

**Influence of Parental Rearing Practices on Prosocial Behavior: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence**Sumaira Kausar<sup>1</sup>, Aqsa Abdul Khaliq<sup>2\*</sup>, Minahil Javaid<sup>1</sup>**Abstract**

This study aimed to explore the relationship between prosocial behavior, emotional intelligence, and perceived parental parenting practices in adolescents. The study employed mediation analysis to examine the underlying processes and mechanisms connecting these variables. A sample of adolescents participated in the study and completed self-report measures assessing perceived parental rearing practices, emotional intelligence, and prosocial behavior. The findings revealed significant positive associations between perceived parental parenting methods, prosocial behavior, and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, emotional intelligence was identified as a mediator between specific parenting practices (mother involvement, mother autonomy support, and father rearing practices) and prosocial behavior. The study also highlighted the importance of parental involvement, autonomy support, and warmth in fostering emotional intelligence and promoting prosocial behavior among adolescents. These findings have implications for interventions and programs aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence and promoting prosocial behavior in adolescents.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Emotional Intelligence, Moderating Role, Perceived Parental Rearing Practices, Prosocial Behavior

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**Introduction**

Parenting plays a vital role in shaping an individual's development and behavior (Barnhart et al., 2013). The manner in which parents interact with their children, their disciplinary techniques, and the values they instill can significantly influence various aspects of their child's life (Sarwar, 2016). One crucial area of interest is the impact of perceived parental rearing practices on prosocial behavior. While numerous studies have explored the association between parenting practices and

prosocial behavior, the underlying mechanisms that explain this relationship remain relatively unexplored. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the link between perceived parental rearing practices and prosocial behavior.

Prosocial behavior, encompassing acts of kindness, empathy, sharing, and cooperation, plays a fundamental role in maintaining social harmony and fostering positive interpersonal relationships (Bornstein, 2012). Research has demonstrated that individuals who engage in prosocial behavior tend to experience enhanced well-being, positive social interactions, and improved psychological adjustment (Mousavi et al., 2013). A research by Padilla-Walker and Carlo (2014) states understanding the factors that contribute to the development of prosocial behavior is crucial for promoting positive social outcomes and facilitating the growth of individuals who are compassionate, empathetic, and cooperative. Furthermore, according to research conducted by Rai and

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Thakur (2017), parents who adopt democratic, authoritative, and responsive approaches play a crucial role in promoting the development of prosocial behaviors in children and adolescents by employing specific socialization techniques.

One key factor that has consistently emerged as influential in an individual's development is the parenting environment. Parenting practices encompass a wide range of behaviors, including warmth, responsiveness, discipline, and control, which are crucial in shaping a child's behavior, values, and social interactions (Moazami-Goodarzi et al., 2020). Previous research has explored the association between various parenting practices and prosocial behavior, highlighting the importance of parental warmth, positive reinforcement, and effective communication in promoting prosocial tendencies (Campos et al., 2018). A study involving preschoolers found a positive link between parents utilizing inductive reasoning and their children's prosocial behavior (Perez et al., 2020). However, the specific mechanisms through which these parenting practices influence prosocial behavior remain less understood.

In recent years, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has gained significant attention as a potential mediator in the relationship between parenting practices and prosocial behavior (Mayer et al., 2008). Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate one's own emotions and the emotions of others (Schutte & Malouff, 2011). The research by Lopes et al. (2011) declares Emotional Intelligence encompasses skills such as empathy, emotional awareness, and effective emotion regulation. Another study by Alegre et al. (2014) indicates that the acquisition of Emotional Intelligence is possible within a supportive home and educational setting, where parental interactions play a vital role in facilitating children's development of higher EI. Positive parenting behaviors, providing emotional guidance, and being responsive

are linked to elevated levels of EI in children (Ahmad et al., 2009). Given the close connection between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior, it is plausible to hypothesize that emotional intelligence may serve as a mediating factor in the link between perceived parental rearing practices and prosocial behavior.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap in the literature by investigating the influence of perceived parental rearing practices on prosocial behavior, with a specific focus on the mediating role of emotional intelligence. By examining the interplay between parenting practices, emotional intelligence, and prosocial behavior, we seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms that contribute to the development of prosocial tendencies in individuals. The findings of this study may have implications for parenting interventions and programs designed to cultivate prosocial behavior and emotional intelligence in children and adolescents.

