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The Impact of Social Adjustment on the Relationship between Parenting Styles and Oppositional Defiant Tendencies among Young Adults

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Abstract

The current study aimed to investigate the impact of social adjustment on the relationship between parenting styles and oppositional defiant tendencies (ODT) among young adults. A cross-sectional quantitative design was used, with a sample of 205 participants selected through purposive sampling from various areas of Hazara Division. Data were collected using the Parenting Authority Scale (PAS), Social Adjustment Scale (SAS-M), and Conduct and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Scale (CODDS). Results revealed that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were positively related to ODT, while authoritative parenting was negatively related. Social adjustment significantly moderated the relationship between parenting styles and ODT. Gender, family structure, and socioeconomic status differences were also found. The findings highlight the importance of parenting and social skills in managing defiant behaviors.

Key words: Social Adjustment, Parenting Styles, Oppositional Defiant Tendencies, Young Adults

Introduction

It is often said that “the way you are raised shapes the way you navigate the world.” In nearly every society, young adulthood is a time of change, challenge, and growth. It is during this period that many individuals learn to navigate the complexities of life, form their identities, and adapt to societal expectations. However, for some young adults, these developmental tasks can be difficult, marked by behaviors that are disruptive, defiant, and challenging known as Oppositional Defiant Tendencies (ODT). Research shows that up to 20% of young adults exhibit these tendencies, which can include defying authority, arguing excessively, and refusing to follow rules (Kazdin, 2005; Goodman et al., 2020).



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Such behaviors can strain relationships, hinder personal growth, and negatively impact academic and professional success. But the question then arises, what shapes these oppositional behaviors, and how can they be understood or reduced? One of the most influential factors in the development of ODT is parenting style.

However, social adjustment, which refers to an individual's ability to cope with the demands of social life, is a key factor in how parenting influences oppositional tendencies. Social adjustment involves emotional regulation, the ability to communicate effectively, and the capacity to form and maintain healthy relationships (Esere, 2008).

Young adults who struggle with social adjustment are more likely to exhibit ODT, as they may find it difficult to manage frustration, communicate their needs, or cope with stress.

Interestingly, research suggests that even when young adults come from homes with less than ideal parenting, those who possess better social adjustment skills are often able to manage their defiant tendencies more successfully (Ogechi & Yusuf, 2011).

It has been shown that young adults who struggle with social adjustment and face parenting-related challenges are more prone to developing oppositional behaviors.

Recent studies highlight that approximately 25% to 30% of young adults exhibit significant oppositional behaviors, often linked to parenting styles characterized by low emotional warmth or inconsistent discipline (Barker et al., 2020). The development of ODT is strongly associated with how well young adults adjust socially and how parenting styles interact with their social environment (Burke et al., 2010).

Social adjustment is the process through which individuals adapt to societal norms, values, and expectations to maintain harmony with their social environment. It is a key component of mental health and well-being and reflects a person's ability to manage interpersonal relationships, meet societal demands, and respond effectively to the challenges of everyday life (Kim et al., 2017). Social adjustment involves developing the skills to interact positively with others, adapt to changing environments, and maintain emotional balance while dealing with various life situations (McAdams, 2015).

Social adjustment includes several types like, emotional, interpersonal, cultural, and behavioral adjustment. Emotional adjustment means managing feelings and stress in healthy ways, which helps maintain good relationships (Kim et al., 2017). Interpersonal adjustment focuses on building and keeping positive relationships through communication and empathy. Cultural adjustment involves adapting to new cultural norms, values, and behaviors, especially important for people in new environments like immigrants or students abroad (Berry, 2007; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Lastly, behavioral adjustment is about acting in socially acceptable ways and following rules to get along in society (Wentzel, 2017). All these types work together to help individuals thrive socially and emotionally. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory explains that people develop social behaviors by watching and imitating others, especially role models like parents, peers, or teachers. This learning process plays a key role in how individuals adjust to their social environments, showing that behavior is shaped not just by personal experience but also through observation (Akram & Imran,



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2018;Bandura, 2006).

