



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Investigating the Role of Positive Parenting in Mitigating Adolescent Disruptive Behaviors in Religious Education**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research aims to investigate the impact of various forms of religious education on adolescents' perceived parenting styles and disruptive behavior. A quantitative research design employing a comparative correlational approach was utilized to collect data from adolescents (N = 300) with the age range of 12-18 years. Convenient purposive sampling technique was employed to gather data from those participants who are exposed to any form of religious education, to explore their parental perceptions and behavioral tendencies. The findings of this research give light to different parenting dimensions that have an effect on the adolescent's disruptive behavior & facilitate the field of Psychology by giving a new perspective towards religion and religious education along with their association with parenting and maladaptive behavior. Future studies can work on collecting samples from different cities and people of different backgrounds to strengthen the analysis.

**Keywords:** Religious Education, Parenting Styles, Disruptive Behavior, Parental Perceptions, Behavioral Tendencies

**Introduction**

In many cultures across the world, religious education has become a part of academic education. In many areas of the world, religion is taught as a compulsory subject and is a part of the national curriculum. Otherwise, it is emphasized and taught in both primary and secondary schools. Consequently, as a significant component of the academic syllabus, the importance of faith, rituals, beliefs and the history of a particular religion is taught in such a way that children, from a very early age, develop the need to feel attached to their beliefs and morality based on what they are taught to be right and wrong (Chowdhury, 2016). As parenting styles of parents are mostly guided by religious practices, there are many researches that have been conducted on how parents' religiosity impacts child-rearing practices as well as the subjective well-being of children (Bornstein, 2017).

Religious Education in the present research revolves around the Muslim population and how Islamic teachings affect the child's perception about parenting and their possible exhibition of disruptive behavior. Institutionalized religious education is the systematic teaching of religion in a school or a madrasa while non-institutionalized religious education includes all sources of religious teachings within the vicinity of homes, few basic examples being Qaaris, parents and tuitions. At a very early age, Muslim families introduce the concept of God to their children and emphasize upon the fulfillment of essential elements of the religion. These essential elements can be covered under the term Islamic Religious Education. The term comprises of 3 parts, namely; - Islam, which is the religion taught by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him), - Religion which comprises of the beliefs and knowledge of the divine messages and obligations and lastly - Education, which is a term used to address the act of enlightening and teaching new knowledge and information. The main aim of Islamic religious education is to instill the importance of serving God and His people to the fullest (Abdullah, 1989).

As Muslim households focus a lot on educating their children about Islam either in an institution or at homes, the three concepts given by Al Attas are widely used and ensure the applications of the teachings in the child's day to day life. Parents play a very important role when it comes to the religious education of their children. Islamic religious education at this stage of childhood depends on the environment the child belongs to. In the later developmental stages of children, parenting is of utmost significance in their emotional and spatial well-being. Religion is transmitted from generation to generation by communicative and interactive practices during this stage. In a friendly and supportive environment, parents and children work in collaboration to discuss and settle over expectations for family roles and responsibilities. In order to practice religion together, families are required to work with warmth, understanding and care. Here the role of parenting comes in, which is described as the practice of child rearing where emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual needs are fulfilled. Parents tend to use different attitudes and behaviors to raise their children which depend on their own subjective well-being. The different strategies used by the parents during the child-rearing process are known as parenting styles which are utilized in order to manage the behavior of their children across different contexts by using affection, receptiveness, control and punishment. Baumrind in 1989 proposed 3 parenting styles namely; Authoritative, Authoritarian and Permissive on the basis of 2 dimensions.

The current research utilizes the parenting framework of Shahida Batool, 2016 which describes the parenting styles using different parenting dimensions that are previously explained as the factors that facilitate understanding of and explain the styles of parenting. Shahida Batool in 2016 used 2 types of parenting dimensions that are positive and negative; the positive parenting dimensions included compassion and support whereas the negative parenting dimensions included control, aggression and orthodox patterns.

The author describes compassionate parents as those who are warm and affectionate towards their children and are worrisome when the child is disturbed. Supportive parents, on the other hand, can be understood as those who are more involved with, and are extremely nurturing and warm towards their children, along with being very supportive and encouraging towards their child's needs and interests. Controlling parents are those parents who are perfectionists and want to control their children according to their rules and will. Whereas, aggressive parents can be identified as those who use verbal and physical abuse in order to control their children and make them more disciplined. Orthodox parents are more of a conventional and conservative type who focuses on religious teachings and beliefs more by raising their children according to the structures and values of the religion. Adolescence is a very crucial stage where an individual goes through an emotional and physical transition from childhood to adulthood. A study by Shehzadi et al. in 2018 determined how perceived parenting styles had an effect on disruptive behavior, findings of which determined that there is a strongly negative correlation between parenting styles and disruptive behavior among adolescents.

