

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL BONDING AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION AMONG YOUNG AND MIDDLE AGED ADULTS

Dissertation submitted to University of Kerala

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

M.Sc Counselling Psychology

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CERTIFICATE



This is to certify that the Dissertation Entitled "The Relationship between Parental Bonding and Emotional Regulation among Young and Middle-aged Adults" is an authentic work carried out by Aparna V Warriar Reg. No.60423115005 under the guidance of Dr. Ammu Lukose during the fourth semester of M.Sc. Counselling Psychology programme in the academic year 2023-2025

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DECLARATION

I, Aparna V Warriar, do hereby declare that the dissertation titled "**The Relationship between Parental Bonding and Emotional Regulation among Young and Middle-aged Adults**" submitted to the Department of Counselling Psychology, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Sreekariyam, under the supervision of Dr Ammu Lukose, Assistant professor of the Department of Counselling Psychology, for the award of the degree of Master's in Science of Counselling Psychology, is a bonafide work carried out by me and no part thereof has been submitted for the award of any other degree in any University.

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the current study is to explore the relationship between parental bonding and emotional dysregulation among young and middle-aged adults. The studies which I have reviewed mainly focus on how parental bonding influences emotional development in childhood and adolescence. However, fewer studies explore how these early bonding patterns continue to impact emotional regulation in adulthood—especially among young and middle-aged adults. There's also limited research comparing maternal and paternal roles and dimensions like care, control, rejection, and autonomy. This study aims to fill these gaps. This is a quantitative study that used the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) to collect data. The sample included 215 young and middle-aged adults between the ages of 16 and 39 years. The study found that parental control, especially from mothers, was significantly linked to higher emotional dysregulation. Father care and father autonomy were associated with better emotional regulation, while other dimensions like mother care, rejection, and autonomy showed no significant impact. Overall, controlling parenting emerged as the key negative influence, while supportive paternal behavior had a positive effect. The results revealed that mother control had a significant positive correlation with emotional dysregulation, indicating that higher levels of perceived maternal control were associated with greater difficulties in regulating emotions. In contrast, father autonomy showed a significant negative correlation, suggesting that when fathers promoted independence and autonomy, emotional regulation was better among participants. However, other dimensions of parental bonding such as care, rejection, and control from both parents, as well as maternal autonomy did not exhibit significant associations with emotional dysregulation. These findings underscore the importance of specific parental behaviours, particularly supporting autonomy and avoiding excessive control, in fostering healthy emotional regulation in offspring. The

results may have implications for parenting practices, interventions, and future research focusing on emotional development across different family dynamics.

Keywords:

Parental Bonding, Emotional Dysregulation, Care, Control, Rejection, Autonomy, Young Adults, Middle-Aged Adults, Spearman Correlation, Mann–Whitney U Test

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Emotion regulation has emerged as a central theme in contemporary psychology, with interdisciplinary research increasingly emphasizing its critical role in mental health, resilience, and social functioning. Biological studies (Etkin et al., 2006; Hartley & Phelps, 2010) have demonstrated that emotion regulation involves distinct neural circuits associated with the amygdala and prefrontal cortex, while cognitive research (Miller et al., 2014; Miu & Crisan, 2011) highlights how individuals interpret, reframe, and manage emotional experiences. These studies collectively underscore that effective emotion regulation is not merely a skill but a foundational psychological capacity that influences long-term well-being.

A key influence on emotion regulation development lies in early life experiences, particularly in the quality of the relationship between a child and their parents. The concept of a "bond" between parent and child, though broadly accepted, lacks a universally agreed-upon definition, as noted by Bowlby and Rutter. However, parental bonding is widely conceptualized across several core dimensions: care, rejection, control, and autonomy. These dimensions influence a child's perceived emotional security and self-worth. For instance, high parental care fosters warmth and emotional attunement, whereas high levels of overprotection or rejection can hinder the development of independence and emotional coping strategies. Such early relational patterns form the psychological groundwork for later emotional functioning and interpersonal behavior.

In particular, young and middle adulthood, ranging from approximately 16 to 39 years is a developmental period marked by emotional transformation and increasing psychological complexity. During this time, individuals typically engage in forming identity, navigating educational and career pathways, building intimate relationships, and potentially assuming

parental roles themselves. These life transitions often carry emotional weight, demanding a robust capacity for emotional regulation. Yet, the ability to regulate emotions effectively is not acquired in isolation; it is intricately linked to earlier parental interactions, which continue to influence adult emotional and relational patterns consciously or unconsciously.

Although substantial research has investigated parenting styles and attachment in relation to children's emotional outcomes, there remains a significant gap in understanding the long-term emotional effects of retrospectively perceived parental bonding in adult populations. Most studies have primarily concentrated on children and adolescents, leaving a limited understanding of how early caregiving experiences shape emotional regulation in later developmental stages. Furthermore, few studies differentiate between the emotional impacts of maternal and paternal bonding, nor do they adequately address how these influences vary across gender and age cohorts within the adult spectrum.

This study addresses these critical gaps by examining the relationship between retrospectively perceived parental bonding and emotional regulation among young and middle-aged adults. Specifically, it investigates how the quality of bonding experienced with both mother and father figures during the first 16 years of life correlates with present-day emotional regulation abilities. The study employs two standardized tools: the Parental Bonding Instrument – Brief Current (PBI-BC) to assess the perceived dimensions of parental bonding, and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS-18) to evaluate participants' current regulatory capacities. By using a correlational-comparative research design and incorporating a diverse age sample, the study aims to provide a holistic perspective on the enduring psychological imprint of early parental interactions.

In addition to its academic relevance, this research carries practical implications. Mental health professionals can benefit from recognizing how early relational dynamics may influence adult

emotional dysregulation, aiding in therapeutic interventions such as schema therapy, attachment-focused therapy, and family systems work. Educators and counselors can better support students and young adults navigating transitional challenges by understanding the emotional scaffolding shaped by their parental experiences. Policymakers and child development specialists may also draw insights into the long-term value of nurturing parenting practices, informing parent education programs and community-based interventions.

Ultimately, by exploring how retrospective parental bonding shapes emotional functioning across developmental stages, this study seeks to enrich both theoretical understanding and real-world practices aimed at enhancing emotional health and psychological resilience across the lifespan.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Parental bonding, defined as the emotional connection and behavioral patterns of interaction between a parent and child, serves as a cornerstone in the development of an individual's psychological, emotional, and social identity. This bond is shaped through consistent caregiving behaviors and is typically expressed along multiple dimensions, including care, rejection, control, and autonomy. These dimensions influence whether a child experiences warmth, safety, and support or, conversely, feelings of neglect, overprotection, or emotional distance. Research has consistently demonstrated that these early caregiving experiences leave a lasting imprint on how individuals perceive themselves, relate to others, and manage their emotions throughout life.

One such critical area affected by early parental interactions is emotional regulation, which refers to the ability to monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional reactions in ways that are adaptive to situational demands. Emotional regulation is essential not only for personal well-being but also for forming and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships, succeeding in

occupational roles, and navigating everyday stressors. Emotional dysregulation, conversely, is implicated in a range of psychological difficulties including anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and interpersonal conflict.

Young and middle adulthood spanning approximately from ages 16 to 39 is a life stage marked by significant transitions, including higher education, entry into the workforce, romantic partnerships, marriage, and parenthood. These transitions place increasing emotional demands on individuals, requiring them to rely heavily on their emotional coping and regulatory capacities. It is during this phase that unresolved patterns from early caregiving may emerge more prominently, particularly in the form of emotional vulnerability or resilience. While these adult stages demand emotional maturity, few individuals consciously recognize the extent to which their early parental bonding experiences shape their present-day emotional regulation abilities.

Despite the established importance of early caregiving, much of the research in this domain has focused on children and adolescents, with limited attention to the long-term effects of perceived parental bonding on adult emotional regulation. There is also a lack of clarity regarding the differential impact of maternal and paternal bonding, as well as how these relationships manifest across various stages of adulthood and gender groups. Addressing this gap is crucial for both theoretical understanding and practical interventions aimed at promoting emotional well-being in adults.

The present study therefore seeks to explore the relationship between parental bonding and emotional regulation among young and middle-aged adults. It utilizes a retrospective lens to evaluate participants' perceptions of their parental bonding experiences during the first 16 years of life and investigates how these perceptions relate to their current emotional regulation capacities. Employing standardized instruments the Parental Bonding Instrument Brief Current

(PBI-BC) and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS-18) the study aims to provide nuanced insights into how specific dimensions of caregiving (e.g., care, control, autonomy, rejection) influence the ability to regulate emotions in adulthood.

By analyzing data from a developmentally diverse sample using a correlational-comparative design, this research aspires to contribute both to the academic understanding of emotional development and to the enhancement of clinical practices and parenting interventions. The findings are expected to have practical implications for mental health professionals, educators, parents, and policy makers, offering guidance on fostering environments that support healthy emotional development across the lifespan.

THEORETICAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Parental Bonding

Theoretical Definition: Parental bonding is a foundational construct in developmental psychology and attachment theory, encompassing the emotional closeness, caregiving consistency, and relational behaviors that characterize the parent–child relationship. It refers to how a child experiences their parent(s) as emotionally available, responsive, supportive, or conversely, as neglectful, intrusive, or overcontrolling. Theoretical frameworks emphasize that these bonding patterns significantly shape the development of self-concept, emotional security, attachment style, and interpersonal skills. Key dimensions of parental bonding include: Care (warmth, affection, emotional support), Rejection (neglect, hostility, emotional detachment), Control (overprotection, intrusiveness), Autonomy (encouragement of independence and initiative). These components interact to form either secure or insecure bonds that continue to affect emotional responses and coping strategies well into adulthood.

Operational Definition: In the current study, parental bonding is operationally defined as the participant's retrospective perception of their relationship with each parent during the first 16

years of life, focusing particularly on the past three months of relational memory. It is measured using the Parental Bonding Instrument – Brief Current (PBI-BC), a standardized psychometric tool that evaluates maternal and paternal bonding across four core subscales: Care: Degree of warmth, affection, and nurturance perceived, Rejection: Experience of emotional unavailability or hostility, Control: Level of parental overprotection or dominance, Autonomy: Extent to which independence and self-initiation were supported. This tool allows for the quantitative assessment of both positive and negative dimensions of parenting, providing a comprehensive picture of perceived early parental influence.

