



Investigating the Effect of Parenting Type on Self-esteem and Perfectionism with the Mediating Role of Character Strengths on Adolescents with Anxiety Disorders

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Abstract

Background: Anxiety disorders are prevalent mental disorders that typically emerge during the early stages of one's life, with over 50% of occurrences happening before the age of 18. This study aimed to examine how different parenting styles impact the self-esteem and perfectionistic tendencies of adolescents dealing with anxiety disorders, while also considering the mediating influence of character strengths.

Methods: This study is a combination of descriptive-correlational research and cross-sectional research methods, with the utilization of structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population for this study consisted of all teenagers (both boys and girls) in Tehran who were diagnosed with anxiety disorders during the period from July to October 2023. The statistical sample for this study consisted of 122 teenagers with anxiety disorders who were chosen through purposive sampling. The research instruments utilized were the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (SEI), the Positive and Negative Perfectionism scale (PANPS), Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ), and the Values In Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS). The research data was analyzed using SPSS version 27 software, while the path between variables was analyzed using SmartPLS version 4 software. The significant level was set at 0.05.

Results: Findings indicate that there was no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting and negative perfectionism, positive perfectionism, and self-esteem when considering the mediating role of character strengths (P -value >0.05). On the other hand, there was a positive and significant relationship between authoritative parenting and positive perfectionism, as well as self-esteem, when considering the mediating role of character strengths (P -value <0.001).

Conclusions: The findings of the current investigation indicate that each of the three parenting styles contributes to the development of negative perfectionism. Additionally, the factor of personality strengths promotes self-confidence and positive perfectionism, while reducing negative perfectionism in teenagers. The outcomes of this study also emphasize the significant role of character strength as a mediating variable.

Keywords: Parenting, Self-esteem, Perfectionism, Personality strengths, Anxiety disorders.

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Introduction

Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent psychiatric illnesses worldwide, characterized by excessive worry or avoidance of anxiety-inducing situations, resulting in impaired functioning. The lifetime prevalence of anxiety disorders is approximately 31%¹. Epidemiological studies have revealed that 13% of individuals experience an anxiety disorder each year, while 21% experience one at some point in their lives. According to², these disorders greatly affect a person's mood, irritability, academic achievements, and overall well-being. Research has indicated that reducing perfectionism and enhancing self-esteem can be effective in alleviating anxiety symptoms among teenagers³. Experiencing anxiety and focusing on negative thoughts can contribute to increased self-criticism and perpetuate a cycle of low self-esteem. Self-esteem, which refers to an individual's overall self-evaluation, develops slowly as a result of various life experiences and is generally seen as a stable characteristic⁴. In essence, self-esteem represents one's positive or negative view of oneself and reflects one's sense of worth. Numerous studies have indicated a negative association between self-esteem and social anxiety⁵.

Additionally, research has shown that individuals with lower levels of self-esteem tend to report higher levels of depression and anxiety⁶. Furthermore, individuals with anxiety disorders and depression tend to exhibit elevated levels of perfectionism, which has been significantly correlated to anxiety and depression in adolescents. Perfectionism is a complex concept that encompasses the pursuit of high standards and critical self-evaluation when faced with failure. Achieving these standards⁷ involves three main dimensions: perfectionistic concerns, perfectionistic efforts, and other-oriented perfectionism. Perfectionistic concerns involve intense self-criticism, while perfectionistic efforts refer to the tendency to set high, often unrealistic, personal standards and demand perfection from oneself. Other-oriented perfectionism entails demanding perfection from others and being highly critical of them⁸.

Numerous research findings have demonstrated a correlation between perfectionistic concerns and symptoms of anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and depression⁹. Additionally, a study has highlighted that self-critical perfectionism serves as a met diagnostic risk factor, leading students who possess this trait to experience more severe anxiety trajectories and depressive symptoms during the transitional period¹⁰. Anxiety causal models have identified vulnerability factors, encompassing genetic and environmental influences, notably parenting styles. The prevailing consensus among numerous researchers posits a direct correlation between the parent-child relationship and the child's anxiety. Parenting styles encompass diverse attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors displayed by parents during routine interactions with their children, encompassing authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive approaches¹¹.

The authoritarian style entails unequivocal parental authority and the utilization of punitive disciplinary measures, such as corporal punishment, raised voices, and stringent imposition of rules. In contrast, the authoritative style entails empathy and closeness, incorporating structured guidance and embracing the child's interests. Conversely, the permissive style involves more lenient guidance and limited tolerance for the child neglecting misbehavior¹².