Social adjustment is also shaped by factors like age, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and family structure. Children develop social skills mainly through family interactions, while adolescents are influenced more by peers and identity formation. Young adults face challenges in forming relationships and becoming independent (Liu et al., 2020). Gender roles affect adjustment too females often show stronger emotional and interpersonal skills, while males may focus more on autonomy (Zhu et al., 2021). SES plays a major role, with higher SES linked to better social skills and support, while lower SES may lead to fewer opportunities and more stress (Wang & Khalil, 2019). Family structure also matters; joint families often provide stronger support systems, while nuclear families may promote self-reliance (Singh & Misra, 2020).

Parenting styles refers to the consistent patterns of behavior, attitudes, and strategies that parents use to raise their children. It is a psychological construct that reflects how parents interact with their children, manage discipline, and provide emotional support. These styles influence every aspect of a child's development, including their emotional, social, and cognitive growth (Baumrind, 2007).

Parenting styles including several types like, authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive which significantly influence children's emotional and social development. Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and structure, fosters positive outcomes, while authoritarian and permissive styles may lead to challenges in emotional regulation and social adaptation (Gimenez et al., 2021).

Theoretical frameworks for parenting styles are primarily based on Diana Baumrind's foundational theory, categorizing parenting into authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles, depending on responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 2021). Parenting styles vary based on demographic factors such as age, gender, SES, and family structure, influencing children's development. Younger parents may lean toward permissive or authoritarian styles due to inexperience or stress, while older parents tend to adopt more authoritative approaches (Liew et al., 2020). Gender differences also exist, with mothers often showing more nurturing behaviors and fathers emphasizing discipline (Martínez et al., 2018). SES plays a key role, with higher SES families more likely to use authoritative styles, while lower SES families may adopt authoritarian or neglectful approaches due to stress.

Oppositional Defiant Tendencies (ODT) refers to a pattern of persistent and pervasive behaviors characterized by defiance, hostility, and disobedience toward authority figures. These tendencies are commonly observed in children and adolescents but may persist into adulthood if not appropriately addressed (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). ODT can negatively affect an individual's ability to form and maintain healthy relationships, succeed academically, and adapt to societal expectations. While some degree of oppositional behavior is considered normal during certain developmental stages, persistent and extreme forms are indicative of ODT and may require intervention (Burke et al., 2010).

So, recognizing diagnostic criteria and symptoms is vital for identifying ODT and implementing appropriate interventions. Early identification can help parents, educators, and clinicians address these behaviors effectively, reducing their impact on the individual's relationships, academic success, and overall well-



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being (Frick, 2012). Moreover, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) prevalence varies across demographic factors; boys exhibit higher rates than girls, and prevalence increases with age, peaking in late adolescence. Lower socioeconomic status and single-parent households are linked to higher ODD rates (Khosravi, 2019).

This study aims to bridge the gap by assessing the influence of parenting styles on the relationship between social adjustment and oppositional defiant tendencies in young adults. Social adjustment, which encompasses emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, and adaptation to social norms, plays a pivotal role in shaping a young adult's ability to navigate complex social environments. The study will examine how different parenting styles contribute to the development of ODT and how social adjustment might mediate this relationship. Specifically, it will explore how young adults' ability to adjust socially interacts with parenting styles to either mitigate or exacerbate oppositional behaviors.

The rationale for conducting this study is rooted in the need to understand the long term effects of parenting on young adults, a population that has often been overlooked in research on oppositional defiance. Most studies have been limited to children or adolescents, with fewer focusing on how these early behaviors translate into adulthood. Additionally, much of the research conducted on parenting and ODT has been in Western contexts, where individualism and autonomy are emphasized, potentially limiting the applicability of findings to non-Western societies. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into how cultural and familial contexts influence the development of oppositional behaviors in young adults and how parenting styles impact their social adjustment and behavioral tendencies.

