

Parental Bonding and Social Adjustment: Evidence from the Mediation by Emotional Intelligence

Sarwat Sultan¹, Samira Rafiq², Sumreen Kanwal³

<p>Article History:</p> <p>Received: 08 Jul 2019</p> <p>Accepted: 17 Oct 2019</p>	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>The purpose of the present study was to investigate the mediating role of emotional intelligence between the relationship of parental bonding and social adjustment among students. Data were collected on three instruments; Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Petrides & Furnham, 2006), Social Adjustment Scale (Weissman & Bothwell, 1976), and Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979) from 376 university students selected through simple random sampling. Employing correlation, regression analyses, and sobel tests, the findings showed the significant relationship of parental bonding with social adjustment and emotional intelligence among students; the findings also indicated the significant association of emotional intelligence with social adjustment. Mediation analyses from sobel tests demonstrated that emotional intelligence played a mediating role between the relationships of parental bonding with social adjustment among students. These findings are useful for parents, teachers, and students in the ways that student's emotional intelligence can help the students to get socially adjusted in the environment.</p> <p>Key Words: Emotional intelligence, social adjustment, parental bonding</p>
--	--

1. Introduction

Family plays a significant role in a child's development and is considered very first school for learning of emotional stability and maturity. Parental attitudes and behaviors predict a child's emotional intelligence and in result these parenting practices determine the social life of a child. Desiandes and Bertrand (2005) described the parent involvement or bonding in terms of a parent's time and energy which they dedicated to their child during developmental or educational domain. The important component of parent-child relationship is the time that they spend with each other while performing any

-
1. Baha Uddin Zakariya University, Multan
 2. Baha Uddin Zakariya University, Multan
 3. Physio College of Rehabilitation Sciences, Multan

joint activity which has been found to be potent and crucial in varying dimensions of a child's development.

One of the most fundamental domains of development is to employ the ability and skills in regulating emotions whether positively or negatively in different contexts of life such as personal, social, educational, and even professional during the early adulthood (Manzeske & Stright, 2009). Emotion is the function that helps a person in maintaining a balance between demands and the conditions that may affect the fulfilment of these desires. It does mean that everyone is likely to have intellectual and emotional potential by birth that further develops and springs up due to experiences and maturity (Bai, 2011).

One of the concepts related to emotion is the emotional intelligence which enables generally to understand emotions according to situation and to regulate the emotions by employing strategies so that important tasks could be achieved (Falatooni, Maktabi, Mehrabizadeh, et al. 2012). Parenting or child rearing practices have generally been identified as absolutely fundamental factor in determining what a child will be after grownup as an adult. Parents have recognized the adolescence developmental stage as most complex and difficult time period because of highly complex process of emotional development wherein an adolescent perceives his/her emotions as more mature and strong (Biradar, 2006). Hence the adolescence period is difficult and a child has to experience several problems and has to handle difficulties during school and even in university, supportive social environment and parental bonding if available could help in coping with stressed life, and then make possible a successful social adjustment (Chandari, 2007).

A number of factors are involved in developing level and strength of emotional intelligence among children including but not limited to peer relations, family stressors and school demands and most importantly parenting styles, parenting attachments, and parenting bonding. These influential elements have the potency to make children's emotional growth strong or weak. Among the afore mentioned factors of a child emotional developmental, parental bonding is considered the most influential component for

emotional intelligence in young children (Richburg & Fletcher, 2002). In line with that Alegre (2012) also found that emotional intelligence was pertained to mothers' time spent with child in several combine activities. They concluded that the time and quality of interaction between mother and her child positively affect the emotional intelligence of child.

Emotions have significant value in our lives and therefore it is important to explore how emotions influence our personal and social adjustments. The construct of emotional intelligence explains individuals as rational and emotional. Emotional intelligence is the repelling drive underlying the factors that influence personal accomplishments and social networking or adjustment to others (Sasikumar & Parimala, 2012). Adjustment is a vital element in completing the goals successfully (Adeyemo, 2005); and thus, the core objectives of parenting and schooling are to grow the children through facilitating them with proper conditions so to avail the greater degree of social adjustment.