According to a study, it has been asserted that there is a substantial correlation between the style of helicopter parenting and various psychological conditions such as social anxiety disorder, significant school avoidance, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and separation anxiety¹³. In addition, a study conducted by Yaffe et al. (2023) revealed that the level of mothers' concern, both positive and negative, can contribute to the development of anxiety disorders in children. This reflects the distinction between overprotective and authoritative parenting styles during early childhood¹⁴. Furthermore, another research demonstrated that anxiety disorders in children are inversely associated with parental negligence by the father and authoritative parenting by the mother, as well as the child's socialization. The combined influence of parenting styles and

the child's temperament accounts for 69% of the variations in anxiety disorders among children¹¹.

Childhood and adolescence are commonly affected by anxiety disorders. However, character strengths act as a shield and contribute to personal growth and development. Unlike anxiety and fear which can lead to feelings of isolation, character strengths enhance feelings of competence and self-confidence¹⁵. These strengths are positive moral traits that manifest in thoughts, emotions, and actions¹⁶. Character strengths are characterized by 24 positive attributes related to thinking, feeling, and actions that are advantageous for both oneself and others. These strengths, which include qualities like taste, hope, love, and kindness, can be grouped into six main categories of virtues: wisdom, humanity, courage, excellence, moderation, and justice¹⁷. Research has shown a strong correlation between self-esteem, character strengths, and social inclusion¹⁸. Additionally, personality strengths serve as a protective factor against the detrimental effects of cognitive vulnerabilities, such as perfectionism, self-criticism, and excessive need for approval, which can lead to psychological disorders¹⁶.

Given that around 50% of lifetime cases of anxiety disorders emerge during adolescence², and considering that self-esteem contributes to approximately 15% of the variation in anxiety symptoms in teenagers while perfectionism contributes to about 5.3%⁴, it is crucial to address anxiety disorders and their symptoms in this age group. Despite its significance, no previous research has directly explored the influence of parenting style on self-esteem and perfectionism, mediated by character strengths, in adolescents with anxiety disorders. This creates a research gap that the present study aims to fill. This study represents one of the first attempts to investigate the impact of parenting style on self-esteem and perfectionism, with character strengths serving as a mediating factor, in adolescents with anxiety disorders. The primary objective is to determine how parenting style and character strengths shape the level of perfectionism and self-esteem in this specific population. To illustrate the research framework, the researcher depicted a conceptual model in Figure 1.

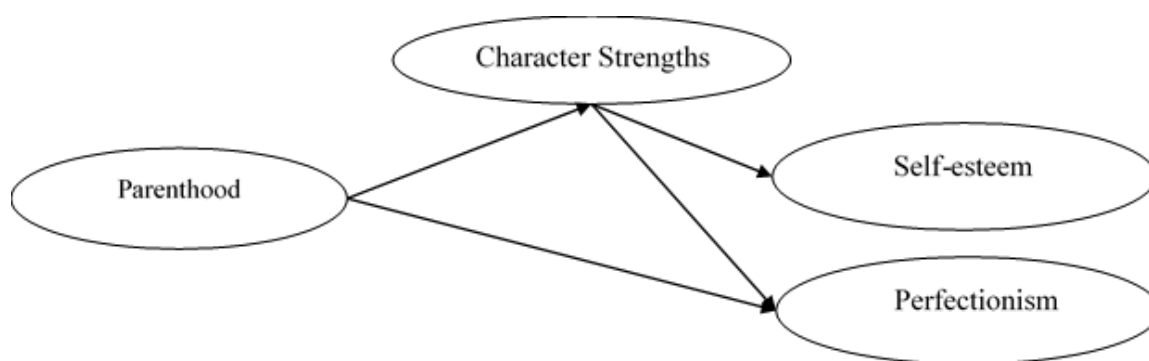


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the research

Materials and Methods

This study utilized a combination of descriptive-correlational and cross-sectional research methods, employing structural equation modeling (SEM). The target population consisted of all adolescent girls and boys in Tehran who had a documented history of anxiety disorders between July and October 2023. The confirmation of anxiety disorders was carried out by specialized psychologists in research clinics using the DSM-5 criteria. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a sample size of 122 teenagers with a history of anxiety disorders. The adequacy of the sample size was determined based on Cohen's formula in 2013¹⁹, considering the number of observed and latent variables in the model, the expected effect size, and the desired probability and statistical power levels. The sample size calculation was as follows:

