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Influence of Parenting Styles on Procrastination and Social Anxiety among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Parenting practices shape emotional and behavioural habits that often continue into adulthood. This study examined how parenting style is related to procrastination and social anxiety among young adults aged 18 to 25 years. Data were collected online from 129 participants using a Parenting Styles Questionnaire (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved styles), the Procrastination Scale by Lay (1986) and the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale- Self-Report, which gives fear and avoidance scores. Participants with mixed (n = 8), permissive (n = 13) or uninvolved (n = 3) styles were excluded because their style was unclear or their groups were too small. This left 105 participants (52 authoritative, 53 authoritarian). Pearson's correlation and One-way ANOVA were run in Jamovi. Procrastination was positively correlated with social anxiety and avoidance. Young adults who reported authoritarian parenting scored significantly higher than those who reported authoritative parenting on procrastination, fear and avoidance. The findings suggest that strict, controlling and less warm parenting is linked with more procrastination and social anxiety in young adulthood, while warm and supportive parenting is linked with less. The results

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support parent education and counselling that address both problems together.

INTRODUCTION

The way a person is raised leaves a lasting mark on how they think, feel and behave as an adult. Parents are usually the first and most important influence in a child's life. They teach rules and values, show how to handle emotions and decide how much freedom a child receives. Psychologists call the overall pattern of this upbringing a parenting style. A parenting style is not a single action. It is a mix of how warm, responsive, demanding and controlling parents are towards their children.

Parenting styles

Baumrind (1966, 1967) first described three parenting styles. Authoritative parents are warm and responsive, set clear rules, and explain their reasons. Authoritarian parents are strict and demanding, expect obedience, and show little warmth. Permissive parents are loving but set very few rules or limits. Maccoby and Martin (1983) later added a fourth style, called uninvolved or neglectful, in which parents offer neither warmth nor guidance. Research has generally found that the authoritative style is linked with better outcomes, while authoritarian and uninvolved styles are linked with poorer ones.

Two theories help explain why parenting continues to matter in adulthood. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory says that people learn by watching and copying others. A child who sees parents deal with stress and tasks in a calm and organised way may learn to do the same, while a child who grows up around harsh criticism may learn fear of making mistakes. Bowlby's (1969) Attachment Theory says that a safe and caring bond with parents helps a child feel secure and confident. A child who does not receive such warmth may carry worry, self-doubt and fear of other people into later life. Together, these theories suggest that cold, controlling or neglectful parenting could shape habits and fears that last into young adulthood.

Procrastination

Lay (1986) described procrastination as a general tendency to delay that can appear in many areas of life, and not only in studies. Procrastination means putting off a task that should be done, even when the person knows that the delay may cause problems (Steel, 2007). It is very common among young adults and is linked with stress, poor performance and low self-esteem.

Social anxiety

Social anxiety is a strong and lasting fear of being judged, embarrassed or looked down upon in social or performance situations. People with high social anxiety often avoid such situations, such as speaking in class, meeting new people or eating in front of others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Young adulthood is a time when people build careers and relationships, so social anxiety can affect this stage of life in a big way.

Purpose of the study

Procrastination and social anxiety are also connected with each other. A person who fears being judged may delay tasks such as presentations or group work, and research with college students supports this link (Ko & Chang, 2019). If both come partly from how a person was raised, then parenting style may be one shared root of the two. Studies on this in India are still limited. The present study therefore examines how authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles are related to procrastination and social anxiety among young adults aged 18 to 25 years.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have found that the way parents raise their children is related to later procrastination. Slobodin et al. (2025), in their study "Interactions between parenting styles, child anxiety, and oppositionality in selective mutism", worked with children with selective mutism. They noted that authoritarian parents may stop children from facing challenges on their own, while permissive parents may allow children to avoid situations that make them anxious.