Social adjustment has been a focus of research for researchers to examine what factors contribute to social adjustment (Ybrandt, 2008). Research conducted on emotional intelligence has revealed its relevance with many other distinct features of life and also its significant contribution to the healthy interactions and adjustments in life. Frederickson, Petrides and Simmonds (2012) also added that emotional intelligence plays a role in social adjustment.

Social adjustment makes people to adjust with values, demands, and standards of a society for being accepted (Ray & Elliott, 2006). It is now rapidly recognized that parental involvement in relation to interest and help in learning at home has several benefits to a child's academic achievement and social adjustment (Hong & Ho, 2005). Findings of the studies confirmed the strong association between parental attachment and level of social skills and social competency; children demonstrating higher degrees of communication,

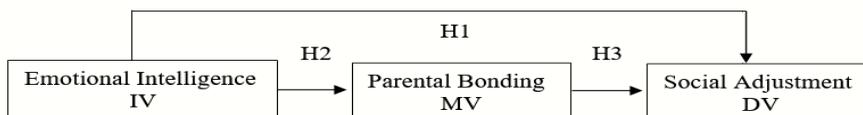
interaction, and trust with their parents are more likely to have better social skills, social competence and social adjustment(Fredricks & Eccles, 2002).

Bean, Lezin, Rolleri, & Taylor, (2004) proposed that parent-child interaction when is high, the emotional context becomes greater within the family in terms of warmth, affection, and trust. When parents and children have a positive connectedness, they may relish by working together in activities and may have healthy and open communication. They are more likely to provide support emotionally and do regard also foreach other. Moreover, they experience less hostility and resentment (Bean et al.,2004). In the context of maternal interaction, mother’s care given to child holds more positive outcomes, greater mother recognition, improved communication and fewer hard feelings.

In respect to overprotection from mother side, when children perceived their mothers over-protective, they experienced pathetic communication, more piteous social skills and more resentment while interacting with mothers. This is reasoned to the parent over protectiveness because when mother or father over protects their children, they are more likely to be perceived as limiting children’s autonomy. Thus children may become more resentful while interacting with parents if are not provided sufficient freedom to be autonomous which in turn results in poorer communication with parents (Bean et al., 2004).

Literature review presents the interconnection among parental bonding, emotional intelligence and social adjustment. This may have been noticed that much of the early work on these variables were intermix, and therefore the current study was planned to affirm the role of parental bonding in emotional intelligence and social adjustment; and to examine the mediating effect of emotional intelligence between the relationship of parental bonding with social adjustment.

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model



2. Method

- **Participants**

Participants of this study were the 376 students aged 19-25 years (mean=22.12, SD=2.98) studying in postgraduate programs at departments of social sciences; psychology, sociology, economics, and statistics from Baha Uddin Zakariya University Multan. Of this sample, 181 (49.45%) were male students and 185 (50.55%) were female students; 166 (45.35%) were from joint family and 200 (54.65%) were from nuclear family system; likewise, 209 (57.10%) were the residing in Urban area while 157 (42.80%) were resident of rural areas. All the students were recruited through simple random sampling technique.

- **Instruments**

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire. Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Petrides & Furnham,2006) was used to measure EQ. It is a 30-item scale responded on 7-point Likert options measuring four components of EQ; sociability, emotionality, well-being and self-control. Before computing the total score on scale following items were reversed coded; 2, 4, 7, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 22, 26, 25, and 28 items. Alpha reliability coefficient was found .81.

Social Adjustment Scale. Social adjustment was measured using 24 items of four subscales of Social Adjustment Scale (Weissman & Bothwell, 1976) which originally contain 45 items covering seven different areas of one' life. However, four subscales were used in the present study; extended family (6 items), social and leisure (9 items), housework (6 items) and family unit (3 items). Responses were obtained on 5-point Likert Scale. Low score showed the low level of social adjustment. Internal consistency was found as .84 alpha coefficient.

Parental Bonding Instrument. Parental bonding between child and parent was measured using a scale (Parker, Tupling, & Brown,1979) containing 50 items; 25 items for mother and 25 items for father measuring two aspects of bonding in terms of mother/father care (12 items each) and mother/father overprotection (13 items each) for mother and father separately. Responses are obtained on 4-point Likert scale. Alpha reliability coefficients were found .82, .79, .77, and .84 for maternal care, maternal overprotection, paternal care and paternal overprotection respectively.