By addressing this gap in the literature, this study will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of parenting in the development of oppositional defiant tendencies, especially in non-Western, collectivist cultures. The results could inform interventions aimed at improving parenting practices and promoting better social adjustment in young adults, thus reducing the prevalence of oppositional defiant behaviors. Practically, the study could help parents, educators, and mental health professionals better understand the dynamics that lead to ODT in young adults and develop targeted strategies to prevent or manage these tendencies effectively. This research will also enhance the global literature by offering a broader perspective on the role of parenting and social adjustment in shaping the behaviors of young adults.

Objectives

The current study has the following objectives:

1. To investigate the relationship among authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting Styles and oppositional defiant tendencies in young adults.
2. To examine the moderating role of social adjustment in the relationship among parenting Styles and oppositional defiant tendencies.
3. To explore the influence of demographic variables (age, gender, family structure and socioeconomic status) on parenting styles, social adjustment, and oppositional defiant Tendencies.



Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the current study are given below:

1. Parenting styles authoritarian and permissive will be positively correlated with Oppositional defiant tendencies and negatively with social adjustment while authoritative parenting will be negatively correlated with ODT and positively with social Adjustment among young adults.
2. Social adjustment will significantly moderate the relationship between parenting styles and Oppositional defiant tendencies.
3. Young adults will have high scores authoritative parenting and social adjustment while showing lower score on authoritarian and permissive parenting and ODT.
4. Male will score higher on authoritarian and permissive parenting and ODT while female will score high on authoritative parenting and social adjustment.
5. Individuals from nuclear families will score higher on authoritarian and permissive parenting and ODT while those from joint families will score high on authoritarian parenting and social adjustment.
6. Individuals from low socioeconomic status, will score high on authoritarian and permissive parenting and ODT while those from middle and high SES will score high on authoritative parenting and social adjustment.

Methodology

The current study is conducted in order to find the social adjustment influence on the relationship between parenting styles and oppositional defiant tendencies among young adults, where the research design, sample of the study, details of the used instruments for data collection, procedure are discussed as following:

Research Design

The research design of the current study is quantitative in nature, based on correlational design to investigate the social adjustment influence on the relationship between parenting styles and oppositional defiant tendencies among young adults.

Sample

A two-step sampling method was used in this study. First, convenience sampling was used to select participants. Then, purposive sampling was applied to identify individuals with oppositional defiant tendencies (ODT). Screening was conducted using the Conduct and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Scales (CODDS), with a cut-off score of 8.5, which has demonstrated 85.3% sensitivity and 72.3% specificity in identifying ODT. Participants scoring 8.5 or above were considered to exhibit significant oppositional defiant tendencies. Out of a total sample of 420 young adults aged 18 to 25 from various areas of Hazara Division, 205 individuals met the cut-off criteria and were included in the final analysis, while the remaining did not meet the threshold.

Research Instruments

In the present study, for the data collection from the participants, an informed consent form, demographic sheet, and three questionnaires were used named as:



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Parenting Authority Scale, Social Adjustment Scale, and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Scale. The description of these questionnaires is given below:

Demographic Sheet

Demographic sheet was used to take the basic information about age, gender (male, female), Socioeconomic status (low, middle, high socioeconomic status), and family status (nuclear, joint). Participants were asked to provide information on these demographic characteristics to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the sample composition.

Social Adjustment Scale

The Social Adjustment Scale (SAS-M) is an 18-item self-report measure designed to assess social functioning. Originally developed by Weissman and Bothwell (1976), it was later modified by Cooper et al. (1982). The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (all the time), with higher scores indicating better social adjustment. The scale's total score ranges from a minimum of 18 to a maximum of 90.

Parenting Authority Scale

The Parental Authority Scale (PAS), originally developed by Buri (1991) as a 30-item scale. This modified short version of the PAS, developed by Alkharusi et al. (2024), reduced the original scale to the 20-items. This scale consists on 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with scores ranging from a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 100.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder Scale (ODDS)

The Oppositional Defiant Tendencies is assessed using the Adult Self Report of Oppositional Defiant Disorder Scales (ODDS). This is a 9-item scale designed to assess symptoms of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) for clinical and research purposes. The scale uses a 3-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 0 (never) to 2 (often). Higher total scores indicate more pronounced symptoms of ODD, with the minimum score being 0 and the maximum score being 18.