Anticipated effect size: 0.3

Desired statistical power level: 0.8

Number of latent variables: 4

Number of observed variables: 152

Probability level: 0.01

Based on the above values, the researcher determined that 137 individuals would be involved in the study. Due to the possibility of a high reduction in the research sample group, the researcher considered the number of 200 people to avoid the attrition of the sample size. To qualify for participation, individuals had to have a documented history of anxiety disorders, provide informed consent if they were teenagers, obtain parental consent if they were minors, and demonstrate sufficient literacy and comprehension skills to answer the survey questions. The study excluded individuals who were older than 19 years, had physical or mental conditions that hindered participation, did not answer more than ten questionnaire items, or were taking medication for anxiety or stress disorders. The research methodology began with securing necessary permissions from the researcher's university, followed by referral to 5 psychology and counseling clinics in Tehran with assistance from faculty members. The identity of these clinics was kept private by not disclosing their names.

These clinics were chosen due to their ease of coordination and implementation of research, as well as the opportunity for partnership in reaching adolescents with anxiety disorders. The researcher then visited the clinics and worked with the management department to organize the research. Following this, a message was sent on behalf of the psychological clinics to families with a child who had a history of anxiety disorders and received counseling and treatment at the clinics, inviting them to participate in the study. Subsequently, detailed information about the research, including its objectives, permits, and ethical guidelines, was shared with them through social media platforms. The information included research objectives, permits, and provisions related to adherence to ethical principles. "Participants were told that the survey forms

did not include any personal details, and adolescents could decide to not participate in the study if they wished." The research and questionnaire completion online took three months to finish due to a lack of parental cooperation. Out of the 200 questionnaires filled, 122 were utilized, with 78 excluded due to incomplete or intentionally erroneous responses. Participants self-reported variables such as parenting style, self-esteem, perfectionism, and character traits. The study followed all ethical guidelines and participants were free to withdraw at any point.

Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (SEI): In 1965, Coopersmith developed a self-report questionnaire to assess students' levels of self-confidence in social and academic environments²⁰. This questionnaire consists of 58 items, with eight questions serving as lie detectors that require yes or no answers. It measures four components: general self-esteem, social self-esteem, family self-esteem, and academic self-esteem. The total score on this scale reflects a person's self-esteem level, with a higher score suggesting greater self-esteem. Scores on the scale range from 0 to 50, with a score of 26 or lower representing weak self-esteem, a score of 27-43 indicating moderate self-esteem, and a score of 44 or higher indicating strong self-esteem. Coopersmith (1967) reported the scale's reliability using the retest method, with coefficients of 0.88 for a sample of 50 children at a five-week interval and 0.70 for a sample of 56 12-year-old children at a three-year interval²¹. In Iran, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was determined to be 0.88. The researcher in this study found the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale to be 0.812.

Positive and negative perfectionism (PANPS): In 1995, Terry Short and his colleagues developed a questionnaire to assess individuals' levels of perfectionism in two categories: positive and negative perfectionism²². The questionnaire consists of 40 items, with 20 items focusing on positive perfectionism and 20 on negative perfectionism. Respondents choose from five options for each item to indicate the extent of their perfectionism. Responses are rated on a Likert scale ranging from "not at all" to "severe", with scores ranging from 1 to 5. The total score, calculated by adding up the scores for each item, will fall between 20 and 100. A higher score indicates higher levels of both positive and negative perfectionism. In a study conducted in Iran, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire was found to be 0.90 for positive perfectionism and 0.87 for negative perfectionism²³. In the current study, the researcher obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.781 for positive perfectionism and 0.783 for negative perfectionism.

Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ): "Baumrind (1973) created a questionnaire to assess parenting styles²⁴. This research consists of 30 items where respondents choose one of five options (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) for each item. The questionnaire includes three dimensions: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles, each with ten items. Adolescents rated their parents on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Scores for each dimension range from 10 to 50, with higher scores indicating a

stronger parenting style. In Iran, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire scale was 0.73²⁵. The researcher found Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.807 for authoritative parenting, 0.751 for authoritarian parenting, and 0.749 for permissive parenting in this study.