- **Procedure**

From a list of total students registered in four departments of social sciences; psychology, sociology, economics, and statistics, a sample of 376 students was selected by employing simple random sampling technique. After obtaining informed consent from the head of the respective departments and recruited students, a booklet comprising three questionnaires along with a demographic information scale was administered to each participant individually. All the students were provided assurance about the confidentiality of their responses on questionnaires and demographic information. Results were then analyzed on SPSS-21 and online Sobel Test.

3. Results

Table 1

Correlations Coefficients among Emotional Intelligence, Social Adjustment and Parental Bonding (N=376)

No	Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5
1	EI	120.25	17.54	1				
2	SA	79.23	10.05	.134*	1			
3	MC	21.72	5.77	.258**	.298**	1		
4	MO	17.54	4.42	.080	-.219**	-.395**	1	
5	PC	22.45	5.30	.186*	.296**	.460**	-.232**	1

6	PO	17.23	4.72	-.019	-.301**	-.347**	.410**	-.408**
---	----	-------	------	-------	---------	---------	--------	---------

Note. EI: Emotional Intelligence, SA Social Adjustment, MC Maternal Care, MO Maternal Over protection, PC Parental Care, PO Paternal Over protection. * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.001$

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations coefficients of study variables. Results indicate that parental bonding; maternal care, maternal overprotection, and paternal care were found significantly correlated with emotional intelligence, but paternal overprotection was found unrelated with emotional intelligence. Four components of parental bonding were also found associated with social adjustment. Results also demonstrate the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and social adjustment.

Table 2

Standardized Coefficients and t-values from Path Analysis of Trans-contextual Model

Hypothesized Paths	Path Coefficients	t Statistics
MC → EI	.058	2.15*
MO → EI	.080	1.99*
PC → EI	.861	2.03*
PO → EI	.019	0.37
MC → SA	.298	6.22**
MO → SA	-.219	-4.47**
PC → SA	.296	6.18**
PO → SA	-.301	-6.29**
EI → SA	.134	2.69**

Note: EI; Emotional Intelligence, SA; Social Adjustment, MC; Maternal Care, MO; Maternal Over protection, PC; Parental Care, PO; Paternal Over protection, * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.001$

Table 2 presents the Regression analysis showing the effect of parental bonding on emotional intelligence and social adjustment. The findings show that components of parental bonding except paternal overprotection have significant impacts on emotional intelligence and social adjustment. Emotional intelligence has also been found significantly associated with social adjustment.

Table 3

Sobel Tests Showing Mediation effect of Emotional Intelligence for the relationship
between Parental Bonding and Social Adjustment

Paths	B _A	SE _A	B _B	SE _B	Sobel Tests	P
MC → EISA →	.058	.016	.298	.083	2.550	0.00**
MO → EISA →	.136	.025	-.219	.111	-1.854	0.03*
PC → EISA →	.086	.015	.296	.091	5.733	0.00**
PO → EISA →	.019	.014	-.301	.102	-1.233	0.10

Note: MC; Maternal Care, MO; Maternal Over protection, PC; Parental Care, OP; Paternal Over protection, EI; Emotional Intelligence, SA; Social Adjustment, **p>0.01, *p>0.05

Results from sobel tests (Table 3) demonstrate the significant mediation played by emotional intelligence and suggest that relationship of parental bonding; maternal care, maternal overprotection, and paternal care with social adjustment is mediated by emotional intelligence while the mediation is insignificant for paternal over protection and social intelligence.

4. Discussion

The goal of this research was to two folded; first to explore the contribution of parental bonding in emotional intelligence and social adjustment; and second to examine the mediating role played by emotional intelligence between parental bonding and social adjustment. The hypothesized model presented the paths among study variables and the relationship of four components of parental bonding; mother care, mother overprotection, father care and father overprotection with social adjustment was assumed. Findings indicated the significant impact of all elements of parental bonding on social adjustment.