Emotional Regulation

Theoretical Definition: Emotional regulation refers to a dynamic set of cognitive and behavioral processes through which individuals monitor, evaluate, and modify the intensity and expression of emotional states. Rooted in affective neuroscience and cognitive-behavioral theory, emotional regulation includes recognizing emotions, understanding their origin, suppressing or expressing them appropriately, and employing strategies such as reappraisal or distraction to manage them. According to Gross's (1998) Process Model of Emotion Regulation, individuals regulate emotions at different stages of the emotional response cycle: from situation selection and modification to attentional deployment and response modulation. Effective emotion regulation supports psychological resilience, social functioning, and mental well-being, while dysregulation is associated with a range of emotional and behavioral disorders.

Operational Definition: In this study, emotional regulation is operationally defined as the participant's current capacity to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a flexible, constructive, and socially appropriate manner. It includes skills such as: Identifying and understanding one's own emotions, Accepting emotional experiences, Controlling impulsive

behaviors during distress, Using strategies to modulate the intensity and duration of negative emotions.

Emotional regulation is measured using the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale – 18 items (DERS-18), a validated self-report instrument that assesses six key dimensions: Nonacceptance of emotional responses, Difficulty engaging in goal-directed behavior, Impulse control difficulties, Lack of emotional awareness, Limited access to emotion regulation strategies, Lack of emotional clarity. The total and subscale scores help identify both general and specific areas of emotion dysregulation, enabling a nuanced analysis of the participants' regulatory profiles.

Young and Middle Adulthood

Theoretical Definition: In developmental psychology, young and middle adulthood are critical life stages characterized by increasing autonomy, identity formation, intimacy development, role transitions, and complex emotional experiences. These stages are defined within lifespan development theory as periods where individuals are required to apply emotional and cognitive competencies in real-world situations such as education, employment, marriage, and parenting. The successful navigation of these challenges relies heavily on established emotional regulatory mechanisms that often originate from earlier attachment relationships with primary caregivers.

Operational Definition: In this study, young and middle-aged adults are operationally defined as individuals between the ages of 16 and 39, based on the inclusion criteria of the Parental Bonding Instrument and relevant developmental literature. The age range is divided into three developmental sub-groups for analytical clarity: Late adolescents and emerging adults (16–24 years), Young adults (25–34 years), Early middle-aged adults (35–39 years).

This categorization enables a comparative exploration of how perceived parental bonding influences emotional regulation across distinct yet overlapping phases of adult development. It allows for the examination of both developmental continuity and variation in emotional functioning as shaped by early caregiving environments.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The early parent–child relationship forms the psychological blueprint upon which much of an individual’s emotional and social development is based. Parental bonding, often considered the cornerstone of this relationship, refers to the enduring emotional connection between a child and their caregivers, shaped through day-to-day interactions, nurturance, and responsiveness. This bond plays a pivotal role in influencing not only the child’s immediate emotional well-being but also their long-term psychological functioning. It encompasses multiple dimensions such as care (warmth and affection), rejection (emotional coldness or neglect), control (overprotection or intrusiveness), and autonomy (support for independence). These dimensions form the basis of how individuals later view themselves, interact with others, and regulate their internal emotional states.

One of the most significant outcomes influenced by early caregiving experiences is emotional regulation the ability to monitor, manage, and modify emotional reactions in ways that are socially appropriate and psychologically adaptive. Effective emotion regulation supports mental health, interpersonal competence, academic and occupational success, and resilience in the face of stress. Conversely, poor emotional regulation is associated with a range of psychological difficulties such as depression, anxiety disorders, impulsivity, and emotional instability, often seen in mood and personality disorders.

Importantly, emotional regulation is not an innate capacity—it is developed through interactions with the environment, particularly within the family system during early childhood

and adolescence. Parents play a crucial role in modeling, teaching, and responding to emotional expressions, thus shaping the strategies children adopt to cope with emotional arousal. For instance, consistent and emotionally attuned parenting is likely to foster secure attachment, emotional validation, and constructive regulation strategies like problem-solving and cognitive reappraisal. On the other hand, harsh, neglectful, or overcontrolling parenting may contribute to insecure attachment, emotional suppression, or maladaptive coping mechanisms such as rumination, avoidance, or aggression.

The influence of parental bonding does not cease in childhood. As individuals progress through developmental stages such as adolescence, young adulthood, and middle adulthood, the internalized patterns of early bonding experiences continue to influence how they process emotions, form relationships, and deal with life stressors. These stages are often accompanied by complex transitions, such as identity formation, intimate relationship-building, career establishment, parenting, and caregiving for older family members—all of which place emotional demands on individuals.

In the Indian socio-cultural context, the parent–child relationship often remains emotionally significant and hierarchically structured well into adulthood. Cultural values emphasizing interdependence, respect for authority, and family cohesion may shape how parental bonding is experienced and remembered. Therefore, examining this relationship in a culturally specific manner is not only relevant but necessary for generating meaningful insights that can inform both academic theory and applied interventions.

Despite its importance, there remains a paucity of research in the Indian context that investigates how retrospective perceptions of parental bonding influence emotional regulation in young and middle-aged adults. Most existing literature centers on Western populations and younger age groups, limiting the applicability of findings to Indian adults navigating culturally

unique developmental challenges. This study aims to fill that gap by examining the relationship between perceived maternal and paternal bonding and current emotional regulation capacities in individuals aged 16 to 39. Through this exploration, the study intends to contribute to the broader understanding of adult emotional development and offer guidance for mental health professionals, educators, and parents in promoting psychological well-being.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Understanding how parental bonding influences emotional regulation requires drawing upon various foundational psychological theories that articulate the mechanisms by which early interpersonal experiences shape emotional and behavioral development across the lifespan.

There are various theories which explain the relevance of parental bonding such as attachment theory given by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth.

In the attachment theory proposed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (1978) Attachment theory by John Bowlby (1969); posits that children are biologically predisposed to form attachments with primary caregivers, which serve as internal working models for future relationships. The quality of these attachments secure or insecure is shaped by the caregiver's responsiveness and emotional availability. Secure attachment emerges when caregivers consistently respond with sensitivity and warmth, fostering emotional safety, confidence, and effective regulation skills. Insecure attachment (anxious, avoidant, or disorganized) often results from inconsistent, neglectful, or intrusive caregiving, leading to maladaptive emotional responses such as fear of abandonment, emotional suppression, or hypervigilance.

In adulthood, these attachment styles manifest in how individuals experience intimacy, cope with stress, and regulate emotions in relational contexts. Parental bonding plays a key role in establishing these early attachment patterns, making attachment theory a central framework for the present study.

Another theory which explains parental bonding is parental bonding theory by Parker, Tupling and Brown explain that Attachment Theory operationalizes parental behaviors into measurable dimensions, providing a more detailed view of how specific parenting styles influence psychological outcomes. The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker et al., identifies two principal dimensions: Care: Reflecting warmth, affection, and nurturance. Overprotection/Control: Indicating overinvolvement, dominance, and restriction of autonomy.

The ideal parenting style involves high care and low control, which supports emotional resilience and autonomy. In contrast, combinations such as low care–high control or high control–high rejection are associated with increased risks for emotional dysregulation, dependency, or internalizing and externalizing disorders. This theory forms the psychometric basis of the PBI-BC used in the current study.

Emotion Regulation Theory by James Gross (1998). Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation outlines a sequence of processes through which emotions are regulated. These include: Situation Selection, Situation Modification, Attentional Deployment, Cognitive Change (e.g., reappraisal), Response Modulation (e.g., suppression)

Parental influences are significant in the early acquisition of emotion regulation strategies. Through modeling, verbal instruction, and emotional responsiveness, parents guide children in how to handle both positive and negative emotional experiences. Emotionally dismissive or punitive parenting, however, can impair the development of adaptive regulation, leading to persistent emotional difficulties in adulthood.

Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory by Erik Erikson (1963) proposed that psychosocial development occurs across eight stages, each characterized by a specific crisis. Relevant stages include: Trust vs. Mistrust (infancy): Rooted in consistent caregiving, this

stage sets the foundation for secure emotional bonds and regulation. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (early childhood): Encouragement of autonomy promotes confidence and emotion regulation, while excessive control fosters shame and emotional suppression.

Later stages such as Identity vs. Role Confusion and Intimacy vs. Isolation during adolescence and young adulthood further depend on the successful resolution of earlier stages. Erikson's model emphasizes how unresolved early relational conflicts can echo into adulthood as emotional and identity struggles.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Edward Deci & Richard Ryan (1985). SDT posits that psychological well-being depends on the fulfillment of three basic needs: Autonomy (feeling in control of one's actions), Competence (feeling effective in one's environment), and Relatedness (feeling connected to others).

Parents who encourage autonomy and validate emotions promote the internalization of emotional regulation strategies and psychological growth. Conversely, overly controlling or emotionally neglectful parenting can inhibit the development of emotional competence, contributing to dysregulation and low self-esteem.

Social Learning Theory: Albert Bandura (1977) emphasizes the importance of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in human development. Children often adopt emotional responses and coping styles by observing how their parents manage emotions. Parents who model calmness, emotional expression, and problem-solving equip their children with constructive emotional habits. However, modeling of aggression, avoidance, or emotional suppression may lead to maladaptive emotion regulation patterns.

Lifespan Development Theory by Baltes, 1987. This theory highlights that development is a lifelong process influenced by both biological and environmental factors. It recognizes the role of plasticity and historical context, asserting that early experiences (e.g., parental bonding)

have enduring effects, but later life experiences can also reshape developmental outcomes. Therefore, examining emotional regulation across different stages of adulthood offers insight into the dynamic interaction between early life foundations and current environmental challenges. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the present study offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how early caregiving experiences particularly the quality of parental bonding relate to the capacity for emotional regulation in adulthood. This theoretical grounding justifies the research focus and supports the multidimensional analysis of emotional development across a culturally relevant sample.