Disruptive behavior can intimidate and threaten others, deviating from the social norms- usually described as juvenile delinquency (American Psychiatric Association) which can negatively impact a child's social, professional and educational areas of functioning. Disruptive behavior is a characteristic feature of Conduct Disorder in which patients tend to deviate from and neglect normal societal rules (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV-TR). American Psychological Association in 1994 characterized the criteria for conduct disorder to 3 main groupings:

1. Physical harm and threat to other people and animals.
2. Loss and damage to property- both of oneself and that of others.
3. Neglecting and deviating from societal norms.

This research aims to investigate how adolescents who are enrolled in any religious institution or are taking religious education at homes perceive their parents' style of parenting. During the stage of childhood where the child is mostly conforming to the rules of the society, their morality is mostly built upon what is good or bad or what is acceptable or punishable or they are struggling through social approval and conforming to societal laws (Kohlberg, 1971).

### **Literature Review**

Erik Erikson's Social-Emotional Development Theory states that this is a transition period from childhood to adulthood and in order to develop an identity, an individual vitally has to look for a suitable role model at this point as this personality development milestone of identity building is linked to favorable life outcomes (Mcleod, 2018). There is a significant degree of complexity when discussing the role of religion in education, identity concerns, and socialization in a multicultural society (Arweck & Jackson, 2014). On account of conducting an indigenous research, Shahida Batool's parental framework has been utilized to investigate the relationship between parents and adolescents, since adolescence is reportedly an important time for children to adjust to their changing biological make-up and social roles, parents' views and behaviors also alter when their kids reach adolescence. Studies show that there is often a mismatch between what parents anticipate from their adolescent children and what adolescents expect from their parents (Batool, 2013).

Few studies have evaluated the models connecting specific parenting methods to distinct profiles of child behaviors, despite the vast empirical research tying parenting practices to problems with disruptive behavior in children. The oppositional, aggressive, and hyperactive behaviors of children, however, can be distinguished according to developmental theory and empirical assessment research (Hinshaw et al., 1987). Additionally, these three categories of behavioral issues may be linked to various etiological causes and results, such as various parenting techniques.

Shahida Batool's first dimension, "supporting parents," is an example of how to be a parent who values and supports your child's decisions and encourages them in their future aspirations, along with congratulating them on their achievements and helping them with their social and academic problems. The second dimension, which is known as "controlling parents" include strict monitoring of a child's academic activities, parental rage at a child's independent decisions, placing restrictions on the child, denying the child mobility autonomy, forbidding the child from engaging in conflict, and using authority to regulate the child's behavior. Compassionate parents, on the other hand, fall under the third dimension. They are friendly, open, considerate, approachable, and prioritize their children's preferences for things they like and dislike, provide constructive criticism, exhibit a positive outlook, understand children's problems from their perspectives, and encourage and provide space for their children to voice their opinions. Additionally, dimension four talks about "aggressive parents," who criticize their children in public, use physical punishment to discipline them, and use abrasive language while speaking to them. The fifth and final dimension covered by Shahida Batool is referred to as "orthodox/conventional parents" since it covers issues like employing traditional methods of childrearing, upholding cultural norms in all aspects of a child's life, and making the child complete religious tasks.

Furthermore, Social Control theory states that humans tend to conform to societal norms and values in order to control and regulate their behaviors (Hirschi, 2002). According to this theory, religious education includes all the values, beliefs and expectations of the community along with defining what are the appropriate and inappropriate actions and behaviors while living in a society. According to Hirschi, societal bonds control and regulate human behavior, so, living in a collectivistic culture where religious values and beliefs are so inculcated in the society, children tend to internalize these values thus reducing the chances of exhibiting disruptive or delinquent behaviors, thus infusing a sense of morality.

Religious education nourishes our personalities and shapes our lifestyles in a perfect manner by fostering norms, values, actions and behaviors, thus has a positive effect on the moral behaviors of adolescents (Batoool et. al., 2021) thus discouraging disruptive or delinquent behaviors.