Procedure

After obtaining informed consent from all participants, data collection began by using paper-based questionnaires. The questionnaires were given to young adults, with clear instructions on how to fill them out and enough time to complete them on their own. Ensuring privacy and confidentiality was a top priority. Participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, ensuring they could choose freely. All steps followed ethical guidelines to protect participants information.

Results

The results of the study are presented below, outlining the key findings from the data collected.

Table 1

Alpha Reliability Coefficient of Social Adjustment Scale, Parenting Authority



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Scale, Oppositional Defiant Disorder Scale (N=205)

Scale	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
Social Adjustment Scale	50.13	13.43	23-90	.84
CODDS Adult Self-Report	12.14	2.73	9-18	.71
Parenting Authority Scale	66.59	13.37	26-100	.85
Authoritarian Parenting Scale	22.59	5.64	9-35	.72
Permissive Parenting Scale	19.27	4.65	6-30	.61
Authoritative Parenting Scale	24.72	6.03	9-35	.81

Note. M = mean; SD =Standard Deviation; CODDS Adult Self-Report =Conduct and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Scales Adult Self-Report.

The results of table 1 indicate that alpha reliability coefficient as Social Adjustment Scale has .84, Conduct and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Scales Adult Self-Report has .71, Parenting Authority Scale has .85, Authoritarian Parenting Scale has .72, Permissive Parenting Scale has .61, and Authoritative Parenting Scale has .81.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix among Parenting Styles, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Social Adjustment and Age (N=205)

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Authoritarian. P.205	22.59	5.64	-	.51**	.18**	.38**	-.03	-.15*	
Permissive. P. S. 205	19.27	4.65	-	-	.03	.33**	-.02	.07	
Authoritative. P.205	23.10	7.82	-	-	-	-.23**	.55**	-.01	
Oppositi. Def.205	12.14	2.73	-	-	-	-	-.28**	-.00	
Ten. Social 205	45.55	17.61	-	-	-	-	-	.03	
Adjustment Age 205	20.36	1.61	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Note. **p <.01, *p <.05, p >.05, N = Number of items; M= mean; SD= standard deviation; Authoritarian. P. S. =authoritarian parenting style, Permissive. P. S. =Permissive parenting style, Authoritative. P. S. =Authoritative parenting style, Oppositi. Def. Ten. =oppositional defiant tendencies

Table 2 shows that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are positively correlated with oppositional defiant tendencies and negatively correlated with social adjustment. In contrast, authoritative parenting is linked to better social adjustment and fewer defiant behaviors. Oppositional defiant tendencies are negatively correlated with social adjustment. Age is negatively correlated with authoritarian parenting, while its relationship with other parenting styles and social adjustment is not significant.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis for Oppositional Defiant Tendencies, Parenting Styles and Social Adjustment (N=205)



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Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i> (203)	<i>P</i>
Constant	9.35	.922		10.14	<.001
Authoritarian. P. S.	.16	.03	.33	4.57	<.001
Permissive. P. S.	.10	.04	.17	2.43	.01
Authoritative. P. S.	-.07	.02	-.21	-2.85	.005
Social Adjustment	-.02	.01	-.15	-2.06	.04

Note. *B* =Unstandardized beta, *SE* =standard error of beta, β =standardized beta coefficient, *t* =*t*- statistic, *p* =significance, Authoritarian. P. S. =authoritarian parenting style, Permissive. P. S. =Permissive parenting style, Authoritative. P. S. =Authoritative parenting style

Table 3 shows that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are significant positive predictors of oppositional defiant tendencies, with authoritarian parenting having a stronger effect than permissive parenting. In contrast, authoritative parenting is a significant negative predictor, meaning higher authoritative parenting is associated with lower oppositional defiant tendencies. Additionally, social adjustment also has a significant negative effect, suggesting that better social adjustment is linked to lower oppositional defiant tendencies.