Need and significance of the study

Understanding the origins and mechanisms of emotional regulation has become increasingly vital in contemporary psychological research and clinical practice. Emotional regulation is not only a core aspect of individual mental health but also significantly affects relationship dynamics, occupational functioning, and overall life satisfaction. As mental health challenges continue to rise among adolescents and adults globally and particularly in the Indian context where stigma and underdiagnosis persist it is imperative to identify the early-life factors that influence emotional functioning across the lifespan.

One of the most profound influences on emotional development is the quality of parental bonding during childhood. Parental bonding, encompassing dimensions such as care, rejection, control, and autonomy, shapes an individual's emotional landscape through attachment, validation, and behavioral modeling. These dimensions are foundational in the development of emotion regulation capacities skills that individuals rely on to manage stress, navigate interpersonal relationships, and adapt to life's challenges. However, despite the wealth of theoretical literature linking parenting and emotion regulation, there remains a significant

research gap in empirical investigations among adult populations, especially within non-Western, collectivist cultures like India.

This study addresses that gap by exploring how retrospectively perceived parental bonding affects emotional regulation abilities among young and middle-aged adults (ages 16–39). These life stages are marked by key developmental milestones such as identity formation, romantic relationships, career challenges, marriage, and parenthood all of which place high emotional demands on individuals. The ability to navigate these transitions effectively often depends on the emotional regulation skills developed early in life, which may be either strengthened or impaired by past parenting experiences. The study's focus on this unique developmental window is both timely and relevant, as young and middle adulthood represent critical periods where unresolved emotional patterns from childhood may resurface, influencing adult functioning and psychological resilience.

Moreover, the Indian cultural context where family structures, intergenerational hierarchies, and parenting styles often differ significantly from Western norms—necessitates culturally sensitive research. In Indian families, the influence of parents typically extends well into adulthood due to collectivist values and close-knit family bonds. This makes it even more important to examine how these long-standing relationships influence adult emotional competencies. By focusing on an Indian sample, this study provides culturally grounded insights that can inform locally relevant interventions and enrich the global literature with diverse perspectives.

The significance of the study is further underscored by its practical implications for multiple stakeholders: Mental Health Professionals: The findings can aid psychologists, counselors, and therapists in identifying the roots of emotional dysregulation in adult clients by linking it to early parental interactions. This can enhance the effectiveness of interventions such as

attachment-based therapy, schema therapy, and family systems therapy. Educators and Academic Institutions: Insights from the study can be used to design emotional literacy and life-skills programs, especially in colleges and universities where young adults face increased emotional stress related to academic and career pressures. Policymakers and Social Workers: The study can inform child development policies, parenting workshops, and mental health awareness campaigns, encouraging policies that promote emotionally responsive and autonomy-supportive parenting styles from early childhood. Current and Future Parents: Perhaps most importantly, the study holds educational value for parents by offering evidence-based insights into how their parenting behaviors today may influence their children's emotional functioning well into adulthood. Encouraging parental practices that are nurturing, validating, and autonomy-promoting can serve as a protective factor against future emotional difficulties. Researchers and Academicians: The study provides a solid foundation for further research into longitudinal patterns of emotional development and offers a model for examining retrospective parenting impacts in culturally specific settings.

In sum, this study not only contributes to theoretical advancement in developmental and health psychology but also bridges the gap between research and practice. It highlights the enduring influence of early parental bonding on adult emotional regulation, urging a more integrated approach to emotional development that spans childhood through midlife. By uncovering these developmental pathways, the study promotes the creation of emotionally healthier individuals, families, and communities, ultimately supporting a more resilient and emotionally intelligent society.

Statement of the problem

The current study seeks to examine the intricate relationship between parental bonding and emotional regulation among young and middle-aged adults. Parental bonding is a vital

developmental construct that significantly influences a child's emotional, cognitive, and social growth. It reflects the emotional closeness, care, control, and overall responsiveness that a child perceives from their parents. This early parent-child dynamic lays the groundwork for secure attachment patterns, fosters healthy self-esteem, and cultivates the individual's ability to form and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships later in life.

When parental bonding is consistent, emotionally supportive, and attuned to the child's needs, it contributes to the development of effective emotional regulation strategies. These strategies enable individuals to monitor, manage, and express their emotions in socially appropriate and adaptive ways. However, disruptions or inadequacies in parental bonding—arising from factors such as parental mental health issues, emotional neglect, overprotective parenting, or inconsistent caregiving—can lead to significant developmental challenges. Such adverse experiences may impair the child's ability to regulate emotions effectively, increasing vulnerability to psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, low academic motivation, diminished self-worth, and difficulties in peer and romantic relationships.

The population of interest in this study includes young and middle-aged adults, operationally defined as individuals between the ages of 16 and 39 years. This broad age range encompasses key transitional life stages from late adolescence to early midlife characterized by increasing autonomy, identity exploration, emotional and social maturation, and evolving interpersonal roles. During these stages, individuals encounter complex emotional demands, such as navigating intimate relationships, pursuing educational or career goals, and managing responsibilities within society. Therefore, understanding the influence of early parental bonding on emotional regulation during this crucial developmental window can provide valuable insights into long-term emotional health and psychological resilience. It can also inform therapeutic interventions, parenting programs, and public mental health policies aimed at fostering healthy emotional development from childhood through adulthood.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the levels of parental bonding (care, rejection, control, and autonomy) perceived by young and middle-aged adults.
- To evaluate the emotional regulation capacities among young and middle-aged adults.
- To examine the relationship between parental bonding and emotional regulation.
- To correlate the maternal and paternal bonding patterns with emotional regulation

CHAPTER-2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Review of Literature is a critical, analytical summary of existing research, scholarly articles, books, dissertations, and other academic sources that are directly related to the research problem under investigation. It provides a comprehensive overview of what is already known in the field, identifies relevant theories, key concepts, and methodological approaches, and highlights gaps or inconsistencies in the existing body of knowledge. In essence, the literature review serves as both a foundation and a justification for the current study.

The primary aim of a literature review is to situate the present research within the context of existing knowledge, allowing researchers to build upon the work of others and avoid unnecessary duplication. It helps clarify what has already been explored, what conclusions have been drawn, and where there is still room for further inquiry. Through the process of reviewing and synthesizing previous studies, researchers can refine their own research questions, formulate hypotheses, and select appropriate theoretical frameworks and methodologies.

A well-structured literature review performs several key functions:

Establishes the Context: It sets the stage for the study by providing background information and historical developments in the area of research.

Identifies Theoretical Frameworks: It discusses the theories or conceptual models that have guided past research, which may also be adopted or challenged in the current study.

Highlights Research Trends: It outlines the patterns, themes, and major findings in the field, helping to map the development of knowledge over time.

Identifies Gaps and Limitations: By analyzing what previous studies have not addressed, the literature review highlights the research gaps that the current study aims to fill.

Demonstrates Relevance: It shows how the proposed study is timely, necessary, and contributes meaningfully to the existing literature.

Supports Methodological Choices: It helps justify the selection of tools, research designs, and population groups by referring to similar or contrasting studies.

Fosters Academic Rigor: It strengthens the credibility and scholarly depth of the research by grounding it in a well-established academic conversation.

For example, in the context of the present study exploring the relationship between parental bonding and emotional regulation, the literature review will examine previous empirical and theoretical research on: The role of parental bonding in psychological development, Various dimensions of bonding (care, control, autonomy, rejection), The development and assessment of emotional regulation across different age groups, Cultural perspectives on parenting and emotion regulation, especially within Indian or collectivist contexts, Identified gaps in adult emotional research related to early life experiences.

By critically engaging with this body of literature, the researcher is able to construct a clear and compelling rationale for the study, demonstrate how it addresses unresolved questions, and show how it contributes to both academic theory and practical applications.

In conclusion, a Review of Literature is not simply a summary of previous research, but a thoughtful, structured, and purposeful analysis that strengthens the relevance, direction, and academic value of the study.

Gross et al. (1998) proposed the Process Model of Emotion Regulation, which explains how people regulate their emotions through strategies like cognitive reappraisal and expressive

suppression. The study highlighted that emotional regulation is essential for adaptive functioning and mental health. Reappraisal (changing how one thinks about a situation) is generally adaptive. Suppression (inhibiting emotional expression) often has negative consequences (e.g., on memory, social interactions). Measurement advances: Includes self-report, behavioral, physiological, and neural assessments. Clinical relevance: Poor emotion regulation is implicated in various psychopathologies (e.g., depression, anxiety, borderline personality disorder). Future Prospects (highlighted in the article): Mechanisms Focus: Future work should uncover how and why specific regulation strategies work. Individual Differences: Emphasizes tailoring strategies to people's traits, goals, and contexts. Cultural Contexts: Recognizes the need for cross-cultural research, as norms for emotion and its regulation vary globally. Neuroscience Integration: Encourages deeper integration with neuroimaging and computational models to understand brain mechanisms. Developmental Trajectory: Study of emotion regulation across the lifespan, from childhood through aging. Intervention Design: Calls for more evidence-based interventions, including digital tools and therapies.

Aldao et al. (2010) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis that significantly advanced the understanding of how different emotion regulation strategies relate to psychological disorders. Their study synthesized findings from over 100 empirical studies, examining the associations between specific emotion regulation strategies and a range of psychopathological outcomes. The meta-analysis revealed that maladaptive emotion regulation strategies—such as rumination, suppression, avoidance, and denial—were consistently and strongly associated with internalizing disorders like anxiety and depression, as well as externalizing disorders such as aggression and conduct problems. Among these, rumination a repetitive and passive focus on one's distress emerged as a particularly robust predictor of emotional distress and depressive symptoms. Similarly, emotional suppression, or the conscious inhibition of emotional expression, was found to correlate with heightened physiological stress responses and reduced

psychological well-being. Aldao et al. emphasized that these maladaptive strategies contribute not only to the development and maintenance of emotional disorders but also act as transdiagnostic risk factors, meaning they are relevant across multiple mental health conditions rather than being specific to one diagnosis. This reinforces the idea that emotion dysregulation is a core mechanism underlying a broad spectrum of psychopathologies. Their findings underscore the critical importance of promoting adaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal and problem-solving, in both clinical and non-clinical populations. By highlighting the central role of emotional regulation in mental health, Aldao et al.'s work has provided a strong empirical foundation for integrating emotional regulation training into therapeutic interventions, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), and has influenced ongoing research in developmental, clinical, and personality psychology.