Values In Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS): The questionnaire was developed in 2004 by Ruch, Proyer, Park, and Seligman to assess the personality strengths related to the six virtues of wisdom, humanity, courage, justice, piety, and excellence²⁶. It consists of 240 statements, with 10 statements measuring each virtue. Participants rate their agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale is frequently shortened to a 24-item version for research purposes as it has a large number of items. The total score on the scale can range from 24 to 120. Peterson and Seligman (2004) confirmed the validity and reliability of the tool with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70. In a study conducted in Iran, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale was found to be 0.80²⁷. In the current study, the researcher determined the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale to be 0.774.

The researchers used SPSS version 27 to analyze descriptive statistics and SmartPLS version 4 to explore the relationships among variables. The normality of the distribution of the research variables was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results indicated that the research variables did not follow a normal distribution, leading to the decision to use SmartPLS. The significant level was set at 0.05.

Results

Initially, the researcher analyzed the descriptive statistics related to the research variables. The teenagers were categorized into three different age brackets: 15 to 16 years old (46.7%), 16 to 17 years old (29.5%), and 18 to 19 years old (23.8%). Similarly, the participants were segregated based on gender into two groups - boys (59.0%) and girls (41.0%).

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of the research variables.

Table 3 shows the correlation between research variables based on Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Based on the findings presented in Table 3, it was evident that the authoritative parenting style showed a strong positive correlation with self-esteem and positive perfectionism measures while displaying a negative correlation with negative perfectionism (P-value<0.001). Conversely, both authoritarian parenting and permissive parenting styles exhibited a negative and significant relationship with Self-esteem and positive but showed a positive association with negative perfectionism (P-value<0.001). Following the analysis, the researcher evaluated the path coefficients and significance levels of the variables in Table 4 to further understand the relationships among the research variables.

Based on the findings presented in Table 4 and Figure 2, it was observed that authoritarian parenting had a significant and positive impact on negative perfectionism ($\beta=0.537$, P-value<0.001). On the other hand, authoritarian parenting had a significant but negative effect on self-esteem ($\beta=-0.313$, P-

value<0.001). There was no significant impact of authoritarian parenting on positive perfectionism or character strengths (P-value>0.05). The results indicated that authoritative parenting had a significant and positive influence on Negative perfectionism, self-esteem, and character strengths (P-value<0.05). However, there was no significant impact on positive perfectionism (P-value>0.05). Conversely, permissive parenting had a significant and positive effect on negative perfectionism ($\beta=0.178$, P-value=0.003), but a negative impact on character strengths and positive perfectionism (P-value<0.05). This component did not have a significant effect on self-esteem ($\beta=-0.095$, P-value=0.165). Character strengths were found to have a significant effect on self-esteem, negative perfectionism, and positive perfectionism (P-value<0.05). The researcher then employed the bootstrap method to examine the indirect effects of parenting styles, setting the value to 5000 for this study.

Based on the results obtained from the bootstrap analysis presented in Table 5, the relationship between authoritarian parenting and negative perfectionism, positive perfectionism, and self-esteem, with character strengths as a mediating variable, was not found to be significant (P-value>0.05). Similarly, the connection between authoritative parenting and positive perfectionism, as well as self-esteem, with character strengths as a mediator, was positively and significantly correlated (P-value<0.001). However, the connection between authoritative parenting and negative perfectionism, with character strengths as a mediator, was negatively and significantly associated (P-value<0.001). Meanwhile, the relationship between permissive parenting and positive perfectionism, as well as self-esteem, with character strengths as a mediating variable, did not show significance (P-value>0.05), while the connection between permissive parenting and negative perfectionism, with character strengths as a mediator, was positive and significant (P-value<0.001). The researcher utilized the Sobel test to determine the significance of the mediating variable in the study. The calculations for this examination were determined using the designated equation.

$$Z - value = \frac{a * b}{\sqrt{(b^2 * s_a^2) + (a^2 * s_b^2) + (s_a^2 * s_b^2)}}$$

In the Sobel test, if the Z value exceeds 1.96, it can be confirmed that the mediating effect of a variable is significant at the 95% confidence level. The Z value for the character strengths variable acting as a mediator between authoritative parenting and positive perfectionism variables was 4.7442. Based on the results from the Sobel test, it can be inferred that the mediating variable in the study is statistically significant. The Z value for character strengths as a mediator between authoritative parenting and negative perfectionism was -3.5306. As per the Sobel test results, the mediating variable in the study is deemed significant. The Z value for the character strengths variable as a mediator between authoritative parenting and self-esteem variables was 5.3550. The Sobel test results indicate that the mediating variable in the research holds significance. The Z value for character strengths as a mediator between permissive parenting and negative perfectionism was 1.78156.