### **Rationale**

The findings of this study have significant implications. They advance our understanding of how parenting practices influence prosocial behavior, providing insights into factors that shape altruistic tendencies. These findings inform the development of effective parenting interventions, enabling targeted support to cultivate prosocial behavior in children. Additionally, the study enhances social and emotional development by designing interventions that nurture empathy, kindness, and cooperation. This promotes positive social outcomes, healthier relationships, and addresses social challenges like bullying and aggression.

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## **Method**

### **Research Design & Sampling**

The research design employed in this study is correlational. Convenient sampling was used to recruit participants, consisting of adolescents from Hasilpur city. G\*power analysis was conducted to determine the sample size, resulting in a total of 214 students from different universities. The participants' age range was 16 to 19 years, and both males and females were included.

### **Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria**

Inclusion criteria involved students of FA, FSc, and ICS who were regular students of public and private colleges. Exclusion criteria included participants from broken families or with divorced parents, diagnosed mental disorders, or any psychological suffering. Participants requiring hospitalization or with special needs or disabilities were also excluded.

## **Measures**

### **Perceptions of Parents Scales (POPS)**

The POPS (perception of parents Scale) is a comprehensive questionnaire consisting of 42 items designed to assess children's perceptions of their parents' levels of autonomy support, parental warmth, and involvement with reliability coefficient 0.91. The scale yields six subscale scores: Mother Autonomy Support, Mother Involvement, Mother Warmth, Father Autonomy Support, Father Involvement,

and Father Warmth. Prior to calculating the subscale scores, certain item scores were reversed as necessary (Grolnick et al., 1991).

### **Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA)**

The PSA (Prosocialness Scale) is a concise questionnaire comprising 16 items designed to assess an individual's level of prosocial behavior with reliability coefficient 0.94. Participants rated their agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicate greater engagement in prosocial behavior (Caprara et al., 2005).

### **Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-ASF)**

The TEIQue-ASF (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire) is a comprehensive tool consisting of 30 items specifically developed to assess global trait emotional intelligence with reliability coefficient 0.90. Participants indicated their level of agreement with each item using a seven-point Likert scale, where higher scores reflect greater levels of trait emotional intelligence. It is important to note that 15 of the items are reverse-coded to ensure comprehensive measurement (Petrides, 2009).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study followed ethical guidelines, obtaining permission from instrument authors, informed consent from participants, and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

### **Results**

Data analysis involved using SPSS software for descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, ANOVA, and t-test analysis to examine the relationships between variables.

**Table 1**

*Mediation Analysis with Mother Involvement, Emotional Intelligence, and Prosocial Behavior (N=214)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>95% CI</b>
Emotional Intelligence - > Prosocial Behavior	0.40	6.82	0.00	(0.28, 0.51)
Mother Involvement - > to Emotional Intelligence	0.34	5.49	0.00	(0.22, 0.46)
Mother Involvement - > Prosocial Behavior	0.28	4.50	0.00	(0.16, 0.40)

$p < .01$

According to the findings presented in Table 1, emotional intelligence emerged as a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $t = 6.82$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior. Additionally, mother involvement was also identified as a significant positive predictor

( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $t = 5.49$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of emotional intelligence. Similarly, mother involvement was found to be a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $t = 4.50$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior.

**Table 2**

*Mediation Analysis with Mother Autonomy Support, Emotional Intelligence, and Prosocial Behavior (N=214)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>95% CI</b>
Emotional Intelligence - > Prosocial Behavior	0.33	5.25	0.00	(0.21, 0.45)
Mother Autonomy Support - > to Emotional Intelligence	0.52	10.19	0.00	(0.41, 0.61)
Mother Autonomy Support - > Prosocial Behavior	0.31	4.90	0.00	(0.18, 0.43)

*Note.*  $p < .01$

According to the findings shown in Table 2, emotional intelligence was found to be a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.33$ ,  $t = 5.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior. Additionally, mother autonomy support emerged as a significant positive predictor

( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $t = 10.19$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of emotional intelligence. Similarly, mother autonomy support was identified as a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $t = 4.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior.

**Table 3**

*Mediation Analysis with Mother Warmth, Emotional Intelligence, and Prosocial Behavior (N=214)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>95% CI</b>
Emotional intelligence -> Prosocial Behavior	0.25	4.14	0.00	(0.23, 0.37)
Mother Warmth -> Emotional intelligence	0.53	10.97	0.00	(0.43, 0.62)
Mother Warmth -> Prosocial Behavior	0.46	7.53	0.00	(0.33, 0.57)

*Note.*  $p < .01$

According to the results displayed in Table 3, emotional intelligence exhibited a significant positive predictive effect ( $\beta = 0.25, t = 4.14, p < .01$ ) on prosocial behavior. Moreover, mother warmth was identified as a significant positive predictor

( $\beta = 0.53, t = 10.97, p < .01$ ) of emotional intelligence. Similarly, mother warmth was also determined to be a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.46, t = 7.53, p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior.