In 2024, Hafeez et al., in their study "Authoritarian parenting and social anxiety: The moderating role of self-esteem, introversion and religious coping", found that authoritarian parenting predicted social anxiety in Pakistan. They also found that self-esteem, introversion and religious coping changed the strength of this link. G. Li et al. (2024), in "Anxiety and academic procrastination in deaf and hard of hearing college students: A moderated mediation model", studied 685 college students and found that anxiety predicted academic procrastination, partly through rumination. X. Li et al. (2024), in "The relationship between academic procrastination and anxiety symptoms among medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring the moderated mediation effects of resilience and social support", found that academic procrastination was positively related to anxiety symptoms among medical students, and that resilience and social support changed this relationship. In India, Nalwa and Tripathi (2024), in "Impact of perceived parenting styles and perceived stress on procrastination among young adults", studied 177 young adults

aged 18 to 26 years using the General Procrastination Scale. They found that the authoritarian parenting style significantly predicted procrastination.

In 2023, Choong reviewed papers in "The effect of parenting styles on development of adolescent's social anxiety". The review supported the view that authoritative parenting is better for children than authoritarian or permissive parenting, and lowers the chance of social anxiety among adolescents. Ilyas and Khan (2023), in "Role of parenting and psychosocial correlates contributing to social anxiety in Asian adolescents: A systematic review", reviewed studies from Pakistan, India and China. They concluded that uninvolved and authoritarian parenting, along with rejection and neglect, were linked to social anxiety and social withdrawal. Their review also reported a study from Pakistan in which mothers' authoritarian style and fathers' uninvolved style made young people more prone to social anxiety (Rana et al., 2013, as cited in Ilyas & Khan, 2023). Y. Li et al. (2023), in "The effect of parenting styles on Chinese undergraduate nursing students' academic procrastination: The mediating role of causal attribution and self-efficacy", found that positive parenting was linked with less academic procrastination ($r = –0.350$), and negative parenting was linked with more ($r = 0.402$).

Wang (2022), in “Meta-analysis on the relationship between academic procrastination and parenting style”, combined eight studies with 2,166 participants. Academic procrastination was positively related to authoritarian and permissive styles and negatively related to the authoritative style.

In 2020, Batool, in “Academic achievement: Interplay of positive parenting, self-esteem, and academic procrastination”, found that positive parenting, meaning compassionate and supportive parenting, reduced academic procrastination indirectly by raising students’ self-esteem. Tras and Gökçen (2020), in “Academic procrastination and social anxiety as predictive variables of internet addiction of adolescents”, found that both academic procrastination and social anxiety predicted internet addiction among 599 high school students.

In 2019, Khalid et al. studied Chinese medical students in “The relationship between procrastination, perceived stress, saliva alpha-amylase level and parenting styles in Chinese first year medical students”. Students who procrastinated more had experienced more negative parenting, such as punishment and rejection, while students who procrastinated less had experienced more positive parenting. Ko and Chang (2019), in “Investigating the relationships among resilience, social anxiety, and procrastination in a sample of college students”, studied 321 college students in Taiwan. They found that social anxiety was positively related to procrastination, so students with more social anxiety procrastinated more. They also found that social anxiety partly explained the link between resilience and procrastination.

Timpano et al. (2015), in "Anxiety sensitivity: An examination of the relationship with authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parental styles", studied 227 young adults. Authoritarian and permissive styles were linked with higher anxiety sensitivity, and authoritarian parenting was tied to its social part.

One of the earlier studies, Zakeri et al. (2013), titled "Parenting styles and academic procrastination", studied 395 university students in Shiraz. Parental acceptance and involvement and the granting of psychological autonomy were significant negative predictors of academic procrastination.

Taken together, these studies suggest that warm and supportive parenting protects against procrastination and social anxiety, while harsh parenting increases both. Procrastination and social anxiety also appear to be related to each other.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To study how authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles are related to procrastination and social anxiety among young adults aged 18 to 25 years.

Objectives

1. To compare the level of procrastination of young adults who experienced authoritative parenting with those who experienced authoritarian parenting.
2. To compare the level of total social anxiety of young adults who experienced authoritative parenting with those who experienced authoritarian parenting.
3. To compare the fear scores of social anxiety between the two parenting style groups.
4. To compare the avoidance scores of social anxiety between the two parenting style groups.
5. To examine the relationship of procrastination with social anxiety, fear and avoidance among young adults.