Table 4

Mean Comparisons of Gender on Parenting Styles, Oppositional Defiant Tendencies and Social Adjustment (N=205)

Variables	Males (<i>n</i> = 111)		Females (<i>n</i> = 94)		<i>t</i> (203)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Authoritarian. P. S.	23.24	5.78	21.82	5.40	1.80	.66	0.25
Permissive. P. S.	19.61	4.99	18.87	4.19	1.13	.13	0.16
Authoritative. P. S.	22.09	8.54	24.29	6.71	-2.02	.02	0.28
Oppositi. Def. Ten.	12.19	2.99	10.08	2.39	.27	.01	0.77
Social Adjustment	44.54	19.26	46.73	15.44	-.88	.09	0.12

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; Authoritarian. P. S. =authoritarian parenting style, Permissive. P. S. =Permissive parenting style, Authoritative. P. S. =Authoritative parenting style, Oppositi. Def. Ten. =oppositional defiant tendencies.

Table 4 indicates that males scored significantly higher than females on authoritarian and permissive parenting style. However, females scored significantly higher than males on authoritative parenting style. For oppositional



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defiant tendencies, males had higher scores than females, while social adjustment score is high in females than males.

Table 5

Mean Comparison of Family System Parenting Styles, Oppositional Defiant Tendencies and Social Adjustment (N=205)

Variables	Nuclear (n=98)		Family Joint Family (n = 94)		t(203)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Authoritarian. P. S.	22.18	5.12	22.96	6.08	-.98	.10	0.13
Permissive. P. S.	18.74	4.34	19.76	4.88	-1.56	.32	0.22
Authoritative. P. S.	24.18	6.48	22.10	8.77	1.91	.01	0.26
Oppositi. Def. Ten.	12.23	2.53	10.05	2.90	.46	.07	0.80
Social Adjustment	45.66	15.75	47.44	19.22	.09	.06	0.10

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Authoritarian. P. S. =authoritarian parenting style, Permissive. P. S. =Permissive parenting style, Authoritative. P. S. =Authoritative parenting style, Oppositi. Def. Ten.=oppositional defiant tendencies.

Table 5 indicates that the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are higher in joint families than in nuclear families. However, authoritative parenting style shows a significant difference, with nuclear families scoring higher compared to joint families. Oppositional defiant tendencies are higher in nuclear families than in joint families. In contrast, social adjustment is higher in joint families compared to nuclear families.

Table 6

One Way Analysis of Variance of Socioeconomic-Status on Parenting Styles, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Social Adjustment (N=205)

Variable	Low (n=65)		Middle (n=85)		High (n=55)		F	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Authoritarian. P. S.	23.54	6.33	21.40	4.99	23.31	5.50	3.32	.03
Permissive. P. S.	20.42	4.84	18.18	3.75	19.64	5.32	4.70	.04
Authoritative. P. S.	22.88	8.62	23.85	6.56	22.20	8.60	.77	.01
Oppositi. Def. Ten.	12.23	2.90	11.70	2.27	12.23	3.09	2.18	.02
Social Adjustment	44.08	19.47	44.82	12.85	48.82	21.20	1.31	.01

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Authoritarian. P. S. =authoritarian parenting style, Permissive. P. S. =Permissive parenting style, Authoritative. P. S. =Authoritative parenting style, Oppositi. Def. Ten. =oppositional defiant tendencies.

Table 6 shows that individuals from low SES shows higher levels of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles compared to those from middle SES, while the



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high SES group falls in between. No significant difference is observed in authoritative parenting across SES levels. ODT appear more frequently among young adults from lower SES compared to middle and high SES background. In terms of social adjustment, individuals from high SES show the highest level, whereas those from middle SES and low SES show low level of social adjustment.

Discussion

The current study was designed to quantitatively assess how social adjustment influences the relationship between parenting styles and oppositional defiant tendencies (ODT) in young adults from Hazara Division of Pakistan. The correlation analysis shows interesting findings regarding the relationships between parenting styles, ODT, and social adjustment (See Table 1). The first hypothesis proposed that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are linked to higher levels of oppositional defiant tendencies (ODT) and lower levels of social adjustment while authoritative parenting is associated with lower ODT and higher social adjustment. Additionally, young adults in this study tended to score higher on authoritative parenting and social adjustment while scoring lower on authoritarian and permissive parenting as well as ODT.