**Table 4**

*Mediation Analysis with Mother Rearing Practices, Emotional Intelligence, and Prosocial Behavior (N=214)*

Variables	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	95% CI
Emotional intelligence -> Prosocial Behavior	0.25	4.14	0.00	(0.11, 0.36)
Mother Rearing Practice -> Emotional intelligence	0.53	10.97	0.00	(0.47, 0.65)
Mother Rearing Practice -> Prosocial Behavior	0.46	7.53	0.00	(0.35, 0.57)

Note.  $p < .01$

According to the findings displayed in Table 4, emotional intelligence was identified as a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.23, t = 3.67, p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior. Furthermore, mother rearing practices were also determined to be a

significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.56, t = 12.00, p < .01$ ) of emotional intelligence. Similarly, mother rearing practices were found to be a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.46, t = 8.08, p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior.

**Table 5**

*Mediation Analysis with Mothers Rearing Practices and Emotional Intelligence and Prosocial Behavior (N=214)*

Variables	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	95% CI
Mother Rearing Practice -> Emotional intelligence -> Prosocial Behavior	0.13	3.44	0.00	(0.06,0.21)

Note.  $p < .01$

The results presented in Table 5 revealed the indirect impact of mother rearing practices on prosocial behavior, mediated by emotional intelligence. The findings indicated that emotional intelligence ( $\beta =$

0.13,  $t = 3.44, p < .01$ ) played a significant mediating role in the relationship between mother rearing practices and prosocial behavior.

**Table 6**

*Mediation Analysis with Father Rearing Practices, Emotional Intelligence, and Prosocial Behavior (N=214)*

Variables	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	95% CI
Emotional intelligence -> Prosocial Behavior	0.30	4.43	0.00	(0.16, 0.42)
Father Rearing Practice-> Emotional intelligence	0.53	12.15	0.00	(0.44, 0.61)
Father Rearing Practice-> Prosocial Behavior	0.37	5.73	0.00	(0.25, 0.50)

Note.  $p < .01$

Based on the results reported in Table 6, emotional intelligence was revealed to be a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.30$ ,  $t = 4.43$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior. Moreover, father rearing practices emerged as a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.53$ ,

$t = 12.15$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of emotional intelligence. Similarly, father rearing practices were identified as a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.37$ ,  $t = 5.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of prosocial behavior.

**Table 7**

*Mediation Analysis with Father Rearing Practices, Emotional Intelligence (mediator), and Prosocial Behavior (N=214)*

Variables	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	SE	95% CI
Mother Rearing Practice -> Emotional intelligence -> Prosocial Behavior	-0.16	4.14	0.00	0.03	(0.08,0.24)

Note.  $p < .01$

The Table 7 illustrate the indirect impact of father rearing practices on prosocial behavior, mediated by emotional intelligence. The findings suggest that emotional intelligence ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $t = 4.14$ ,  $p < .01$ ) plays a significant mediating role between father rearing practices and prosocial behavior. Table indicates that supportive father rearing practices significantly enhance emotional intelligence among adolescents. Emotional intelligence likely mediates the relationship

between rearing practices and prosocial behavior, though the specific details for the latter path need to be reported to fully confirm this mediation effect. The significant positive association between father rearing practices and emotional intelligence underscores the importance of a supportive parenting approach in fostering emotional and social competencies in adolescents.

## Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the association between prosocial behavior, emotional intelligence, and perceived parental rearing practices in adolescents. Mediation analysis was employed to understand the underlying processes linking these variables and explored whether emotional intelligence acted as an intermediate factor in the relationship between parenting practices and prosocial behavior (Khalid & Aslam, 2012; Schutte & Malouff, 2011; Sun et al., 2012). Partial mediation analysis assessed the enduring impact of emotional intelligence on prosocial behavior beyond the immediate effects of parenting practices (Perez et al., 2020).

The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between perceived parental

rearing practices, prosocial behavior, and emotional intelligence. Specifically, parental involvement, autonomy support, and warmth were positively correlated with prosocial behavior and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence mediated the relationship between mother involvement, mother autonomy support, and prosocial behavior, as well as between father rearing practices and prosocial behavior. These findings align with previous research demonstrating positive associations between prosocial behavior and parenting practices such as warmth, supervision, and emotional support (Padilla-Walker et al., 2017; Saleem et al., 2021). The study's conclusion that emotional intelligence is a significant positive predictor of prosocial behavior is

consistent with other research studies (Choi & Kim, 2017; De Corte et al., 2019).