Research Gap and Hypothesis

Past research shows that parenting is related to procrastination and also to social anxiety. However, most studies looked at only one of these outcomes at a time, used adolescent samples or samples from Western and East Asian countries, and measured academic procrastination only. Very few have studied both

outcomes together among young adults in India. The present study attempts to fill this gap by using a general procrastination scale and a social anxiety scale, including its fear and avoidance parts, with young adults from Bangalore and Kolkata. Based on the literature, the following hypotheses were formed:

- **H1:** Young adults who experienced authoritarian parenting will have significantly higher procrastination than those who experienced authoritative parenting.
- **H2:** Young adults who experienced authoritarian parenting will have significantly higher social anxiety than those who experienced authoritative parenting.
- **H3:** Young adults who experienced authoritarian parenting will have significantly higher fear scores on social anxiety than those who experienced authoritative parenting.
- **H4:** Young adults who experienced authoritarian parenting will have significantly higher avoidance scores on social anxiety than those who experienced authoritative parenting.
- **H5:** Procrastination will be positively related to social anxiety, fear and avoidance.

Research design

This study used a quantitative design that was both correlational and comparative. The correlational part was used to find out whether procrastination is related to social anxiety, fear and avoidance, and in which direction. The comparative part was used to compare two naturally formed groups, young adults with authoritative parenting and young adults with authoritarian parenting, on procrastination and social anxiety. This design was chosen because parenting style cannot be assigned or changed by the researcher, and it would be unethical to do so. The design also makes it possible to collect data from many people in a short time and gives clear numerical results that can be tested statistically. Since no variable was manipulated, the design shows relationships and group differences, but it cannot prove cause and effect.

Participants

Young adults aged 18 to 25 years from Bangalore and Kolkata took part in the study. The preliminary sample had 129 participants. After scoring, the dominant parenting style of each participant was identified, and 24 participants were excluded (see Data analysis). The final sample had 105 participants, of whom 52 had an authoritative parenting style and 53 had an authoritarian parenting style.

Inclusion criteria:

(a) age between 18 and 25 years

(b) able to read and understand English

(c) willing to take part and give consent.

Exclusion criteria:

(a) incomplete or duplicate responses

(b) age outside the 18 to 25 range

(c) inconsistent or wrongly filled responses.

Sampling method

Participants were selected through convenience sampling, i.e., people who were easily available and willing to take part were included.

Measures

Parenting Styles Questionnaire: This is a 20-item self-report questionnaire that asks young adults how their parents behaved towards them while they were growing up. Each item describes a situation, such as how parents respond when the person is upset, makes a mistake, breaks a rule or asks for more independence. Each item has four answer choices (A, B, C and D). The items are related to parental warmth and responsiveness, parental control, parental expectations, and encouragement of independence and emotional support. Each choice matches one parenting style: A for authoritative, B for authoritarian, C for permissive and D for uninvolved. The style chosen most often is taken as the dominant parenting style experienced by the participant.

Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986): This scale measures the general tendency to delay tasks in everyday life. Participants rate how well each statement describes them on a five-point scale. Some items are worded in the opposite direction and need reverse scoring. After this, the scores are added, and a higher total score shows a higher level of procrastination.

Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale- Self-Report (LSAS-SR; Liebowitz, 1987): This scale lists 24 social and performance situations. For each situation, participants rate how much fear they feel and how often they avoid it, both on a scale from 0 to 3. The fear ratings add up to a fear score, and the avoidance ratings add

up to an avoidance score. These two scores are added to give a total social anxiety score. A higher score shows greater social anxiety.

Procedure

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they began. Data was collected online through Google Forms. The form gave clear instructions on how to answer and explained that taking part was voluntary, that answers would remain confidential and that the data would be used for research purposes only. Demographic details such as age and sex, were collected along with the three questionnaires.

Data analysis

All responses were first scored according to the manual of each measure. For the Procrastination Scale, reverse scoring was done for the required items, and a total score was calculated for each participant. For the LSAS-SR, a fear score and an avoidance score were calculated for each participant, and these were added to give a total social anxiety score. The fear and avoidance scores were also used separately in the analysis.