Ainsworth (1989) significantly expanded upon Bowlby's foundational attachment theory by introducing a more nuanced understanding of attachment styles and extending the theory beyond infancy to encompass the entire human lifespan. She identified three distinct attachment styles: secure, anxious, and avoidant, which emerge as a result of variations in caregiving quality during early childhood. These attachment styles are not only crucial for understanding early emotional development but also play a significant role in shaping how individuals interpret, express, and regulate emotions across different stages of life. Ainsworth proposed that attachment should not be seen as static or confined to infancy but rather as a dynamic construct that evolves into later childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and throughout various interpersonal relationships. In this regard, she introduced the concept of multiple behavioral systems that drive different relational dynamics, namely the attachment system (which motivates individuals to seek safety and security), the caregiving system (which compels individuals to comfort and protect others), the reproductive system (particularly in the

context of adult romantic pair bonds), and the systems that govern friendships and kinship ties. These systems are interrelated and interact in complex ways throughout development, contributing to the formation of emotional patterns and relational behavior. Ainsworth's work highlighted that while attachment styles show a degree of stability over time, they are also susceptible to change due to significant life experiences and shifting interpersonal contexts. Her behavioral-systems perspective underscored the importance of understanding emotional development and regulation within a broader relational and developmental framework, setting the stage for later research into adult attachment, romantic relationships, and emotional functioning. Overall, her contributions underscore the lifelong relevance of early attachment experiences and their deep-seated influence on an individual's emotional regulation capacity and relational health.

Parker et al. (1979) made a landmark contribution to the study of parent-child relationships with the development of the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), a psychometric tool designed to retrospectively assess individuals' perceptions of their parents' behaviors during their first 16 years of life. The PBI is a 25-item self-report questionnaire that has become widely used in psychological, psychiatric, and developmental research to examine the long-term influence of parental bonding on mental health and emotional functioning. The instrument is based on a two-dimensional model of parenting, capturing the core aspects of Care and Overprotection/Control. The Care dimension, measured through 12 items, reflects the extent of warmth, affection, and emotional support perceived from parents. In contrast, the Overprotection dimension, assessed by 13 items, represents controlling, intrusive, and authoritarian parenting behaviors that limit a child's autonomy. Responses are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("very unlike") to 3 ("very like"), allowing for nuanced evaluation of parenting styles. The PBI has demonstrated strong reliability and validity, with consistency across both maternal and paternal ratings. Interestingly, research using the PBI has

shown that mothers tend to be rated higher than fathers on both care and overprotection, while the child's gender does not significantly influence the ratings. A key finding from Parker et al.'s analysis is the inverse relationship between care and overprotection, indicating that high levels of parental control are often associated with low emotional warmth. Norms for the instrument were established using a Sydney community sample, with detailed scoring instructions and considerations of demographic variables such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status. Over the years, the PBI has garnered thousands of citations and has been widely adopted in studies examining the links between early parenting behaviors and various outcomes, including attachment styles, personality development, emotional regulation, and psychiatric conditions. Its concise and empirically supported framework has proven invaluable for both researchers and clinicians, making it a foundational tool in understanding how early familial experiences shape psychological functioning throughout life.

Baumrind (1991) introduced a foundational typology of parenting styles—authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive—which has profoundly influenced research in developmental and educational psychology. Her theory is grounded in two key dimensions of parenting: responsiveness (warmth and supportiveness) and demandingness (control and discipline). According to Baumrind, authoritative parenting is characterized by high levels of both responsiveness and demandingness. Parents in this category provide a nurturing environment with clear expectations, consistent discipline, and open communication. This style has been consistently associated with optimal child development outcomes, particularly in the realm of self-regulation and emotional competence. Children and adolescents raised by authoritative parents tend to develop stronger emotion regulation skills, higher self-esteem, greater social competence, and improved academic performance compared to those raised in authoritarian or permissive households.

In contrast, authoritarian parents, who are high in control but low in warmth, tend to enforce rigid rules with little emotional responsiveness. This approach may lead to children who are obedient but less socially adept, more anxious, and prone to internalizing or externalizing problems due to a lack of emotional validation and autonomy. Permissive parenting, marked by high warmth but low control, may foster poor impulse control and underdeveloped self-discipline in children, as boundaries and behavioral expectations are often unclear or inconsistently enforced. Baumrind's research also highlights the protective effect of authoritative parenting against problematic behaviors. For instance, adolescents with authoritative parents show significantly lower rates of problematic substance use, including addiction and heavy drug or alcohol use, likely due to stronger internal regulation, better decision-making skills, and open channels for discussing risky behavior.

Moreover, authoritative parenting encourages autonomy-supportive practices, allowing children to develop a sense of agency and accountability, which are essential for navigating complex emotional and social challenges in adolescence and adulthood. The reciprocal and communicative nature of authoritative parenting helps children learn to express their emotions constructively, resolve conflicts, and adaptively cope with stressors, laying a strong foundation for lifelong emotional resilience. Baumrind's conceptual framework continues to be a cornerstone in research exploring the long-term effects of parenting on emotional and behavioral outcomes, including its integration with modern perspectives on emotional intelligence, attachment theory, and self-determination theory. Her work has not only shaped academic discourse but also informed parenting interventions, educational policies, and clinical practices aimed at fostering healthier family dynamics and promoting positive youth development.

Vygotsky (1978), in his seminal work *Mind in Society*, emphasized that emotional and cognitive development are deeply rooted in social interaction, particularly those that occur

between children and their primary caregivers. His sociocultural theory introduced a revolutionary perspective that viewed learning and development not as isolated internal processes, but as fundamentally social and cultural phenomena. One of his central assertions—*"all higher mental functions originate as social relationships between individuals"*—highlights the role of interpersonal communication and collaborative learning in the formation of psychological functions. Vygotsky proposed that mental functions first occur on a social or interpsychological level (between individuals) before they are internalized and developed on an individual or intrapsychological level. This concept is particularly relevant to emotional regulation, as children first learn how to manage their emotions by observing and interacting with caregivers who model appropriate emotional responses, provide scaffolding, and guide the development of emotional awareness and coping strategies.

One of Vygotsky's most influential contributions is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the range of tasks a child cannot yet perform independently but can accomplish with the guidance of a more knowledgeable other, such as a parent or teacher. In the context of emotional development, the ZPD represents the space where parents or caregivers can actively assist children in understanding, labeling, and managing their emotions—for example, helping a child navigate frustration during a difficult task or resolving interpersonal conflict. Through dialogue, co-regulation, and emotional scaffolding, caregivers transmit culturally appropriate emotional responses, laying the foundation for autonomous emotional regulation as the child matures.

Language, which Vygotsky viewed as both a cognitive tool and a medium for cultural transmission, also plays a vital role in emotional development. Parents who engage in emotion-rich conversations, use emotional labeling, and encourage perspective-taking help children internalize regulatory strategies and develop emotional intelligence. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes that development is not a passive unfolding of internal capacities but an active

process shaped by meaningful social interactions and mediated by cultural tools, including symbols, norms, and shared emotional scripts.

Although Vygotsky passed away in 1934, his theoretical contributions were compiled and translated into English in 1978, making his work more accessible to Western audiences and sparking a renewed interest in developmental psychology, education, and cross-cultural studies. His ideas have since been integrated into contemporary understandings of parental bonding, emotion regulation, and social-emotional learning (SEL). The emphasis on the relational and interactive nature of development aligns closely with modern frameworks in attachment theory, self-determination theory, and emotional socialization models. Thus, Vygotsky's work continues to provide a theoretical backbone for understanding how caregivers shape not only cognitive but also emotional growth, reinforcing the importance of sensitive, responsive, and developmentally attuned parenting practices in fostering emotionally competent and resilient individuals.

Cicchetti and Rogosch (2002), drawing on the developmental psychopathology framework, emphasized that early maladaptive interactions with caregivers can have profound and enduring effects on the trajectory of emotional development. Their work highlights how chronic exposure to parental neglect, emotional inconsistency, overcontrol, or psychological unavailability during critical developmental periods can disrupt the normative acquisition of emotional regulation skills, potentially leading to emotional dysregulation in later stages of life. They assert that emotional regulation is not merely an individual trait but emerges from complex, dynamic interactions between a child's biological predispositions and their surrounding ecological context, particularly the caregiving environment. Through longitudinal and empirical evidence, the authors show that children raised in unstable or emotionally deprived family settings are more likely to develop maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance, hypervigilance, aggression, or emotional suppression, which increase their

vulnerability to internalizing disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety) and externalizing behaviors (e.g., defiance, impulsivity).

Their interdisciplinary approach, which integrates perspectives from psychology, neurobiology, and social sciences, underscores the transactional nature of development—where both the individual and the environment exert reciprocal influences over time. Importantly, Cicchetti and Rogosch stress that emotional dysregulation is not an isolated phenomenon but a core transdiagnostic mechanism that underlies a wide range of psychopathological outcomes. They advocate for examining how early relational disturbances, such as emotionally unavailable parenting or exposure to chaotic family dynamics, alter neural and physiological systems involved in emotional processing, such as the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and prefrontal-limbic circuitry.

By conceptualizing emotional regulation difficulties as developmental deviations shaped by adverse early experiences, their work not only deepens the understanding of emotional psychopathology but also provides a valuable lens for early intervention. Intervening in caregiving environments—by improving parent-child interactions, promoting emotional attunement, and supporting secure attachment—can serve as a protective factor, fostering resilience and emotional competence even among high-risk populations. Thus, Cicchetti and Rogosch's contribution remains pivotal in linking early caregiver experiences to emotional regulation outcomes and psychological health across the lifespan.