The results of the Sobel test indicate that the mediator variable in the study did not show significance.

Table 1. Description of the demographic variables

Variables	Groups	Frequency	Percent	Sample size	Median
Gender	Boy	72	%59.0	122	1
	Girl	50	%41.0		
Age	15 to 16	57	%46.7	122	2
	16 to 17	36	%29.5		
	18 to 19	29	%23.8		

Table 2. The mean and standard deviation of the research variables

Variables	Mean±SD	Max	Min	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-esteem	41.5902±4.81	49	31	122	-0.082	-0.96
Positive perfectionism	57.9508±8.31	71	40	122	-0.559	-0.765
Negative perfectionism	59.5246±9.90	71	40	122	-0.451	-1.101
Character strengths	69.1803±7.90	81	47	122	-0.681	-0.457
Authoritative parenting	31.3361±6.32	43	20	122	0.078	-1.227
Authoritarian parenting	32.9098±7.32	43	20	122	-0.044	-1.564
Permissive parenting	33.8033±7.83	43	20	122	-0.23	-1.692

Table 3. Correlation between variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	P-value
Self-esteem	-							<0.001
Positive perfectionism	0.603	-						<0.001
Negative perfectionism	-0.735	-0.581	-					<0.001
Character strengths	0.775	0.653	-0.600	-				<0.001
Authoritative parenting	0.638	0.438	-0.364	0.603	-			<0.001
Authoritarian parenting	-0.674	-0.435	0.759	-0.458	-0.428	-		<0.001
Permissive parenting	-0.544	-0.434	0.628	-0.399	-0.302	0.644	-	<0.001

Table 4. Standard research coefficients in general

Path to variables	Path coefficient	STDEV	P-value	T-value	Result
Authoritarian parenting -> Character strengths	-0.146	0.092	0.113	1.585	rejection
Authoritarian parenting -> Negative perfectionism	0.537	0.068	<0.001	7.880	confirmation
Authoritarian parenting -> Positive perfectionism	-0.067	0.070	0.341	0.953	rejection
Authoritarian parenting -> Self-esteem	-0.313	0.071	<0.001	4.434	confirmation
Authoritative parenting -> Character strengths	0.494	0.067	<0.001	7.334	confirmation
Authoritative parenting -> Negative perfectionism	0.143	0.072	0.048	1.980	confirmation
Authoritative parenting -> Positive perfectionism	0.037	0.067	0.576	0.559	rejection
Authoritative parenting -> Self-esteem	0.184	0.055	0.001	3.322	confirmation
Permissive parenting -> Character strengths	-0.155	0.078	0.047	1.988	confirmation
Permissive parenting -> Negative perfectionism	0.178	0.060	0.003	2.942	confirmation
Permissive parenting -> Positive perfectionism	-0.168	0.060	0.005	2.810	confirmation
Permissive parenting -> Self-esteem	-0.095	0.068	0.165	1.388	rejection
Character strengths -> Negative perfectionism	-0.370	0.092	<0.001	4.023	confirmation
Character strengths -> Positive perfectionism	0.533	0.086	<0.001	6.196	confirmation
Character strengths -> Self-esteem	0.483	0.062	<0.001	7.747	confirmation