These findings are in line with the study findings of Hong and Ho, (2005) who widely accepted that parental bonding and involvement in the context of support and common interests for learning at home have significant impact on children’s adjustment and achievement. It implies that when a child has strong interaction with mother and father

while participating in any joint activity and parent show greater intimacy, care, and even overprotection in terms of support and help during a task, then a child may well be adjusted with the environment where he or she is working with parent. This thing further extends the social skills and social competency for being socially adjusted (Deslandes & Bertrand).

Consistent with the previous literature (Alegre & Benson, 2007; Bennett et al. 2005; & Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998; Steele et al. 1999), parental bonding predicted the emotional intelligence in the present study as well. Findings from the path analyses postulated the significant effects of maternal care, maternal overprotection, and father care on emotional intelligence. However, the path between father overprotection and emotional intelligence was found insignificant (Table 3). Findings are supported by several other researchers' works such as according to Alegre and Benson (2010), it is evident that dimensions of parenting practices employed by parents during the process of child development and parenting styles adopted by parent are related to children's emotional intelligence. Particularly, the cares received from parent has demonstrated to be significantly linked to perceiving emotions, understanding emotions, and regulating emotions. There are other empirical studies also indicated that parental control or parental overprotection leads to emotional intelligence; perception, understanding, and regulation of emotions (Morris et al. 2007; Pears & Moses 2003; Perlman et al. 2008).

The assumption that emotional intelligence will predict social adjustment- was also found accepted in the present study. The finding showed that emotional intelligence has significant relationship with social adjustment which is in consistent with the findings of the study Adeyemo (2005) that revealed a strong association between emotional intelligence and social adjustment. It might be concluded that if a person is emotionally strong, he/she may survive better in the society. Emotionally intelligent person can comprehend his/her feelings accurately. So, using his emotions he can adjust in every type of environment. The statistical analysis showed that emotional intelligence orderly played a great contribution in predicting social adjustment (Patel, 2013).

The main significant finding of the present study is related to the mediating role of emotional intelligence played between parental bonding and social adjustment. Results showed the emotional intelligence as a significant mediating factor for the relationship of three components of parental bonding and social adjustment. The maternal care, maternal overprotection, and father care received the mediating effect from emotional intelligence while affecting the social adjustment.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study suggested that parental bonding in terms of mother and father cares and overprotection played significant roles in developing emotional intelligence and increasing social adjustment. Emotional intelligence was also found to be related with social adjustment. The hypothesized paths proved the mediation through emotional intelligence between parental bonding and social intelligence. To conclude, emotional intelligence as mediator is a significant factor for parental bonding while promoting social intelligence among adolescents.

6. Limitations and Suggestions

There are several limitations that must be taken into consideration while interpreting the findings of present study. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small for comparing the hypothesized paths in term of gender, age, and family systems. Secondly, the sample was constituted the students who were selected from only one university; therefore, results cannot be generalized to the adolescents of other areas. Thirdly, the language barrier was faced by students due to lack of language proficiency. It might have influenced the data collected on survey questionnaires that were presented in English language to participants.

Given the findings and limitations, future research should consider a sample from a larger population to ensure the study is a representative one. Besides, translation of language in the measurement should be made for the better understanding of the statements

on survey measures. Furthermore, different methods of measuring the study variables should be employed to investigate parental bonding and social adjustment to determine if the results still hold the same. Some other variables such as socio-economic status, family system, and size of family should also be considered for future studies in knowing their effects on parent-child bonding and relationship, and social adjustment.

- **Implications of the Study**

Findings have the greater implications for parents, teachers and students in the manner if students' emotional intelligence could be maintained and enhanced, they can be better adjusted in their social relations and social environment in the context of parental bonding. Strategies to enhance the emotional intelligence if are employed by parents and teachers can extend the better adjustment with social life and social competencies. Seminars and workshops should be conducted for the awareness of importance of parental bonding, social adjustment and emotional intelligence.