Bowen (1978) proposed the Family Systems Theory, a foundational framework in understanding human behavior within the context of the family as an emotional unit. According to Bowen, individuals cannot be understood in isolation from their families, as the emotional interdependence among family members profoundly shapes psychological development, particularly emotional regulation. He posited that patterns of emotional functioning are

transmitted across generations, and that a family's emotional climate, roles, boundaries, and communication styles contribute to either healthy or maladaptive regulatory capacities in its members. One of Bowen's central concepts is "differentiation of self," which refers to an individual's ability to balance emotional and intellectual functioning while maintaining autonomy without emotional cutoff or excessive fusion with family members. Individuals with low differentiation often exhibit emotional reactivity, dependency, or detachment, all of which can impair emotional regulation and lead to relational difficulties, anxiety, and mood disturbances.

Another key mechanism identified in Bowen's theory is "triangulation," where two family members in conflict draw a third member into their issues to stabilize the emotional system. This dynamic often causes chronic stress and emotional enmeshment, limiting individual autonomy and self-regulatory development. Similarly, emotional cut-off, or the withdrawal from familial relationships to manage unresolved tensions, may offer temporary relief but ultimately contributes to emotional avoidance and regulatory challenges in adulthood. Bowen emphasized that children raised in high-conflict or overly fused families often internalize these dysfunctional patterns, impairing their ability to manage affective responses independently in later life. The family's role in modeling and reinforcing emotional behaviors is critical, with multigenerational transmission serving as a powerful explanatory tool for understanding persistent emotional dysfunction.

Bowen's theoretical framework continues to influence both clinical and developmental research. Empirical studies grounded in Family Systems Theory have demonstrated that families characterized by open communication, emotional support, and clearly defined boundaries foster better emotional regulation, psychological flexibility, and social functioning in their members (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). In contrast, rigid, controlling, or emotionally volatile family environments are frequently associated with emotional dysregulation and

psychopathology. Thus, Bowen's theory offers a systemic lens through which emotional development can be understood not merely as a product of individual traits, but as embedded within familial emotional processes, making it especially relevant for interventions aimed at improving family dynamics and individual emotional health.

Eisenberg et al. (1998) developed the Emotion Socialization Theory, a prominent framework that highlights the critical role of parental influence in the development of children's emotional regulation. According to this theory, parents shape their children's emotional functioning through three primary mechanisms: modeling of emotional behaviors, reactions to children's emotional expressions, and emotion-related coaching or discussions. These parental practices, either directly or indirectly, teach children how to interpret, express, and manage emotions in socially acceptable ways. For instance, children who observe parents managing their own emotions constructively are more likely to adopt adaptive emotion regulation strategies such as problem-solving, reappraisal, and self-soothing, whereas those exposed to parental suppression, harshness, or inconsistency may develop maladaptive strategies like avoidance, aggression, or rumination.

Eisenberg et al. (1998) emphasized the distinction between supportive and unsupportive emotion socialization. Supportive practices—such as validating emotions, helping children label feelings, and offering guidance promote emotional awareness, empathy, and behavioral regulation. In contrast, unsupportive reactions, such as dismissing or punishing emotional expressions, often lead to emotional suppression, heightened reactivity, or difficulty in managing distress, thereby increasing vulnerability to internalizing (e.g., anxiety, depression) and externalizing (e.g., aggression, impulsivity) behaviors. Their empirical studies found that parental responsiveness and warmth were positively correlated with children's emotional competence, prosocial behavior, and academic adjustment, while parental rejection, inconsistency, or neglect were predictors of poor emotion regulation and psychopathology.

Subsequent research inspired by this theory has consistently validated its core claims across diverse cultural and developmental contexts. For example, emotion coaching—a term derived from Eisenberg’s framework and further developed by Gottman et al. (1996)—has been associated with resilience, secure attachment, and lower stress reactivity in children. Moreover, longitudinal studies have shown that emotion socialization practices in early childhood have lasting effects on adolescents’ and young adults’ social relationships, mental health outcomes, and coping mechanisms (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). Importantly, the theory accounts for bidirectional influences, recognizing that children’s temperamental traits also affect how parents respond emotionally, thus creating a dynamic interplay between parent and child that shapes long-term emotional development.

In essence, Eisenberg’s Emotion Socialization Theory underscores the developmental importance of emotionally attuned parenting in fostering regulatory skills. It provides a robust framework for designing parent-focused interventions that aim to promote emotional resilience, empathy, and social competence in children, making it highly relevant to both psychological research and applied practice.

Deci and Ryan (2000), in their formulation of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), emphasized that human beings possess innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are essential for psychological growth, well-being, and self-regulation. According to SDT, environments particularly parenting climates that support these needs enable individuals to develop intrinsic motivation, emotional resilience, and adaptive regulatory capacities. Specifically, autonomy-supportive parenting, which involves acknowledging the child’s perspective, offering meaningful choices, and minimizing controlling language, fosters a sense of volition and ownership over behavior, leading to more internalized emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being.

Deci and Ryan argued that children and adolescents who experience autonomy-supportive environments are more likely to develop self-endorsed values, enhanced emotional flexibility, and greater self-regulatory capacities, as opposed to those in controlling or authoritarian settings, which tend to elicit amotivation, anxiety, and rigid or suppressed emotion regulation patterns. Empirical findings from their research and subsequent studies have shown that autonomy-supportive parenting correlates with lower levels of externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggression, defiance) and internalizing symptoms (e.g., depression, social withdrawal), and promotes greater psychological integration, empathy, and emotional intelligence.

The theory also posits that thwarting the need for autonomy through controlling parenting, excessive monitoring, or punitive discipline leads to fragmented self-concept, diminished motivation, and maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as emotional disengagement, repression, or dependency. Notably, SDT provides a developmental explanation for how early relational dynamics influence later emotional health. For example, children whose autonomy is respected are better equipped to navigate emotional challenges, tolerate distress, and regulate mood without external enforcement, thereby promoting lifelong mental health and relational stability.

Moreover, Deci and Ryan extended their model to include the concept of causality orientations, proposing that individuals raised in autonomy-supportive environments are more likely to develop an autonomous orientation, characterized by proactive engagement and adaptive emotion regulation, in contrast to controlled orientations, which are more reactive and emotionally dysregulated. Their theoretical framework has been widely validated across contexts such as parenting, education, workplace dynamics, and psychotherapy, and continues to inform intervention programs aimed at enhancing emotional development through need-supportive environments.

In summary, Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (2000) provides a powerful lens to understand how parental autonomy support fosters emotional regulation, motivation, and mental well-being. It bridges developmental psychology with clinical practice, offering both explanatory depth and actionable insight into how parenting practices shape emotional resilience and psychological functioning across the lifespan. Schore (2001) advanced the understanding of emotional development by offering a neurobiological perspective on attachment, emphasizing how early interpersonal experiences, particularly those with caregivers, shape the structure and function of the developing brain. Drawing upon advances in neuroscience, Schore argued that the right hemisphere—which is dominant in processing emotions and nonverbal social cues—is particularly sensitive to early relational environments during the critical period of brain development in the first two to three years of life. He proposed that the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC), a region implicated in emotion regulation, social behavior, and affective decision-making, undergoes rapid growth during this time and is profoundly influenced by the quality of the attachment relationship. Secure attachment relationships, characterized by emotional attunement, consistency, and affective mirroring, stimulate optimal neural activity in the OFC, supporting neural integration and the formation of adaptive emotion regulation circuits.

In contrast, insecure or disorganized attachment—marked by emotional neglect, inconsistency, or fear-inducing interactions can lead to dysregulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, chronic activation of stress responses, and impaired development of the limbic system and prefrontal areas. This can result in structural and functional alterations in brain regions responsible for affect regulation, impulse control, and self-awareness. Schore emphasized that emotion regulation is not merely a psychological skill but a biologically embedded capacity, constructed through co-regulatory dyadic interactions between the infant and caregiver. He highlighted the importance of affective synchrony, where caregivers detect,

interpret, and respond appropriately to the infant's emotional cues, thus facilitating the infant's ability to develop self-soothing and emotional resilience.

Schore's work integrates attachment theory, developmental psychology, and neuroscience, offering compelling evidence that emotional dysregulation in adulthood often traces back to neurodevelopmental disruptions rooted in early attachment trauma. His theory supports interventions that focus on relational repair and emotional attunement, particularly in therapeutic settings aiming to reshape dysfunctional emotional processing patterns. By bridging psychological and neurobiological domains, Schore's theory reinforces the critical importance of early parenting in shaping the neurophysiological substrates of emotional regulation, contributing to both developmental psychopathology and resilience research.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) developed the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which conceptualizes stress as a dynamic process resulting from an ongoing interaction—or "transaction"—between an individual and their environment. Central to the model are two forms of cognitive appraisal: *primary appraisal* (where the individual evaluates whether an encounter is irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful) and *secondary appraisal* (where the individual assesses their resources and options for coping). Emotional regulation, according to this framework, is not an automatic reaction to stress but is mediated by the individual's perception of the situation and their coping resources, which are often developed in early life.

The model distinguishes between two major forms of coping: problem-focused coping, which involves addressing the source of the stress, and emotion-focused coping, which involves managing emotional responses to the stressor. Both types of coping can be adaptive or maladaptive, depending on the context, and are significantly influenced by early learning experiences, particularly parental guidance, support, and modeling. Children raised in environments where parents foster constructive coping strategies, such as problem-solving,

emotional expression, and cognitive reframing, are more likely to develop resilient and flexible emotion regulation patterns. Conversely, parenting that dismisses or invalidates emotions may lead to ineffective appraisals and reliance on maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as avoidance, denial, or rumination.

Lazarus and Folkman emphasized the role of reappraisal, the process of reevaluating a stressor, which is closely linked to emotion regulation and influenced by internalized family schemas. Parents who provide consistent emotional support and help children make sense of their experiences contribute to more positive appraisals of challenging situations, thereby enhancing emotional resilience and regulatory competence. Moreover, the social context—including caregiver responsiveness, emotional validation, and autonomy encouragement—serves as a scaffold for learning how to interpret stress and respond adaptively.