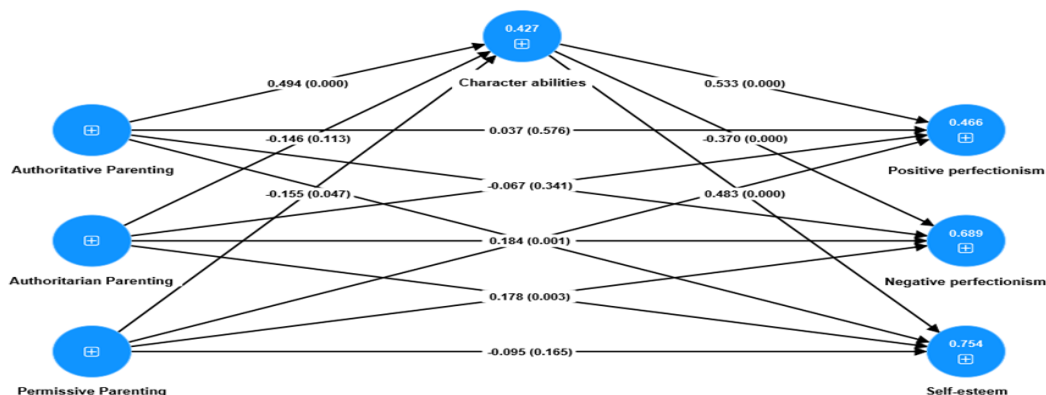


Figure 2. Path coefficients between variables and significance level

Table 5. Indirect effects between research variables

Path to variables	Path coefficient	STDEV	P-value	T-value
Authoritarian Parenting -> Character strengths -> Negative perfectionism	0.061	0.041	0.136	1.493
Authoritarian Parenting -> Character strengths -> Positive perfectionism	-0.084	0.056	0.130	1.514
Authoritarian Parenting -> Character strengths -> Self esteem	-0.090	0.062	0.148	1.446
Authoritative Parenting -> Character strengths -> Negative perfectionism	-0.205	0.049	<0.001	4.156
Authoritative Parenting -> Character strengths -> Positive perfectionism	0.284	0.053	<0.001	5.384
Authoritative Parenting -> Character strengths -> Self-esteem	0.303	0.044	<0.001	6.953
Permissive Parenting -> Character strengths -> Negative perfectionism	0.065	0.031	0.040	2.059
Permissive Parenting -> Character strengths -> Positive perfectionism	-0.089	0.048	0.062	1.866
Permissive Parenting -> Character strengths -> Self esteem	-0.095	0.050	0.059	1.886

Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine how different parenting styles impact self-esteem and perfectionism in adolescents with anxiety disorders, with character strengths playing a mediating role. Results showed that authoritarian parenting had a positive and significant impact on negative perfectionism, but a negative effect on self-esteem. However, it did not significantly affect positive perfectionism or personality strengths. Authoritative parenting, in contrast, had a beneficial and noticeable influence on negative perfectionism, self-worth, and personal qualities; however, its impact on positive perfectionism was not substantial. "The presence of permissive parenting was found to have a positive and significant impact on negative perfectionism, but a negative and significant impact on personality strengths and positive perfectionism. However, the influence of permissive parents was not significant on self-esteem. On the other hand, personality strengths had a positive and significant effect on self-esteem and positive perfectionism, while they had a negative and significant effect on negative perfectionism. The study also revealed that the relationship between authoritarian parenting and negative perfectionism, positive perfectionism, and self-esteem with the mediating factor of personality strengths was not significant. In contrast, the connection between authoritative parenting and positive perfectionism, as well as self-esteem with the mediating factor of personality strengths, was positive and significant. Additionally, the connection

between authoritative parenting and negative perfectionism with the mediating factor of personality strengths was negative and significant. Conversely, the relationship between permissive parents and positive perfectionism, as well as self-esteem with the mediating factor of personality strengths, was not significant. However, the association between permissive parents and negative perfectionism with the mediating factor of personality strengths was positive and significant."

The results of the current study on authoritarian parenting indicate that this style of parenting leads to an increase in negative perfectionism and a decrease in self-esteem while having no impact on positive perfectionism and personality strengths. These findings align with previous research²⁸⁻³¹. Prior studies have revealed a positive relationship between authoritarian parenting and concerns about mistakes and high personal standards, which are aspects of perfectionism²⁸. One study also found a connection between perfectionist effort and parenting styles²⁹. Additionally, research has shown that authoritarian parenting negatively impacts self-esteem³⁰. Another study suggested that authoritarian and neglectful parenting are correlated to poor self-esteem outcomes³¹.

During childhood and adolescence, parents play a crucial role in shaping the development of the personality trait of perfectionism. The trait of perfectionism is a result of interactions within the family, where parental approval, expectations, and criticism combine to create a focus on perfection and success. Children are taught by their parents that

achieving perfection is necessary to receive love and approval, while failure is unacceptable. As a result, children with authoritarian parents who have high-performance expectations and criticize them for not meeting those expectations are more likely to develop perfectionistic tendencies³². Authoritarian parents who have high expectations tend to instill a negative self-image in teenagers. As this negative self-image takes hold, adolescents feel pressured to maintain a facade, such as constantly striving for success to hide feelings of inadequacy. When these self-imposed rules are violated, it triggers negative thought patterns and the individual begins to anticipate negative consequences. This cycle of anxiety and seeking security leads to self-criticism and reinforces a pattern of low self-esteem⁴. In this timeframe, the strengths of a person's personality not only serve as a shield during difficult times but also play a role in their overall achievements. When paired with support from family, these qualities have the potential to result in adolescents experiencing self-approval, happiness, and a feeling of satisfaction. However, parents who have authoritarian parenting methods may hinder the development and enhancement of their teenage children's character strengths¹⁵.