For the Parenting Styles Questionnaire, the number of A, B, C and D responses was counted for each participant, and the option chosen most often decided the dominant parenting style. Eight participants had an equal mix of two parenting styles, so their data were not used in further analysis. Thirteen participants were found to have a permissive style and three an uninvolved style. Since these groups were very small compared to the authoritative and authoritarian groups, they were also excluded from further statistical analysis. This left 105 participants (52 authoritative and 53 authoritarian).

The analysis was done using Jamovi software at 0.05 level of significance. First, the mean, standard deviation and standard error were calculated for each group. Second, Pearson's correlation was used to see how procrastination, total social anxiety, fear and avoidance (subscales of social anxiety) are related to each other. Third, One-way ANOVA was used to compare the authoritative and authoritarian groups on procrastination, total social anxiety, fear and avoidance.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Correlation matrix of the study variables (N = 105)

		Procrastination	Social Anxiety	Fear	Avoidance
Procrastination	**Pearson's r**	—			

		Procrastination	Social Anxiety	Fear	Avoidance
	df	—			
	p-value	—			
Social Anxiety	**Pearson's r**	0.239	—		
	df	103	—		
	p-value	0.014	—		
Fear	**Pearson's r**	0.210	0.947	—	
	df	103	103	—	
	p-value	0.031	<.001	—	
Avoidance	**Pearson's r**	0.241	0.938	0.776	—
	df	103	103	103	—
	p-value	0.013	<.001	<.001	—

Table 1 shows how the four variables are related to each other. Procrastination has a significant positive correlation with total social anxiety (r = 0.239, p = 0.014), fear (r = 0.210, p = 0.031) and avoidance (r = 0.241, p = 0.013). This means that people who tend to procrastinate more also are likely to have more social anxiety, more fear and more avoidance. Social anxiety, fear and avoidance are very strongly related to each other because total social anxiety is made up of the fear and avoidance scores.

Table 2: One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)

	F	df1	df2	p
Procrastination	8.70	1	102	0.004
Social Anxiety	4.87	1	103	0.030
Fear	4.44	1	103	0.037
Avoidance	4.14	1	103	0.044

Table 2 shows the results of the One-way ANOVA comparing the authoritative and authoritarian groups. The two groups differ significantly on all four variables: procrastination (p = 0.004); total social anxiety (p = 0.030); fear (p = 0.037); and avoidance (p = 0.044) under social anxiety.

Table 3: Group Descriptives

	Parenting Style	N	Mean	SD	SE
Procrastination	**Authoritative**	52	85.4	18.8	2.60
	Authoritarian	53	95.8	17.5	2.40
Social Anxiety	**Authoritative**	52	55.6	28.5	3.96
	Authoritarian	53	67.8	28.2	3.87
Fear	**Authoritative**	52	26.8	15.6	2.17

Table 3: Group Descriptives

	Parenting Style	N	Mean	SD	SE
	Authoritarian	53	33.2	15.7	2.15
Avoidance	**Authoritative**	52	28.8	14.8	2.06
	Authoritarian	53	34.6	14.2	1.96

Table 3 shows that the authoritarian group had higher mean scores than the authoritative group on every variable. The average procrastination score is 95.8 for the authoritarian group and 85.4 for the authoritative group. Social anxiety is 67.8 compared with 55.6, fear is 33.2 compared with 26.8, and avoidance is 34.6 compared with 28.8. All four hypotheses about group differences (H1 to H4) and the hypothesis about the link between procrastination and social anxiety (H5) are therefore supported.

DISCUSSION

This study looked at how parenting style is related to procrastination and social anxiety among young adults. The main finding was that young adults who described their parents as authoritarian scored significantly higher on procrastination, total social anxiety (fear and avoidance) than those who described their parents as authoritative. The study also found that procrastination is positively related to social anxiety, fear and avoidance.

Parenting style and procrastination

The difference in procrastination is the strongest of the four group differences ($F = 8.70$, $p = 0.004$, compared with F values of 4.14 to 4.87 for the social anxiety scores). Earlier studies that link harsh parenting with procrastination mostly measured delay in academic work (Khalid et al., 2019; Li et al., 2023; Wang, 2022). Here, procrastination is measured as a general habit in everyday life, and the difference is still clear among young adults of India. This suggests that the link with parenting is not limited to studies or exams but also in how a person handles tasks in general. Social Learning Theory offers one possible explanation. Children who grow up with constant criticism and strict demands may learn to fear mistakes, and delaying tasks in general is one way to avoid the chance of failing. Authoritarian parents also make most decisions for the child so the child may get little practice in planning, setting goals and taking responsibility for tasks which help them to finish those tasks on time.

