pandemic produced results that adaptive coping was related to improved psychological adaptation, and avoidant coping was associated with increased stress and anxiety (Kumar et al., 2023).

RESEARCH GAP

The strategies of coping are particularly appropriate in the period of young adulthood, as this is the period of developmental requirements that include academic, career, and psychological changes. The practice of parenting and coping behaviour can also be influenced by culture. Though several studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between parenting styles and coping strategies, most of the available studies have been conducted on the overall parental influence and not on individual parents. Specifically, little has been done in examining the effects of maternal parenting styles on coping behaviour. This is significant since mothers are usually the primary caregivers and are at the centre of early attachment and emotional socialization, and this may influence how people perceive and cope with stress later in adult life. Parenting processes and relationships vary in areas like Uttarakhand where collectivism values and close family ties are prevalent in people than those typically examined in western and urban societies. Nonetheless, there is limited empirical studies on parenting styles and coping mechanisms of mothers in this regional context. This research is, therefore, expected to identify the correlation between parenting styles and coping mechanisms of young adults in Uttarakhand.

OBJECTIVE

The present study aims to examine the relationship between maternal parenting styles and coping strategies among young adults in Uttarakhand.

HYPOTHESIS

Research Hypothesis (H1): There will be a high relationship between perceived maternal parenting styles and coping strategies amongst the young adults.

Null Hypothesis (H0): No meaningful correlation will exist between perceived maternal parenting styles and problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant coping strategies in the case of young adults.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study was conducted to examine the relationship between parenting behaviors of the mother and the coping mechanisms among young adults between the ages of 18-26 years in the state of Uttarakhand. The present study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, correlational, cross-sectional design. Data were collected once at a single time point, and no variables were manipulated, therefore, the study examined naturally occurring associations between the study variables.

1. Sample

The estimated sample size of the study was concluded using the Yamane sample size formula. The calculation was done using a margin of error of 0.05 (5%), which is usually used in social science studies. According to this formula, the sample size of 94 participants was the minimum requirement. Nevertheless, to increase the validity of the findings, 122 participants were finally enrolled in the study.

2. Sources of Data

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific inclusion criteria, which was being within the designated age range and residents of Uttarakhand. Individuals who did not meet these criteria were excluded from the study. The final sample consisted of 122 participants, including 85 females and 37 males. Participants were recruited through social media platforms and were informed about the objectives of the study prior to participation.

3. Statistical tools

The tools used for this study was Parental Authority Questionnaire by (John R. Buri, 1991) and Brief COPE Inventory by (Carver, 1997).

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) - The PAQ created by John R. Buri (1991) is a questionnaire that evaluates perceived parenting styles in accordance with the model suggested by Diana Baumrind. It is a scale with 30 self-report items that are rated on a five-point Likert scale and assesses three parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. The score is obtained by adding items that are relevant in each subscale where higher scores show a greater perception of that parenting style.

Brief COPE Inventory- This Inventory designed by Charles S. Carver (1997) is a self-report instrument consisting of 28 items that evaluates coping reactions to stress of a multifaceted nature. The items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale and represent 14 coping strategies, which are usually clustered into a few super categories of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant coping. The scores on every subscale are higher, which means that one uses that strategy of coping more frequently.

4. Procedure

Data were collected from young adults in Uttarakhand using an online survey method. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed through social media platforms. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured.

The survey included the Parental Authority Questionnaire to assess maternal parenting styles and the Brief COPE inventory to measure coping strategies. Participants were instructed to respond honestly based on their experiences. The collected data were checked for completeness, coded, and analysed using statistical software while maintaining all ethical considerations.

RESULT

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the distribution of maternal parenting styles and coping strategies of the participants. Among the parenting styles, authoritative parenting demonstrated the highest mean score ($M = 34.96$, $SD = 7.67$), followed by authoritarian ($M = 33.98$, $SD = 8.01$) and permissive parenting ($M = 33.97$, $SD = 7.74$).

With regard to coping strategies, emotion-focused coping showed the highest mean score ($M = 28.75$, $SD = 6.75$), followed by problem-focused coping ($M = 20.77$, $SD = 4.71$) and avoidant coping ($M = 18.02$, $SD = 4.53$). The range of minimum and maximum scores across variables indicated sufficient variability in participants' responses.

Prior to inferential analysis, the normality of data distribution was assessed. As the variables deviated from normality, Spearman's rank-order correlation was employed to examine the relationship between maternal parenting styles and coping strategies. Statistical significance was set at the 0.05 level.

Table 1- Spearman Correlation between Parenting Styles and Coping Strategies (N = 122)

Parenting Style	Coping Strategy	ρ	p
Permissive Parenting	Problem-Focused Coping	-0.018	0.842
	Emotion-Focused Coping	0.095	0.297
	Avoidant Coping	0.147	0.106
Authoritarian Parenting	Problem-Focused Coping	-0.003	0.974
	Emotion-Focused Coping	0.074	0.416
	Avoidant Coping	0.182	0.044*
Authoritative Parenting	Problem-Focused Coping	0.084	0.355
	Emotion-Focused Coping	0.013	0.885
	Avoidant Coping	0.009	0.925

Note. ρ = Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance.

Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between parenting styles and coping strategies among young adults (N = 122). The results showed a significant positive relationship between authoritarian parenting style and avoidant coping ($\rho = 0.182$, $p = 0.044$). This indicates that individuals who reported higher levels of authoritarian parenting were likely to use avoidant coping strategies.

However, permissive parenting style was not significantly related to problem-focused coping ($\rho = -0.018$, $p = 0.842$), emotion-focused coping ($\rho = 0.095$, $p = 0.297$), or avoidant coping ($\rho = 0.147$, $p = 0.106$). Thus, null hypothesis was accepted for permissive parenting style.

Similarly, authoritative parenting style did not show a significant relationship with problem-focused coping ($\rho = 0.084$, $p = 0.355$), emotion-focused coping ($\rho = 0.013$, $p = 0.885$), or avoidant coping ($\rho = 0.009$, $p = 0.925$). Thus, null hypothesis was accepted for authoritative parenting style.

DISCUSSION

The current research involved investigation of the connection between mother parenting styles and coping mechanisms among youth in Uttarakhand. The findings pointed out that most parenting styles were not significantly connected with problem-focused, emotion-focused, or avoidant coping strategies. This implies that parenting style is not necessarily a strong determinant of how individuals are able to cope with stress in young adulthood since coping patterns can also be shaped by the experiences of individuals, social conditions, and individual psychological influences.

It was revealed that no coping strategy was significantly related to authoritative parenting. The absence of significant relationships talks about the fact that the young adults may develop their approaches to stress management using the experience related to academic activities, communication with peers, and life difficulties, which may decrease the direct impact of previous parenting styles. During young adulthood, ways of handling stress are shaped not only by earlier parenting experiences but also by what young adults face, such as academic workload, communication with peers, and everyday life difficulties. Research with university students shows that academic stressors are linked with students' stress responses, and that active coping strategies (for example, planning, positive reappraisal, and seeking support) are important in how students deal with academic stress (Ruiz-Camacho et al., 2025). Peer-related experiences can also play a role, because coping in college settings often includes seeking support and learning coping skills through peer-based mental health and coping programs (Wong et al., 2021). At the same time, parenting can still be related to coping in young adulthood, but evidence suggests that the effect may not always be direct and may work through coping-related factors such as coping efficacy (Liu et al., 2019). Parenting style has also been linked with coping and adjustment during the phase of transition to college (for example, homesickness), but students continue to adapt based on their new environment and experiences (Nijhof & Engels, 2007). Therefore, when coping strategies are measured in young adults, the influence of earlier parenting may appear weaker because coping is a changing process that develops with ongoing demands and available support (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Equally, most coping strategies were not significantly related to authoritarian and permissive parenting styles in the present study. This kind of pattern can occur because parenting may not show strong links with every coping domain in young adulthood, especially when coping is influenced by many current factors. The key significant finding was a small positive correlation between authoritarian parenting and avoidant coping, meaning that participants who reported higher authoritarian parental behavior also reported slightly higher use of avoidant coping when they were stressed. A similar direction has been reported in research with young adults using the Brief COPE, where authoritarian parenting was significantly associated with avoidant coping (Jain & Lokesh, 2023).

The limited associations are also due to cultural and environmental factors. These participants belonged to Uttarakhand where the socialization is frequently done in the extended family structure, and within the community. Within these environments, social support, common cultural values and environmental experiences can lead to development of coping strategies as opposed to parental behaviour being the sole determinant of coping.

Personal psychological factors can also have an effect on coping styles. Psychological studies indicate that resilience, emotional control, and personality characteristics in addition to self-efficacy are significant in determining individual reaction to stress. Thus, personal, social and environmental factors are likely to influence coping mechanisms during young-adulthood.

These findings indicate that parenting style alone may not be a strong determinant of coping strategies in young adulthood but rather a combination of personal, social, and environmental factors. The research demonstrates that the development of coping is a complicated process that should also be viewed in terms of wider psychological and cultural factors to comprehend the ways of coping with stress among young adults. The present findings indicate that coping strategies in young adults are shaped by a combination of influences, and that parenting style by itself does not adequately explain coping patterns.

CONCLUSION

The current research focused on the association between maternal parenting styles and coping mechanisms among the young adults in Uttarakhand. In general, the results showed that the majority of parenting styles were not dissimilarly related to problem-oriented, emotion-oriented, or avoidant coping strategies. The weak positive relationship between avoidant coping and authoritarian parenting was the only significant finding. These results suggest that coping behaviour in young adulthood may not be determined solely by perceived parenting style. Instead, coping patterns may develop through a combination of personal experiences, social interactions, and individual psychological characteristics that become more influential as individuals move toward greater independence. Overall, the findings highlight that coping strategies in young adulthood are shaped by multiple interacting influences rather than by parental behaviour alone.

Despite its limitations, including reliance on self-report measures and a regionally specific sample, the study contributes to the limited literature examining maternal parenting styles and coping behaviour within the sociocultural context of Uttarakhand. The results emphasize the importance of considering broader psychological and environmental factors when understanding how young adults manage stress. Future research may benefit from including larger and more diverse samples and examining additional variables

such as personality traits, resilience, and social support to gain a more comprehensive understanding of coping processes.

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