For this research it is hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between positive parenting styles and disruptive behavior among adolescents.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Nature**

The current research utilizes a quantitative research design since it is based on an explanatory aim. It further follows a comparative and correlational approach by employing surveys for the purpose.

### **Population**

The research population consists of males and females around the age of 12 to 18 years, those adolescents who were getting institutionalized (Madrassa/school-based) or non-institutionalized (home-based) forms of religious schooling, for the purpose of which religious institutes across Karachi

### **Sample size**

A sample of 300 (n = 300) males and females

### **Sample technique**

A convenient purposive sampling technique.

### **Instrument**

A 35 items scale called Perceived Dimensions of Parenting Scale (PDPS) based in Urdu Language designed by Syeda Shahida Batoool in 2016 was utilized for assessing the adolescents' perception of the parenting style, as the scale is based on the author's parenting framework which is a main element of the current research. Initially, the research contained the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire has as a means of visualizing the correlation between the two scales and their subscales where their hypothesis has been proven.

### **Data analysis technique**

The approach employed in the current study is a quantitative correlational comparative design. Furthermore, Pearson's r was used to test the proposed hypotheses of correlation between positive/negative parenting styles and disruptive behavior.

### **Ethical Consideration**

As per the code of conduct given by the American Psychological Association (APA), permission was obtained from the authorities for the conduction of the research as well as from the authors in order to utilize the scales. Along with that, approval was taken from the relevant religious institutes in order to gather data from their enrolled students along with the parents of those students to ensure the fulfillment of ethical standards. All the participants seeking religious education at home were approached in person using purposive-convenient sampling and permission was obtained from their parents as well.

Moreover, the participants were also given assurance about the confidentiality of their information accompanied by a consent form which was obtained from all of them. Additionally, participants were told that they are not bound to remain a part of the research and had been given the right to withdraw from the research anytime they want to. In order to avoid any bias, every participant was educated about the purpose of the research. Furthermore, after these initial steps and considerations, participants from the contacted religious institutes and the social circle (for the non-institutionalized participants) were asked to fill out the consent form along with the demographics' information sheet accompanied by the questionnaires for the perceived parenting styles and disruptive behavior

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Correlation of Subscales of Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire with Perceived Dimensions of Parenting Subscales (N=300).**

Variables	SP	CP	CoP	AP	OP
1. SDQ Total Difficulties	-.193**	.197**	-.276**	.239**	.039
2. Emotional Problems	-.248**	.041	-.261**	.141*	-.008
3. Conduct Problems	-.186**	.275**	-.280**	.294**	.000
4. Hyperactivity Scale	-.089	.054	-.132*	.006	.042
5. Peer Problems scale	.037	.178**	-.048	.201**	.085
6. Pro-social Scale	.215**	-.061	.223**	-.196**	.036
7. SDQ Impact Supplement	-.270**	.102	-.256**	.105	.005

Note. \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$

Table 1 depicts the correlational analysis between the Subscales of Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in addition to the subscales of Perceived Dimensions of Parenting Scale (PDPS) and indicates that there is a weak negative correlation of Supportive Parents with SDQ Total Difficulties Score ( $r = -0.193$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), Conduct Problems ( $r = -0.186$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), Emotional Problems ( $r = -0.248$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and SDQ Impact Supplement ( $r = -0.270$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) whereas, the table depicts supportive parents to have a weak positive correlation with Pro-social scale ( $r = 0.215$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, it does not indicate any significant correlation of Supportive Parents with Hyperactivity and Peer Problems scale. The table indicates the presence of a weak positive correlation between Controlling Parents and SDQ Total Difficulties Score ( $r = -0.197$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), Conduct Problems ( $r = 0.275$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and Peer Problems Scale ( $r = 0.178$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) whereas, it does not indicate any significant correlation of Controlling Parents with Emotional Problems, Hyperactivity, Pro-Social Scale and SDQ Impact Supplement Scale. Adding to this, Compassionate Parents have been depicted to have a weak negative correlation with SDQ Total Difficulties Score ( $r = -0.276$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), Emotional Problem ( $r = -0.261$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), Conduct Problems ( $r = -0.280$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), Hyperactivity Scale ( $r = -0.132$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and SDQ Impact Supplement ( $r = -0.256$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The table also indicates the presence of a weak positive relationship between compassionate parents and Pro-social scale ( $r = 0.223$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) whereas; it does not specify any significant correlation of the mentioned subscale with Peer Problems scale. In addition to this, the table also indicates that there is a weak positive correlation of Aggressive parents with SDQ Total Difficulties Score ( $r = 0.239$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), Emotional Problem ( $r = 0.141$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), Conduct Problems ( $r = 0.294$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and Peer problems scale ( $r = 0.201$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The table further depicts the presence of a weak negative relationship between Aggressive parents and Pro-social scale ( $r = -0.196$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) along with specifying the absence of any significant correlation with Hyperactivity and Peer Problems scale. Lastly, the table reveals the absence of a significant correlation of Orthodox Parents with any of the subscale of Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire along with the Impact Supplement and the Total Difficulties Score.