Furthermore, the research revealed that authoritative parenting is correlated to higher levels of negative perfectionism, as well as increased self-esteem and personal strengths. However, it does not have a significant impact on positive perfectionism, consistent with previous studies^{29,30,33}. Previous research has also shown a slight positive correlation between perfectionist effort and parenting styles²⁹. Studies have also found that authoritative parenting has a beneficial impact on self-esteem³⁰. Additionally, the research results suggested that parents experience improvements in personality strengths, new perspectives, greater appreciation for life, and changes in spiritual beliefs through positive personal outcomes, enhanced parenting skills, and increased family cohesion³³. The discovery can be clarified by noting that authoritative parenting involves warmth, reasoning, democratic participation, and a positive attitude from parents. Authoritative households set clear boundaries that create a supportive yet independent atmosphere, allowing children to understand and accept demands, leading to increased confidence and sociability. Consequently, children with authoritative parents exhibit higher self-confidence, less disruptive behavior, improved self-control, greater self-esteem, social skills, cognitive abilities, and positive developmental results¹¹.

Parents are caring and supportive towards their children while also setting boundaries and guiding their behavior in a balanced way³². This approach can positively impact the mental health of adolescents, as positive parenting practices like warmth, responsiveness, and autonomy lead to higher self-esteem, greater life satisfaction, and overall well-being in teens. Additionally, receiving feedback from others regarding their strengths can help teenagers better understand themselves and utilize those strengths. When parents give strength-focused feedback, it is significantly related to teenagers utilizing their strengths, and considering the various ways parents communicate with their children daily, it is logical that those with an authoritative parenting style can enhance the personality strengths of teenagers³⁴.

The results of the present study indicate that permissive parenting style can lead to an increase in negative perfectionism and a decrease in personality strengths and positive perfectionism, aligning with previous research³⁵⁻³⁶. Previous research has also shown a strong connection between perceived parenting styles and perfectionism, altruistic behavior, and mental health³⁵. Changing parental behavior from permissive to authoritative has been found to improve a child's externalizing behavior problems and shape their personality strengths, interpersonal skills, and courage during adolescence, ultimately impacting their mental health in adulthood³⁶. However, inconsistencies exist in current research regarding the impact of permissive parenting style on self-esteem compared to previous studies³⁰⁻³¹. Aziz et al.'s (2021) study found that both permissive and authoritative parenting styles positively influence self-esteem³⁰. Other research also suggests that authoritarian and negligent parenting are correlated to lower levels of self-esteem³¹.

Permissive parenting is characterized by a lack of follow-up, ignoring misconduct, and parental self-doubt. Children raised in this way may feel insecure due to a lack of intimacy and neglect. These parents do not supervise their children's behavior or nurture their interests, leading to challenges in emotional development¹¹. Furthermore, adolescents' mental well-being can be influenced by their parents' styles of parenting, particularly in terms of perfectionism and altruism. Those driven by negative perfectionism set high standards for themselves and strive to meet their parents' lofty expectations. Therefore, they frequently go through denying themselves and subjecting themselves to torture. The way parents reject or excessively support their children has a dual impact on perfectionism. Parents who are overly detached, strict, or lenient towards their children can lead to self-identity confusion and even the emergence of reverse psychology in children. This can influence their proper development. Additionally, parents who employ a permissive parenting approach can diminish beneficial perfectionism, which helps enhance children's cognitive skills and boost their self-confidence³⁵. The results of the latest study revealed that personality strengths have a positive and significant impact on self-esteem and positive perfectionism and a negative and significant impact on negative perfectionism. This study also found a strong correlation between self-esteem, personality strengths, and social inclusion¹⁸. Additionally, another research study suggested that personality strengths act as a protective factor against the harmful impacts of cognitive vulnerabilities, like perfectionism, self-criticism, and excessive need for approval, which may contribute to mental health issues¹⁶.