The transactional perspective also underlines the bidirectional influence between environment and emotional processes: while stressful events can shape emotional responses, the way an individual copes can, in turn, alter the environment or reduce stress intensity. This highlights the importance of early parent-child interactions in setting the tone for how individuals later manage stress and emotions in adulthood.

In summary, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model underscores that coping and emotion regulation are learned capacities, deeply shaped by early parental influence, cognitive appraisal development, and the emotional context in which a child matures. Their work bridges cognitive and emotional processes and reinforces the idea that emotion regulation is a function of both individual interpretation and social learning, with parenting playing a critical formative role.

Kernberg (1976), through his contributions to Object Relations Theory, emphasized that an individual's internalized representations of early caregivers—formed during infancy and childhood significantly shape the development of the self, personality organization, and

emotional functioning across the lifespan. According to Kernberg, these “object relations” are not merely memories of interactions with others but are complex internalized dyadic structures, consisting of the image of the self in relation to an image of another person (usually a parent or caregiver), both imbued with emotional valence. In healthy development, these internalized representations become integrated, forming a coherent and stable sense of self and facilitating mature emotional regulation.

However, in cases where early relationships are inconsistent, neglectful, hostile, or overly intrusive, the child may internalize split and contradictory images such as a “good” caregiver and a “bad” caregiver without the ability to integrate these opposing experiences. This results in what Kernberg termed “identity diffusion” and “affective instability,” leading to difficulties in self-concept, emotional control, and interpersonal functioning in adulthood. Such fragmented internal structures are often observed in individuals with borderline personality organization, where emotions are experienced intensely and are poorly regulated, often triggered by perceived relational threats or abandonment fears.

Kernberg also proposed that early affective experiences, especially those involving frustration, unmet needs, or inconsistent caregiving, create internalized patterns of defensive operations, such as splitting, projection, and projective identification. These defenses further impair the individual’s ability to process complex emotional states, leading to impulsivity, mood swings, and difficulties with affect tolerance. Moreover, the failure to develop integrated object relations undermines the formation of trust and intimacy in adult relationships, as emotional experiences are often dominated by past unresolved relational schemas.

Importantly, Kernberg’s model integrates psychoanalytic theory with developmental psychology and clinical observations, offering a comprehensive explanation for how early caregiving patterns shape long-term emotional and psychological outcomes. His work

highlights the critical role of emotionally attuned and consistent parenting in fostering an integrated self, stable affect regulation, and healthy interpersonal capacities.

In essence, Kernberg's Object Relations Theory provides a robust framework for understanding the deep-rooted impact of early relational experiences on emotional regulation, supporting the view that dysfunctional early bonding can lead to long-standing challenges in emotional development and mental health.

Siegel (2012), in his groundbreaking work on Interpersonal Neurobiology (IPNB), synthesized findings from neuroscience, attachment theory, psychology, and systems theory to explain how early relational experiences especially emotionally attuned caregiving profoundly shape the developing brain and emotional regulation capacities. He proposed that the mind, brain, and relationships are deeply interwoven systems, and that parent-child interactions serve as the foundation for building the neural architecture underlying emotion regulation, self-awareness, and social functioning. According to Siegel, emotionally responsive parenting helps organize the child's nervous system by regulating the infant's arousal states, thereby creating patterns of neural integration where different brain regions, especially the prefrontal cortex, limbic system, and brainstem, work in coordination.

Siegel emphasized that the development of "mindsight" the capacity to perceive the mind of oneself and others is fostered through secure attachment relationships, which allow children to internalize patterns of emotional attunement and reflective functioning. This internalization supports the maturation of self-regulation, empathy, and mental flexibility. On the contrary, unresponsive, chaotic, or intrusive caregiving may impair the integration process, leading to fragmented neural connectivity, dysregulation, and vulnerabilities to mental health issues like anxiety, impulsivity, or emotional dyscontrol.

A key feature of Siegel's model is "neural integration", the process by which distinct brain regions especially the right and left hemispheres, the cortical and subcortical areas, and the "upstairs" and "downstairs" brain (prefrontal cortex vs. limbic regions) are functionally linked, allowing individuals to manage strong emotions, plan behavior, and reflect on internal experiences. He suggests that when caregivers consistently reflect, name, and help regulate a child's emotions, it promotes the integration of implicit and explicit memory, enabling children to not only understand their emotions but also manage them constructively. This form of co-regulation, repeated over time, becomes internalized as self-regulation.

Additionally, Siegel discusses the "Window of Tolerance," a neurobiological concept describing the optimal arousal zone in which individuals can process emotional stimuli without becoming overwhelmed or shutting down. Parents play a crucial role in expanding this window by modeling calm responses and helping children stay within regulated states. His work highlights that early experiences of mutual gaze, soothing touch, vocal tone, and empathic responsiveness are not merely comforting but are essential neurodevelopmental stimuli that shape emotional and social brain circuits.

Overall, Siegel's Interpersonal Neurobiology provides a robust theoretical and empirical framework for understanding how early caregiving environments influence the formation of regulatory systems in the brain, underscoring the critical importance of secure, responsive parental bonding in fostering emotional health and resilience across the lifespan.

Beck (2011), in his formulation of Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT), emphasized that early interactions with primary caregivers play a critical role in the formation of core beliefs and cognitive schemas that shape an individual's perception of self, others, and the world. According to Beck, children internalize parental responses, messages, and behavioral patterns into enduring core beliefs such as "I am unlovable" or "The world is unsafe" which influence

how they interpret emotional events and regulate their emotional responses. These core beliefs are further maintained and reinforced through automatic thoughts and cognitive distortions like overgeneralization, catastrophizing, or personalization. When caregiving is invalidating, critical, neglectful, or inconsistent, children are more likely to develop negative self-schemas, which impair emotional regulation by distorting emotional appraisals and promoting maladaptive emotional reactions such as anxiety, anger, or emotional numbness.

Beck highlighted the importance of early attachment experiences in shaping the development of these schemas. Emotionally supportive parenting fosters adaptive core beliefs and flexible thinking patterns that enable individuals to effectively modulate emotional experiences. In contrast, repeated experiences of rejection, harsh discipline, or conditional approval often result in maladaptive cognitive-emotional patterns, increasing vulnerability to disorders such as depression, anxiety, and personality disturbances. These schemas become activated under stress, triggering emotional dysregulation and reinforcing negative emotional cycles.

CBT posits that emotion regulation difficulties are maintained by the interplay between maladaptive cognition and learned behavioral responses. For instance, a child who repeatedly hears “Don’t cry” or “Stop being weak” may learn to suppress emotional expression, eventually leading to emotional avoidance and poor awareness of internal states in adulthood. Beck also acknowledged that behavioral avoidance a learned coping strategy often worsens emotional distress by preventing the reappraisal and restructuring of dysfunctional beliefs. His theory laid the groundwork for cognitive restructuring techniques in therapy, where individuals learn to identify and challenge these deeply rooted beliefs and replace them with more realistic, adaptive interpretations that enhance emotional regulation.

In sum, Beck's cognitive model underscores the lasting impact of early parental feedback on emotional and cognitive development, highlighting how dysfunctional parental interactions

contribute to the formation of maladaptive schemas that hinder emotional processing and regulation. CBT remains one of the most widely applied frameworks in clinical psychology, offering robust strategies for restructuring early-formed cognitive patterns and fostering healthier emotional functioning.

Empirical Literature Review

Muris et al. (2003) conducted an empirical study to examine the relationship between perceived parental rearing behaviors and emotional adjustment in adolescents, with a specific focus on anxiety symptoms and emotional regulation capacities. The study involved a sample of adolescents aged between 12 and 17 years, who completed standardized self-report questionnaires, including the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) and assessments of anxiety and emotional functioning. The results revealed that higher levels of perceived maternal care—characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and emotional support—were significantly associated with lower levels of anxiety and improved emotional regulation skills. This finding aligns with attachment theory, suggesting that secure, affectionate parental relationships provide a psychological buffer against stress and emotional dysregulation.

Conversely, higher levels of perceived parental overprotection and rejection, particularly from fathers, were correlated with elevated anxiety symptoms and difficulties in emotional control. These results underscore the role of paternal involvement in adolescent emotional development, highlighting that excessive control and emotional distance may hinder the adolescent's autonomy and coping efficacy. The study also found that maternal care had a stronger predictive value for positive emotional outcomes than paternal care, though both parental roles contributed uniquely to the adolescent's psychological profile.

Muris et al. argued that the internal working models formed through early parental interactions continue to influence how adolescents interpret emotional experiences and manage stress.

Adolescents who internalize nurturing and emotionally available parental figures are more likely to develop adaptive emotion regulation strategies, while those exposed to inconsistent or harsh parenting may develop maladaptive patterns, such as avoidance or rumination. This research supports the broader psychological literature that emphasizes parental bonding as a crucial developmental determinant of emotional health, and it provides empirical backing for interventions that promote positive parenting practices as a means of enhancing adolescent well-being and reducing vulnerability to anxiety disorders.

Roth et al. (2009) investigated the long-term effects of early parental bonding on adult emotional regulation, focusing on how remembered parenting behaviors influenced emotional functioning later in life. The study utilized self-report measures, including the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), across a diverse adult sample. Their findings revealed that individuals who perceived their parents—particularly their mothers—as emotionally distant, rejecting, or overcontrolling during childhood were significantly more likely to exhibit emotional dysregulation in adulthood, such as heightened emotional reactivity, mood swings, and difficulty managing distress. In contrast, adults who recalled their parents as warm, supportive, and emotionally available reported higher use of adaptive regulation strategies, including cognitive reappraisal and emotional acceptance.

The researchers found that low parental care combined with high overprotection was a particularly detrimental pattern, associated with elevated levels of emotion suppression, a maladaptive coping mechanism linked to anxiety and interpersonal difficulties. This parenting style limited the development of autonomous emotion regulation skills, fostering dependency and low confidence in managing negative emotions independently. The study also indicated that emotionally distant or controlling parenting may contribute to the internalization of rigid or negative core beliefs about the self, such as unworthiness or fear of rejection, which further hinders healthy emotional processing.