The results show that authoritarian and permissive parenting is positively correlated with oppositional defiant tendencies. This aligns with previous researches indicating that authoritarian parenting fosters externalizing behaviors such as aggression, defiance, and difficulty in adhering to social norms and permissive parenting is linked to increased impulsivity and defiance, as children raised without structure fail to develop self-regulation skills (Bulow et al. 2020; Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Pinquart, 2017; Timpano et al., 2018). The results also show that authoritarian parenting is negatively correlated with social adjustment. Researches by Dwairy et al. (2019) and Sorkhabi and Mandara (2017) supports this, stating that authoritarian parenting suppresses independent decision-making, resulting in lower self-esteem and difficulty in forming meaningful relationships.

The results show that authoritative parenting is negatively correlated with oppositional defiant tendencies. Research by Bornstein and Lansford (2018), found that authoritative parenting is linked to lower levels of defiance, as children raised in structured yet supportive environments develop stronger emotional regulation. Additionally, the correlation between authoritative parenting and social adjustment, indicating that children raised in such households develop better social skills. Researches by Lamborn et al. (2018) and Grolnick (2020) found that authoritative parenting promotes independence, confidence, and strong interpersonal relationships.

The results show that age is negatively correlated with authoritarian parenting, meaning that as individuals grow older, they perceive their parents as less authoritarian. Lansford et al. (2021) also found that as young adults gain autonomy, they reassess their childhood experiences and recognize the intent behind their parents' disciplinary actions. However, age does not show a significant correlation with permissive and authoritative parenting styles, oppositional defiant tendencies, or social adjustment. This suggests that while authoritarian parenting may influence individuals differently at various ages, other factors like social adjustment and defiant tendencies remain stable regardless of age.



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The second hypothesis of the study proposed that social adjustment would moderate the relationship between parenting styles and ODT. The results from multiple regression analysis (See Table 3) confirmed this hypothesis. The result of this study shows that authoritarian and permissive parenting has a strong association with oppositional defiant tendencies. These findings align with previous researches that have consistently linked authoritarian parenting to externalizing behaviors and also permissive parents tend to exhibit more behavioral problems, including ODT. (García & Gracia, 2019; Llorca et al. 2017; Martínez et al. 2019; Pinquart, 2017). The findings of this study also support the widely accepted notion that authoritative parenting, is associated with lower levels of ODT. This aligns with research by Baumrind (2013), which found that children in authoritative households are less likely to develop behavioral disorders due to the combination of emotional support and consistent discipline. The results of this study confirm that social adjustment plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between parenting styles and ODT. This is consistent with research by Ladd and Troop-Gordon (2018), who found that children with high social competence are less likely to exhibit behavioral issues, even in the presence of authoritarian or permissive parenting. The findings of this study also align with multiple psychological theories including, Patterson's (1982) coercion theory, and Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory.

The results of this study indicate significant gender differences in parenting styles, oppositional defiant tendencies and social adjustment, supporting the Fourth hypothesis that males score higher on authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, as well as ODT, while females score higher on authoritative parenting and social adjustment.

The t-test analysis shows that males exhibit higher scores in authoritarian and permissive parenting, as compare to females (See Table 4). This finding is supported by prior researches indicating that boys often experience more rigid disciplinary approaches from parents, particularly in collectivist cultures where obedience and conformity are emphasized for male children and they often receive more autonomy from their parents, leading to less structured discipline and increased behavioral issues (Baumrind, 2012; Hosokawa & Katsura, 2019; Karreman et al., 2019; Pinquart, 2017). Regarding oppositional defiant tendencies, males also scored significantly higher than females. Studies have consistently shown that boys exhibit higher rates of oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) symptoms, including defiance, irritability, and aggression (Loeber et al., 2018; Keenan & Shaw, 2019).

In contrast, females scored higher on authoritative parenting and social adjustment, indicating that they perceive their parents as warm, responsive, and firm yet supportive. This

finding aligns with prior researches demonstrating that girls are more likely to experience authoritative parenting, which promotes emotional regulation, social competence, and positive adjustment and they tend to develop stronger interpersonal skills, empathy, and cooperation, which contribute to better social integration (Bowlby, 2020; Rose & Rudolph, 2018; Steinberg, 2021; Spera, 2019). The results of this study indicate a significant difference in family type (nuclear vs.