The study also examined the direct relationship between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior among adolescents. The results indicated that emotional intelligence significantly predicted prosocial behavior ( $\beta = 0.40, t = 6.82, p < .01$ ), showing that higher levels of emotional intelligence were associated with a greater likelihood of engaging in prosocial behaviors. These findings align with previous research conducted by Khalid and Aslam (2012) which found positive associations between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior among adolescents. De Corte et al. (2019) emphasized that emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to understand and manage one's emotions and empathize with others, which contributes to prosocial behaviors such as helping, sharing, and cooperating.

The study confirmed that emotional intelligence played a mediating role between mother involvement, autonomy support, and prosocial behavior. Father rearing practices directly predicted emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior, while mother rearing practices indirectly affected prosocial behavior through emotional intelligence. These findings are consistent with Choi and Kim (2017), who found positive associations between parental warmth, acceptance, involvement, emotional understanding, empathy (components of emotional intelligence), and prosocial behavior. Similarly, Sarwar (2016) found that adolescents perceiving higher levels of autonomy support from their parents exhibited higher emotional understanding and empathy, which were related to increased prosocial behavior. These results contribute to the existing literature, emphasizing the significance of parental involvement, support, and autonomy in fostering emotional intelligence and promoting prosocial behavior among adolescents.

The implications of these findings extend beyond the immediate study, suggesting practical applications in educational and developmental programs. Integrating emotional intelligence training into school curricula and parenting workshops could foster better emotional regulation and empathy in adolescents, leading to increased prosocial behavior. Moreover, these results highlight the importance of supportive and involved parenting practices in the development of emotional intelligence, suggesting that parents should be encouraged to engage in positive rearing behaviors. Future research should further explore these relationships in diverse cultural settings and examine long-term outcomes of enhanced emotional intelligence on adolescent development and societal well-being.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the relationship between prosocial behavior, emotional intelligence, and perceived parental parenting practices in adolescents. Mediation analysis was used to understand the underlying mechanisms connecting these variables, exploring emotional intelligence as a mediator. The study found a significant positive association between perceived parental practices, prosocial behavior, and emotional intelligence. Parental involvement, autonomy support, and warmth were positively correlated with prosocial behavior and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence acted as a mediator between mother involvement, autonomy support, and prosocial behavior, as well as between father rearing practices and prosocial behavior. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of parenting practices and emotional intelligence in promoting prosocial behavior among adolescents.

### **Limitations & Recommendations**

First of all, the use of self-reported measures may have introduced social desirability bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of participants' responses. Then, the cross-sectional design employed in the

study limits the ability to establish causal relationships between variables, as it does not capture changes over time. Additionally, the focus on adolescents restricts the generalizability of the findings to other age groups, warranting caution when applying the results to different populations. Moreover, the specific sample used may not be fully representative of the broader population, further limiting the generalizability of the findings. The study also lacks a comprehensive exploration of factors such as cultural background, socioeconomic status, and family dynamics, which could potentially influence the observed relationships. Finally, the study did not consider other potential mediators or moderators of the relationship, leaving room for future research to explore additional factors that may contribute to the associations between emotional intelligence, parenting practices, and prosocial behavior.

### Implications

The study has several practical implications that can guide interventions and strategies aimed at promoting prosocial behavior among adolescents. Firstly, the findings highlight the importance of parental involvement, autonomy support, and warmth in fostering emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior. Parents can enhance their child's emotional intelligence by actively engaging in their lives, providing support and guidance, and creating a warm and nurturing environment. Additionally, professionals working with adolescents, such as educators and counselors, can incorporate emotional intelligence training programs into their interventions to promote prosocial behavior. These programs can focus on developing skills related to emotional understanding, empathy, and emotion regulation, which are crucial components of emotional intelligence. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the need to consider the role of both mothers and fathers in promoting prosocial behavior. Parenting programs can provide

guidance to parents on effective rearing practices and encourage shared responsibilities in parenting. Overall, the study underscores the significance of parental involvement and emotional intelligence in shaping adolescents' prosocial behavior and highlights potential avenues for intervention and support.

### Contribution of Authors

Sumaira Kausar: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft

Aqsa Abdul Khaliq: Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing, Supervision

Minahil Javaid: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by the authors.

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The authors declared no source of funding.

### Data Availability Statement

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [A.A.] upon the reasonable request.

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