Importantly, Roth et al. emphasized the lasting influence of early attachment experiences, arguing that they form foundational emotional templates that guide how individuals cope with challenges throughout life. These findings support the notion that secure early relationships facilitate the development of stable affect regulation systems, while inconsistent or distant parental behavior may lead to vulnerabilities in emotional functioning. Their study contributes to the growing evidence base on the intergenerational transmission of emotional patterns and underlines the importance of early family environments in shaping adult psychological health.

Zimmermann and Iwanski (2014) conducted a comprehensive cross-sectional study investigating how emotion regulation strategies develop and change across different life stages adolescence, young adulthood, and middle adulthood and how these strategies are shaped by early parental bonding experiences. Drawing on a large and diverse sample, their study demonstrated that individuals who perceived high parental warmth, responsiveness, and emotional validation during their formative years consistently reported greater use of adaptive strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, problem-solving, and emotional acceptance, regardless of their current age. These emotion regulation strategies were associated with better emotional adjustment, psychological resilience, and greater social competence across the lifespan. Notably, cognitive reappraisal the ability to reinterpret a situation to alter its emotional impact was particularly prevalent among those with positive parental bonding histories, suggesting long-term benefits of emotionally attuned parenting. On the other hand, individuals who recalled their parents as emotionally distant, controlling, or inconsistent tended to use maladaptive strategies, such as suppression, rumination, and avoidance, which correlated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, and interpersonal conflict. The study also highlighted gender differences in emotion regulation patterns, with females typically reporting greater use of reappraisal, and males showing a higher tendency toward suppression. Importantly, these patterns were found to be stable across age groups, indicating the enduring impact of parental

bonding on emotional functioning throughout life. This research emphasizes the critical role of early family environment in shaping emotional regulation capacities and underscores the importance of emotionally supportive parenting for long-term psychological health.

Bariola et al. (2011) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis examining how parental socialization of emotion affects children's development of emotion regulation and social competence. The review integrated findings from numerous studies across varied cultural contexts and age groups, focusing on the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of parental emotional support. The study found that emotionally supportive parenting particularly from mothers was significantly correlated with a child's ability to regulate emotions effectively, which in turn predicted greater psychosocial adjustment, peer acceptance, and academic performance.

The analysis highlighted that maternal sensitivity and responsiveness were particularly potent in shaping emotion regulation during early childhood a critical developmental period for emotional learning. Warmth, validation of emotions, and guidance through emotional experiences were linked to children's use of constructive strategies, including cognitive reappraisal, emotional labeling, and interpersonal problem-solving. On the other hand, emotion-dismissing or harsh parenting styles were associated with maladaptive outcomes, such as emotional suppression, avoidance, and higher levels of internalizing behaviors (e.g., anxiety, depression).

Importantly, the authors found that the quality of the parent-child relationship moderated the effects of emotion-related parenting practices. For example, in secure parent-child relationships, even mild emotional coaching could significantly enhance emotion regulation, whereas in insecure or conflictual relationships, the same practices might be less effective or even counterproductive. The study also emphasized the importance of consistency in emotional

support, noting that fluctuating or unpredictable parental responses could contribute to emotional dysregulation and confusion in children.

Bariola et al. further discussed gender differences, suggesting that girls may be more sensitive to maternal emotion socialization due to societal norms that permit emotional expression more freely in females. The study concluded that emotionally supportive parenting is a foundational protective factor that fosters long-term emotional resilience and psychological well-being and recommended parent-training programs that promote emotion coaching, validation, and attunement.

Kiff et al. (2011) conducted a comprehensive review examining how variations in parenting behavior influence emotional development and self-regulation in children, particularly in early to middle childhood. Their findings revealed that harsh, inconsistent, and unresponsive parenting is consistently associated with greater emotional reactivity, behavioral dysregulation, and the development of maladaptive coping strategies. Children exposed to such parenting are more likely to exhibit heightened negative affect, such as irritability, aggression, and anxiety, along with difficulties in modulating their emotions and adapting to challenging situations. The review emphasized that authoritarian and punitive parenting tends to suppress rather than support the development of healthy emotion regulation, often resulting in internalizing problems (e.g., withdrawal, anxiety) or externalizing behaviors (e.g., impulsivity, aggression). Moreover, the authors highlighted how the emotional climate of the home and the emotional functioning of the parent themselves influence the development of children's regulatory capacities. Parents who are emotionally dysregulated may inadvertently model poor regulation strategies, thereby shaping similarly maladaptive patterns in their children. In contrast, emotionally responsive and consistent parenting was found to foster the development of effortful control, a key component of self-regulation that supports impulse control, emotional flexibility, and goal-directed behavior. The review also noted that early emotional interactions

with caregivers influence neurobiological pathways related to emotion regulation, particularly within the prefrontal cortex and limbic system. Kiff et al. (2011) concluded that early intervention strategies and parenting programs that promote emotional attunement and responsive caregiving are critical for nurturing healthy emotional development.

Morris et al. (2007) proposed a comprehensive tripartite model of emotion regulation development, integrating existing theories and empirical findings to explain how parenting behaviors influence children's emotional competencies. Their model emphasizes three key mechanisms: parental modeling of emotion regulation, the emotional climate of the family, and emotion-related parenting practices (such as emotion coaching and direct instruction). Through an extensive review of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, the authors demonstrated that children learn regulatory behaviors by observing how their parents manage their own emotions, particularly during stress or conflict. For instance, parents who display adaptive regulation strategies—such as calm problem-solving or open emotional expression—tend to have children who mirror those strategies. In contrast, parents who frequently suppress emotions or exhibit dysregulation (e.g., explosive anger, emotional withdrawal) inadvertently teach children maladaptive patterns.

The emotional climate, including overall levels of warmth, security, and emotional availability in the home, was found to be a strong predictor of children's emotion regulation abilities. A supportive emotional climate fosters secure attachment and allows children to explore and manage their emotions within a safe environment. The model also includes the role of emotion-related parenting practices, such as whether parents validate or dismiss their child's emotional experiences. Children whose emotions are acknowledged and guided by parents are more likely to develop self-awareness, emotional vocabulary, and adaptive regulation. Conversely, punitive or dismissive responses to a child's distress were linked to emotional avoidance, suppression, and internalizing symptoms such as anxiety and depression.

The model also accounted for bidirectional influences, noting that children's temperament and emotional behaviors also influence parental responses over time. Additionally, Morris et al. called for more research on cultural variations and emphasized the need to explore how different family structures and socioeconomic contexts interact with these processes. This integrative model has since been influential in shaping interventions aimed at improving emotion regulation through parent-focused training, and it underscores the critical and multifaceted role of parenting in emotional development.

Heleniak et al. (2016) conducted a pivotal longitudinal study examining the impact of childhood emotional abuse and neglect on emotional dysregulation during adolescence and young adulthood. Using a diverse community sample, the researchers investigated how early adverse emotional experiences disrupt the developmental pathways of emotional regulation and contribute to later psychopathology, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress symptoms. The study employed standardized measures, including the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) and emotion dysregulation scales, to capture the severity and chronicity of maltreatment and its psychological consequences.

The findings revealed that individuals who experienced emotional abuse (e.g., constant criticism, humiliation, rejection) or emotional neglect (e.g., lack of affection, attention, or responsiveness) in childhood displayed significantly higher levels of emotional reactivity, poor impulse control, and difficulties in emotional awareness and clarity in their later years. These emotion regulation difficulties were, in turn, strongly predictive of internalizing disorders, especially major depressive disorder and PTSD symptoms. Notably, the study distinguished emotional maltreatment from physical and sexual abuse, emphasizing that emotional forms of maltreatment may have uniquely potent effects on regulatory development.

Moreover, the authors proposed a developmental cascade model, suggesting that early emotional maltreatment initiates a chain of maladaptive processes—such as poor attachment, social withdrawal, and cognitive distortions that gradually solidify into patterns of emotional dysregulation. This cascade disrupts the formation of secure attachment representations, self-concept, and coping skills, which are foundational to effective emotional regulation.

The study also discussed neurobiological implications, citing evidence that chronic emotional stress in childhood may lead to dysregulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and altered development of brain regions like the amygdala and prefrontal cortex, which are crucial for emotion processing and control.

Heleniak et al. concluded by underscoring the importance of early intervention and supportive caregiving to mitigate the long-term impacts of emotional maltreatment. The study's findings have important implications for trauma-informed care, mental health prevention programs, and parenting interventions that prioritize emotional availability and responsiveness.

Katz and Gottman (1995) conducted a foundational study in the area of emotion coaching, a concept that refers to parents' active engagement in recognizing, validating, and guiding their children through emotional experiences. The researchers developed and validated a model of meta-emotion philosophy, which is defined as parents' feelings and attitudes about emotions—both their own and their children's and how these beliefs influence parenting practices.

The study involved parents of preschool and school-aged children and included observational assessments, parent interviews, and self-report questionnaires. Katz and Gottman categorized parents into two primary types based on their emotion-related parenting style: "emotion-coaching" parents and "emotion-dismissing" parents.

Their findings revealed that emotion-coaching parents: Were more aware of their own and their child's emotions. Viewed negative emotions (such as sadness or anger) as opportunities for

intimacy and teaching. Helped their children label emotions, problem-solve, and find constructive ways to manage feelings. Children of emotion-coaching parents exhibited significantly higher levels of emotional competence, including: Better emotion regulation skills, such as the ability to soothe themselves, delay gratification, and manage frustration. Improved social competence, including greater peer acceptance and stronger interpersonal relationships. Fewer behavioral problems, both internalizing (e.g., anxiety, depression) and externalizing (e.g., aggression, defiance).

In contrast, emotion-dismissing parents minimized or ignored children's emotional expressions, often viewing emotions as problematic. Their children were found to be more emotionally reactive and less equipped to handle distressing experiences, often showing more conduct problems and lower emotional understanding.

Katz and Gottman emphasized that emotion coaching is a learned skill and not necessarily innate. They proposed that parents could be trained in this approach through parenting programs and therapeutic interventions, which could promote children's emotional resilience, social adjustment, and academic success.