Joint families) on parenting styles, ODT, and social adjustment (See Table 5). Fifth hypothesis proposed that individuals from nuclear families score higher on



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authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, as well as oppositional defiant tendencies, while those from joint families score higher on authoritarian parenting and social adjustment.

The study found that authoritarian and permissive parenting is significantly higher in joint families while authoritative parenting is high in nuclear families. Researches suggests that in nuclear families, where parents often manage household responsibilities without extended family support, strict parenting styles may be more prevalent to maintain control (Dwairy et al., 2006, Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019).

The results of this study also indicate that social adjustment is more commonly observed in individuals from joint families and ODT is observed in nuclear families. This finding aligns with the well-established research suggesting that joint family systems offer a collaborative parenting environment where multiple caregivers contribute to the child's upbringing, reinforcing the principles of authoritative parenting and fosters better interpersonal skills (Kagitcibasi, 2007). Finally, the study examined the impact of socio-economic status (SES) on parenting styles, ODT, and social adjustment. The Sixth hypothesis confirm that individuals from low socioeconomic status (SES) would score higher on authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, as well as oppositional defiant tendencies (ODT), while individuals from middle and high SES would score higher on authoritative parenting and social adjustment (See Table 6).

The results of this study align with previous researches highlighting the impact of SES on parenting styles. Low SES parents often face economic hardship, limited access to educational resources, and increased stress, all of which contribute to authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991; Smetana, 2017; Conger et al., 2010; Pinquart, 2017).

Research further supports the notion that individuals from higher SES backgrounds are more likely to adopt authoritative parenting styles. Studies indicate that children raised in authoritative households exhibit lower levels of behavioral problems, including oppositional defiant tendencies, and show better emotional regulation and academic achievement (Lansford et al., 2018). The association between SES and oppositional defiant tendencies also finds support in psychological theories such as Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory which was proposed in 1979 and social learning theory of Bandura, given in 1977, which emphasizes the role of modeling and reinforcement in shaping behavior.

Conclusion

This study highlights the critical influence of parenting styles on the social adjustment and oppositional defiant tendencies (ODT) of young adults in the Hazara region of Pakistan. Authoritarian and permissive parenting were linked to higher defiance and poorer social outcomes, while authoritative parenting fostered lower ODT and better social adjustment.

Social adjustment moderated the effects of authoritarian and permissive parenting on ODT, with gender differences showing males had higher ODT due to stricter or indulgent parenting, while females benefited from authoritative parenting and better social adjustment.

Additionally, family type and socio-economic status (SES) played a role, with joint families promoting authoritative parenting and social adjustment, while nuclear families and lower SES were associated with more restrictive or



indulgent parenting and higher defiance.

Limitations and Suggestions

This study highlights the importance of parenting styles and social adjustment in understanding oppositional defiant tendencies (ODT) but has some limitations. The findings are specific to the Hazara region, so they might not apply to different cultural settings. The cross-sectional design only provides a snapshot in time, limiting insights into changes over the years, which future longitudinal studies can address. Self-reported data may include biases, so adding perspectives from parents or teachers would improve accuracy. Lastly, the focus on ODT and social adjustment overlooks other emotional and behavioral challenges like anxiety or aggression, which future research should explore.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study highlight the crucial role of parenting styles effect on young adults' behavior and well-being. Authoritative parenting, which includes warmth, clear rules, and good communication, leads to better outcomes, especially for families facing challenges like low income. Social skills and emotional regulation also help reduce defiance, so schools and community centers can offer programs to teach healthy relationships and coping skills.

The study highlights that boys and girls respond differently to parenting, so support programs should consider these differences. Family type, whether joint or nuclear, also impacts emotional growth, and family-based programs can strengthen bonds through better communication. Parenting programs should address a variety of challenges, like anxiety and aggression, to help young adults succeed in all areas of life.

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