All in all, the table indicates the presence of a negative and positive correlation of the positive and negative parenting styles with the disruptive behavior respectively, hence proving the hypothesis.

The purpose of the research was to analyze how different modes of religious education impact the adolescents' perception of their parent's parenting style and their disruptive behavior tendencies. The participants (N=300) of this research were adolescents of age range 12-18 years, since this age serves a major role in the personality development of an individual (Erikson, 1968), as well as it is a critical period in which the individual tends to explore their identity. Identity refers to one's belief, values and experiences that are subjected to the individual. The approach employed in the current research is a quantitative correlational comparative design. Furthermore, Pearson's r was used to test the proposed hypotheses of correlation between positive/negative parenting styles and disruptive behavior.

The findings for the current research indicated that Aggressive parenting styles have a weak negative relationship with pro-social scale, and weak positive relationship with SDQ Total Difficulties Scale, Emotional Problems, Conduct Problems and Peer Problems. Aggressive parenting can have a significantly negative effect on the adolescents' developing personality as they may develop behavioral and emotional problems and increase the chances of exhibiting antisocial behavior, thus affecting their social, emotional and mental wellbeing (Pace, 2023). These findings approve the hypothesis of this research which stated that positive parenting styles had have a negative relationship with disruptive behavior and negative parenting styles had have a positive relationship with disruptive behavior.

## **Conclusion**

The current research focused on analyzing the effect of different modes of adolescents' religious education on their perceived parenting styles and disruptive behavior and the results depict that religious schooling and the mode of education, has a significant impact on the adolescents' disruptive behavior tendencies. However, the findings suggest that there is no significant difference in how students of institutionalized and non-institutionalized religious education perceive their parent's parenting style. It has also been found how different parenting dimensions have an effect on the child's disruptive behavior. Furthermore, additional findings of the research indicated the difference in gender on the perception of parenting styles and disruptive behavior. Since there is very limited research on religious education and perceived parenting styles, findings of the current research are new to past literature and add significant value to the field of psychological research.

Religion being an essential element for the Pakistani children and youngsters, religious schooling tends to have a significant impact on the adolescents' perceptions and behavior. However, despite of being a Muslim Majority country, there is quite limited literature in Pakistan that targets the individuals seeking religious education from the perspective of analyzing their well-being, perceptions or behavioral tendencies and hence, the present study focuses on investigating its effect and would play a huge role towards studying and facilitating a change in the negative perceptions formed in our culture and enforced through the media sources, around the individuals seeking religious education especially in an institutionalized setting as being "rigid/radical and having aggressive tendencies" since the research depicts institutionalized individuals to have less emotional problems and lesser behavioral and perceptual difficulties. Moreover, the research has also played its role in altering educational policies devised by the regulatory bodies as of giving importance to and inculcating appropriate religious education in the entire educational curriculum along with giving a direction to all forms of media channels so as to enlighten individuals on the importance of religious education as having an impact on the adolescents' overall functioning since proper knowledge of their religion (dominantly Islam) would help

them find a direction and purpose in their lives along with having a significant impact on the quality of their perceptions and behavior.

### **Recommendations**

Despite of that fact that this study has provided useful insights towards individuals seeking religious education from different aspects, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations that the study possesses such as the sample was taken from the institutions and adolescents across Karachi only which would affect the generalizability of the research since religious education and the pattern towards it might differ from city to city hence, the results cannot be generalized for the entire adolescent population of Pakistan. Future studies can work on collecting samples from different cities and people of different backgrounds to strengthen the analysis. Furthermore, the present study focused on adolescents only; however, a significant population of Pakistan that is younger than 12 years, grade-schoolers, also seeks religious education and future studies can investigate this age sample with other variables as well to gain a wider insight.

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