References

- Adeyemo, A. D. (2005). The buffering effect of emotional intelligence on the adjustment of secondary school students in transition. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 3, 79-90.
- Alegre, A. (2012). The relation between the time mothers and children spent together and the children's trait emotional intelligence. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 41(5), 493-508.
- Alegre, A., & Benson, M. J. (2010). Parental behaviors and adolescent adjustment: Mediation via adolescent trait emotional intelligence. *Individual Differences Research*, 8, 83–96.
- Bai, S. (2011). Study of Anxiety Proneness and Emotional Intelligence in Relation to Academic Achievement of Pre-university Students. *International Referred Research Journal*, II (22), ISSN-0975-3486.
- Bean, S., Lezin, N., Roller, L. A., & Taylor, J. (2004). Parent-child connectedness: Implications for research, interventions, and positive impacts on adolescent health, *ET Associates*. 1– 85.
- Bennett, D. S., Bendersky, M., & Lewis, M. (2005). Antecedents of emotion knowledge: Predictors of individual differences in young children. *Cognition & Emotion*, 19, 375–396.
- Biradar, S. (2005). Analysis of parenting style and emotional intelligence of the college students (Doctoral dissertation, UAS, Dharwad).
- Chandari, L. (2007). Adolescents' health and human rights concerns. *Health action*, 32-4.
- Deslandes, R., & Bertrand, R. (2005). Motivation of parent involvement in secondary-level schooling, *Journal of Educational Research*, 98(3), 164-175.
- Eisenberg, N., Cumberland, A., & Spinrad, T. L. (1998). Parental socialization of emotion. *Psychological Inquiry*, 9, 241–273.
- Falatooni, F., Maktabi, G., Mehrabizadeh, H. M., Birgani, S., & Morovati, Z. (2012). The Relationship between Alexithymia and Emotional Intelligence with Social Adjustment in female Secondary School Students. *Journal of Life Sciences Biomedical*. 2(5): 239-242.

- Fredricks, J., & Eccles, J. (2002). Children's competence and value beliefs from childhood through adolescence: Growth trajectories in two male-sex-typed domains, *Developmental Psychology*, 38, 519.
- Frederickson, N., Petrides, K. V., & Simmonds, E. (2012). Trait emotional intelligence as a predictor of socioemotional outcomes in early adolescence. *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences*, 52, 323-328.
- Hong, S., & Ho, H. (2005). Direct and indirect longitudinal effects of parental involvement on student achievement: Second order latent growth modeling across ethnic groups, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 97(1), 32-42.
- Manzeske, D., & Stright, A. D. (2009). Parenting styles and emotion regulation: The role of behavioral and psychological control during young adulthood. *Journal of Adult Development*, 16, 223–229. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-009-9068-9>.
- Morris, A. S., Silk, J. S., Steinberg, L., Myers, S. S., & Robinson, L. R. (2007). The role of the family context in the development of emotion regulation. *Social Development*, 16, 361–388.
- Parker, G., Tupling, H., & Brown, I. B. (1979). A parental bonding instruments. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 52, 1–10.
- Patel, H. T (2013). A Study of Emotional Intelligence and Adjustment of 9th Standard Students, *International Journal for Research in Education*, Vol 2, No. 6, pp 24-25.
- Pears, K. C., & Moses, L. J. (2003). Demographics, parenting, and theory of mind in preschool children. *Social Development*, 12, 1–19.
- Perlman, S. B., Camras, L. A., & Pelfrey, K. A. (2008). Physiology and functioning: Parents' vagal tone, emotion socialization, and children's emotion knowledge. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 100, 308–315.
- Petrides, K.V. & Furnham, A. (2006). The role of trait emotional intelligence in a gender specific model of organizational variables. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36, 552-569.
- Ray, C., & Elliott. (2006). Social adjustment and academic achievement: A predictive model for students with diverse academic and behavior competencies, *School Psychology Review*, 52(3), 493-501.

Richburg, M., & Fletcher, T. (2002). Emotional Intelligence: Directing a child's emotional education. *Child Study Journal*, 32, 31-38.

Sasikumar., N.& Parimala, F. M. (2012). Role of Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Management- Pre-Service Teachers Perspective. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 1(4).

Steele, H., Steele, M., Croft, C., & Fonagy, P. (1999). Infant-mother attachment at one year predicts children's understanding of mixed emotions at six years. *Social Development*, 8, 161-178.

Weissman, M. M., &Bothwell, S. (1976). Assessment of social adjustment by patient self-report. *Archives of general psychiatry*, 33(9), 1111-1115.

Ybrandt, H. (2008). The relation between self-concept and social functioning in adolescence, *Journal of Adolescence*, 31(1), 1-16.