Parenting style and social anxiety

Authoritarian parenting is also linked with higher social anxiety, both fear and avoidance being higher in the authoritarian group. This implies fear and avoidance are closely tied to each other (r = 0.776), that fear leads to avoidance and avoidance then keeps the fear going because the person never learns that the feared situation can be handled. Many earlier studies used a single social anxiety score, so looking at the two parts separately gives a clearer picture of how the anxiety shows up. The overall direction matches earlier studies that connect authoritarian parenting with social anxiety and social withdrawal (Hafeez et al., 2024; Ilyas & Khan, 2023; Timpano et al., 2015). Attachment Theory helps to understand that when a child gets little warmth and comfort, the child may not develop a sense of safety around other people and expect to be judged or rejected. Higher fear and avoidance suggests that these young adults not only feel more worried in social situations but also stay away from them more often. Over time, such avoidance may make the fear persistent, because the person never learns that the feared situations are manageable.

Procrastination and social anxiety

Procrastination has a small but significant positive link with social anxiety, fear and avoidance. This is similar to the findings of Ko and Chang (2019) and Li et al. (2024). A person who strongly fears being judged may put off tasks that involve other people, such as giving a presentation, asking a question or joining a group project. In this way, procrastination may sometimes work as a form of avoidance. Since the correlations were small, social anxiety explains only a small part of why people procrastinate.

This study shows differences between groups and relationships between variables. It does not prove that parenting style causes procrastination or social anxiety. Other factors such asv personality, school environment, peer experiences, and family conditions, may also play a role.

CONCLUSION

The study found that young adults who experienced authoritarian parenting had significantly higher procrastination, social anxiety, fear and avoidance than those who experienced authoritative parenting. Procrastination was also positively related to social anxiety, fear and avoidance. These findings suggest that a parenting approach that is strict, controlling and low in warmth may be linked with delaying habits and social fears in young adulthood, while a warm and supportive approach may be protective. Although the study cannot show cause and effect, it highlights the value of supportive parenting and counselling that deals with procrastination and social anxiety together.

Implications

- *For parents and families:* The results suggest that warmth as well as clear and fair rules (authoritative parenting) may be better for young adults than strict control with little warmth. Parent education programmes and workshops can help parents listen, explain their rules and allow children to make age-appropriate choices.
- *For counsellors and mental health professionals:* When a young adult comes with procrastination or social anxiety, it may help to ask about their upbringing. Because procrastination and social anxiety were related, they can be addressed together, for example by gently building social confidence while teaching time management to them.
- *For colleges and universities:* Student counselling centres can run awareness sessions and skill-building programmes on managing delay, handling fear of judgement and building self-confidence for young adults.
- *For research and theory:* The study adds data from Indian young adults and supports the ideas of Social Learning Theory and Attachment Theory about the long-term effects of parenting.

Limitations

- Convenience sampling was used, and participants came from only two cities, so the results may not apply to all young adults in India.
- All measures were self-reports. Participants had to recall how they were parented, and their answers may be affected by memory or wish to give socially acceptable answers.
- The study is cross-sectional and correlational, so it cannot show that parenting style causes procrastination or social anxiety.
- Parenting style was decided by the most frequently chosen option. This put each person in one group and ignored mixed styles. Twenty-four of the 129 participants (about 19%) had to be excluded, and the permissive and uninvolved styles could not be studied.
- Other factors such as gender, family income, personality and other life experiences that may have affected the results which were not controlled.

Future research directions

- Use larger samples chosen by random methods from more cities, regions and cultural groups.
- Include all four parenting styles, with enough participants in the permissive and uninvolved groups, to see how each style relates to procrastination and social anxiety.
- Study the parenting of mothers and fathers separately, and do a comparative analysis.
- Use qualitative research methods like interviews to learn more about how young adults understand the effect of their upbringing.
- Test whether parent training or counselling programmes can lower procrastination and social anxiety in young adults.

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