



IMPACT OF HARSH AND RESTRICTIVE CHILDHOOD DISCIPLINE ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ADULTHOOD

Aarti Passi Gupta¹, Evangeline Supriya²

¹MSc Psychology Student, Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru

Abstract: The present study examines the relationship between harsh and restrictive childhood disciplinary practices and emotional intelligence in adulthood. A retrospective quantitative research design was employed using a sample of 52 adults aged 40–60 years. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of a self-developed Childhood Discipline Scale and an adapted version of the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation were used for data analysis. The findings revealed a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.38$) between harsh childhood discipline and emotional intelligence, indicating that individuals exposed to higher levels of harsh discipline tend to exhibit lower emotional intelligence in adulthood. However, the moderate strength of the relationship suggests the influence of additional factors such as education, life experiences, and resilience. The study highlights the long-term emotional impact of early disciplinary environments and emphasizes the importance of supportive parenting practices.

Index Terms - Childhood discipline, emotional intelligence, parenting, adulthood, retrospective study.

I. INTRODUCTION

Childhood experiences significantly influence emotional, psychological, and social development. Among these experiences, parental discipline plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals regulate emotions and interact with others. While discipline is essential for guiding behaviour, excessively harsh and restrictive practices may have long-term adverse effects.

Harsh discipline includes physical punishment, verbal aggression, emotional withdrawal, and rigid enforcement of rules without emotional support. Such practices may create fear-based environments, limiting emotional expression and the development of adaptive coping mechanisms.

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. It is a key determinant of psychological well-being, effective communication, and interpersonal relationships.

The present study aims to examine the relationship between harsh childhood discipline and emotional intelligence in adulthood, particularly among individuals aged 40–60 years.

II. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design was adopted. The study included 52 participants aged 40–60 years, selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of a self-developed Childhood Discipline Scale (10 items) and an adapted Emotional Intelligence Scale (23 items). Both instruments used a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Data collection was conducted through an online survey using Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained.

Descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation were used for statistical analysis.

III. RESULTS

The findings indicated that participants generally reported low to moderate levels of harsh childhood discipline and moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence.

Correlation analysis revealed a moderate negative relationship ($r = -0.38$) between childhood discipline and emotional intelligence. This suggests that increased exposure to harsh discipline is associated with lower emotional intelligence.

Table 1: Correlation between Childhood Discipline and Emotional Intelligence

Variable Relationship	Correlation (r)
Childhood Discipline & Emotional Intelligence	-0.38

IV. DISCUSSION

The results support the hypothesis that harsh childhood discipline negatively impacts emotional intelligence in adulthood. These findings align with developmental theories emphasizing the importance of early emotional environments.

Harsh disciplinary practices may suppress emotional expression and hinder emotional learning, leading to difficulties in emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning. In contrast, supportive environments facilitate emotional awareness and resilience.

However, the moderate correlation indicates that emotional intelligence is influenced by multiple factors, including education, life experiences, and individual resilience.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that harsh and restrictive childhood discipline is associated with lower emotional intelligence in adulthood. While early experiences play a significant role, emotional intelligence is also shaped by various life factors.

The findings highlight the importance of promoting supportive parenting practices and raising awareness about the long-term effects of harsh discipline.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my guide, Ms. Evangeline Supriya, for her valuable guidance and support throughout this study. I also thank all the participants for their time and contribution to this research.

REFERENCES

- Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of authoritative parental control on child behaviour. *Child Development*, 37(4), 887–907.
- Baumrind, D. (1991). The influence of parenting style on adolescent competence and substance use. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 11(1), 56–95.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment*. Basic Books.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology (Vol. 4, pp. 1–101)*. Wiley.
- Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Educational implications (pp. 3–31)*. Basic Books.
- Santrock, J. W. (2011). *Life-span development (13th ed.)*. McGraw-Hill.
- Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Hall, L. E., Haggerty, D. J., Cooper, J. T., Golden, C. J., & Dornheim, L. (1998). Development and validation of a measure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 25(2), 167–177.
- Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. National Academy Press.
- Thompson, R. A. (2014). Stress and child development. *The Future of Children*, 24(1), 41–59.
- Wrightsmann, L. S. (1992). *Assumptions about human nature: Implications for researchers and practitioners*. Sage Publications.