Character strengths are favorable moral attributes that are evident in one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. There are 24 personality strengths that make up this classification, including social intelligence, vision, creativity, courage, humor, leadership, fairness, kindness, teamwork, humility, forgiveness, self-regulation, prudence, perseverance, openness, honesty, spirituality, gratitude, zest, hope, love, love of learning, curiosity, and appreciation of beauty and excellence. These strengths can help protect against the negative impact of cognitive vulnerabilities like perfectionism, self-criticism, and excessive need for approval, which can lead to mental health

issues such as depressive symptoms. By implementing interventions that focus on developing these personal resources, individuals can reduce psychological problems and enhance their mental health and well-being¹⁶. Furthermore, having more personality strengths can make individuals more resilient to challenges and improve their mental health and self-esteem, regardless of any existing personality issues³⁷. Regarding the mediating function of personality strengths in the present study, the lack of consistent research background on this topic led to the justification of this result through studies that focused on personality strengths. For instance, one study demonstrated that the influence of personality strengths on well-being and academic enthusiasm is significant³⁸.

Another study mentioned that promoting personality strengths could potentially prevent suicidal behavior and facilitate social transformation in individuals with personality disorders³⁷. Additionally, research findings indicated that the utilization of strengths plays a partial mediating role in the connection between strength-based parenting and subjective well-being³⁴. Personality strengths are psychological processes that help individuals think and behave in a beneficial way for themselves and society. By utilizing these strengths, individuals can enhance mindfulness, boost well-being, and decrease stress in adolescents and adults. These strengths serve as a protective factor for mental health and aid in coping with challenges and moving forward¹⁷. "Personality strengths play a crucial role in reducing negative behaviors and increasing positive behaviors, as well as being correlated to various aspects of well-being. However, just possessing positive character traits is not enough for success and taking positive actions; it is only a necessary starting point. For instance, if someone is creative but does not utilize this creativity, it will not result in positive outcomes. However, if someone with high creative abilities can express themselves, it can lead to a feeling of fulfillment and competence, laying the foundation for their well-being and passion. Therefore, it is crucial to utilize our strengths in our daily routines, as this can lead to the development of self-compassion and bring about numerous positive outcomes³⁸.

The present study, similar to other studies, had limitations. Initially, data collection was conducted through a questionnaire. There was a risk of participants providing inaccurate answers due to misinterpreting the questions, potentially skewing the findings. Nevertheless, steps were taken to mitigate this risk by clearly explaining the instructions and allowing ample time for responses. Additionally, the reliance on self-report measures could have introduced response bias. Combining self-report measures with other methods like observations and interviews may help reduce this bias. One limitation of the study was the inability to control variables such as cultural background, social and economic status, drug consumption, nutrition, and amount of sleep among participants, which could have impacted the reliability of the results. The sample size in the research was adequate, but to generalize the findings, a larger and more diverse group of individuals in terms of age, cultural background, and education level would be necessary. Future studies could explore the effect of different parenting styles on various clinical populations, such as individuals with stuttering, eating

disorders, body image issues, emotional distress, or divorce, as well as the population of substance abusers.

The results of the present research demonstrate that each of the three approaches to parenting plays a role in fostering negative perfectionism in children. However, authoritarian parenting was found to lower self-esteem, while permissive parenting was associated with a decrease in personality strengths and positive perfectionism. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting led to higher levels of self-esteem and personality strengths in teenagers. Additionally, there was a correlation between individuals' personality strengths and elevated levels of self-esteem and constructive perfectionism, with a decrease in negative perfectionism among adolescents. The study also highlighted the significance of character strength as a mediating variable. Given the abnormality of the perfectionism structure and its association with psychological issues, further research in identifying the factors contributing to this unhealthy pattern is crucial to prevent its detrimental effects on society. The results of the present research demonstrate that each of the three approaches to parenting plays a role in fostering negative perfectionism in children. However, authoritarian parenting was found to lower self-esteem, while permissive parenting was associated with a decrease in personality strengths and positive perfectionism. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting led to higher levels of self-esteem and personality strengths in teenagers. Additionally, there was a correlation between individuals' personality strengths and elevated levels of self-esteem and constructive perfectionism, with a decrease in negative perfectionism among adolescents. The study also highlighted the significance of character strength as a mediating variable. Given the abnormality of the perfectionism structure and its association with psychological issues, further research in identifying the factors contributing to this unhealthy pattern is crucial to prevent its detrimental effects on society.

Ethical Considerations

The study received approval from the Ethical Committee at Islamic Azad University, Garmsar Branch (IR.IAU.GARMSAR.REC. 1402. 198).

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Conflict of Interest

The authors confirm that the research was carried out without any commercial or financial conflicts of interest.

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