This study was highly influential in shaping both research and practical interventions related to parental emotion socialization and laid the groundwork for later work by Gottman and colleagues in developing parent-training programs like the "Emotion Coaching Parenting Workshop."

Skowron, Stanley, and Shapiro (2003) conducted an influential study exploring the relationship between family-of-origin emotional processes and adult emotional regulation, through the lens of Bowen's Family Systems Theory particularly the concept of differentiation of self. Differentiation refers to an individual's ability to balance emotional and intellectual functioning and maintain autonomy while still remaining emotionally connected to their family of origin.

The researchers assessed 205 adult participants using the Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI) and other psychological measures such as the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS) to evaluate emotional regulation capacities, including clarity of emotions and mood repair. They also examined levels of emotional reactivity, fusion with others, emotional cutoff, and I-position (a sense of strong self-identity in relationships).

Key Findings were high differentiation was positively associated with greater emotional clarity, effective emotional self-regulation, and a higher capacity to cope with interpersonal stress. Participants who were emotionally autonomous (i.e., not overly fused or cut off from their families) were less reactive to emotional stressors and demonstrated better psychological adjustment, including reduced anxiety, depression, and interpersonal conflict. Those with low differentiation tended to exhibit emotional dysregulation, higher emotional reactivity, dependency in relationships, and difficulty in maintaining self-identity under relational pressure.

The study provided empirical support for Bowen's theoretical claim that early family emotional dynamics leave a lasting imprint on individuals' emotional functioning. The authors emphasized that differentiation, rooted in early parent-child interactions, continues to influence emotional resilience well into adulthood.

Skowron et al. (2003) also highlighted that therapeutic efforts focused on improving differentiation such as through emotion-focused therapy, Bowenian family therapy, or mindfulness-based interventions can help individuals improve emotional regulation by revisiting and reworking unresolved family-of-origin issues.

This research added to the growing evidence that early family emotional climates shape lifelong emotional capacities, including the ability to process, express, and regulate feelings, especially under relational stress.

Brumariu and Kerns (2010) conducted a pivotal review exploring the association between attachment security and emotion regulation in childhood, synthesizing both theoretical and empirical literature. Their findings emphasized that children's early attachment relationships—particularly with primary caregivers play a crucial role in shaping their emotional development and regulatory strategies. Securely attached children, who experience their caregivers as consistently responsive, warm, and emotionally available, are more likely to develop constructive emotion regulation strategies, such as cognitive reframing, problem-solving, and seeking social support when distressed. These children also show greater emotional awareness, the ability to articulate their feelings, and openness in discussing their emotions with others.

In contrast, children with insecure attachment patterns whether anxious, avoidant, or disorganized tend to struggle with emotion regulation. Avoidantly attached children were found to minimize or suppress emotional expression, often disengaging from emotional experiences to cope with stress. Anxiously attached children, on the other hand, were more likely to amplify emotional distress, display heightened emotional reactivity, and engage in rumination or dependency-based coping. The review underscored how these maladaptive strategies could predispose children to internalizing problems such as anxiety or depression, or externalizing behaviors such as aggression and impulsivity.

Brumariu and Kerns also highlighted developmental pathways through which early attachment influences emotion regulation such as co-regulation in infancy, emotional coaching in early childhood, and modeling of emotional expression and control by parents. They concluded that secure attachment relationships serve as a protective factor, fostering resilience and emotional competence, while insecure attachments present a risk factor for dysregulation and associated psychopathology.

Turpyn et al. (2015) conducted a neuroscientific investigation into how early parenting experiences influence the neural mechanisms underlying emotion regulation in children. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), the researchers assessed brain activation patterns in preadolescent children (aged 8–10 years) as they completed emotion regulation tasks that involved processing negative emotional stimuli. The primary aim was to examine how maternal responsiveness, observed in parent-child interactions, related to neural activation in regions associated with cognitive control and emotional regulation, particularly the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and anterior cingulate cortex (ACC).

The study found that children who experienced higher maternal responsiveness—defined as emotionally supportive, attuned, and consistent parenting—showed greater activation in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (dlPFC) and ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) during emotional tasks. These regions are critical for top-down regulation of emotional responses, inhibitory control, and adaptive coping. Moreover, enhanced activation in these areas was associated with lower levels of internalizing symptoms, such as anxiety and depression, suggesting a protective neural pathway mediated by sensitive parenting.

In contrast, children exposed to less responsive or harsh parenting demonstrated weaker activation in these regulatory regions and higher activation in emotion-reactive regions such as the amygdala, indicating a heightened emotional reactivity and poor top-down control. These neural patterns suggest that early caregiving experiences directly influence the functional development of neural systems responsible for managing emotional arousal and regulation.

Turpyn et al.'s findings underscore the biological embedding of parenting quality, providing compelling evidence that responsive caregiving not only influences behavioral outcomes but also has measurable effects on the developing brain architecture involved in emotional self-

regulation. This study integrates developmental psychology with neurobiology, emphasizing the long-term implications of early parental bonding on children's emotional health.

Siffert and Schwarz (2011) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate how different dimensions of family functioning particularly parental conflict resolution styles and parenting consistency—influence children's emotional development and adjustment outcomes. Drawing on data from German school-aged children and their families, the study examined how constructive versus destructive parental conflict, inconsistent discipline, and emotional responsiveness were related to children's internalizing problems (e.g., anxiety, depression) and emotion regulation abilities. The findings revealed that unresolved or destructive parental conflict—characterized by hostility, avoidance, or withdrawal—was significantly associated with greater emotional dysregulation and higher levels of internalizing behaviors in children. Notably, these associations remained robust even after controlling for socioeconomic status, suggesting that the emotional climate of the household plays an independent and critical role in children's psychological functioning.

Moreover, the study found that inconsistent parenting practices, such as unpredictable rules, fluctuating emotional availability, or erratic discipline, were linked to impaired self-regulatory skills in children. In contrast, when parents demonstrated constructive conflict resolution (e.g., cooperation, mutual respect) and consistent, emotionally supportive parenting, children were more likely to develop adaptive emotion regulation strategies and display fewer symptoms of emotional distress. Siffert and Schwarz highlighted the mediating role of emotional security in the relationship between family processes and child outcomes suggesting that children's sense of emotional safety in the home environment influences how they interpret and respond to emotional experiences. This research underscores the importance of stable, respectful, and emotionally coherent family interactions in fostering healthy emotional development.

Creasey et al. (1999) explored the role of conflict resolution quality in parent-adolescent relationships and its association with adolescents' emotional and social outcomes. The study focused on how the style and tone of conflict discussions, particularly between mothers and their adolescent children, influenced emotional regulation abilities and interpersonal adjustment. Their findings highlighted that adolescents who engaged in respectful, empathetic, and collaborative conflict discussions with parents—characterized by mutual listening, emotional validation, and problem-solving exhibited higher levels of emotional regulation, including the ability to modulate negative affect, express emotions constructively, and recover from emotional arousal. Furthermore, these adolescents demonstrated better interpersonal functioning, such as enhanced communication skills, empathy in peer relationships, and reduced aggressive or avoidant behaviors in social contexts.

In contrast, parent-adolescent dyads characterized by coercive, dismissive, or hostile conflict interactions were associated with poorer emotional outcomes, including heightened emotional reactivity, use of suppression or avoidance as regulation strategies, and greater difficulty in peer relationships. The study emphasized that it is not conflict itself that is detrimental, but rather the manner in which conflicts are managed and resolved. Adolescents who perceive their parents as emotionally available and willing to engage in constructive dialogue are more likely to internalize emotion regulation models and develop healthy coping mechanisms. These findings align with broader attachment and emotional socialization theories, underlining the importance of supportive parental engagement in adolescents' emotional and relational development.

Calkins and Hill (2007) provided significant evidence linking early maternal sensitivity to the development of effective emotional regulation in children. Their longitudinal study examined how mothers' responsiveness to infants' cues and emotional needs during the early years predicted the children's ability to manage emotional responses in later childhood. The

researchers found that maternal behaviors characterized by warmth, attunement, and consistency—such as comforting the child during distress, responding appropriately to emotional expressions, and encouraging emotional communication—were strong predictors of adaptive emotional regulation in stressful contexts. Children of sensitive mothers were more likely to engage in self-soothing, use constructive coping strategies, and show reduced physiological stress responses, such as lower cortisol reactivity and better behavioral self-control when faced with frustration or challenge.

Moreover, the study emphasized that early caregiver-child interactions serve as the foundation for internal working models of affect regulation. Children internalize their early experiences with caregivers and develop a framework for understanding, expressing, and managing emotions. Conversely, the absence of maternal sensitivity such as inconsistent or intrusive parenting—was linked to emotion dysregulation, including heightened emotional reactivity, poor impulse control, and a greater reliance on maladaptive strategies like avoidance or outbursts. These findings reinforce the developmental perspective that early emotional environments, particularly those shaped by maternal bonding, play a critical role in laying the neural and psychological groundwork for long-term emotional health and resilience.

The reviewed studies suggest that parental bonding has a lasting impact on an individual's emotional regulation capacity. Warmth, care, and autonomy support from parents help children internalize adaptive emotional strategies. On the other hand, experiences of parental rejection, control, or neglect contribute to emotional challenges in adulthood. While substantial research supports this link, more comparative studies across different adult age groups especially in diverse cultural contexts like India are needed. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring these variables among young and middle-aged adults.

Gross (1998) introduced the Process Model of Emotion Regulation, which explains how individuals manage their emotional experiences through different strategies. He categorized these strategies into two main types: antecedent-focused (such as cognitive reappraisal) and response-focused (such as expressive suppression). Antecedent-focused strategies involve modifying one's thoughts before the emotion is fully generated, while response-focused strategies occur after the emotion has been elicited. Through a review of multiple experimental studies involving adult participants, Gross found that cognitive reappraisal was linked to more positive psychological outcomes, including lower levels of distress and better interpersonal functioning. In contrast, expressive suppression was associated with increased negative affect, social difficulties, and reduced emotional well-being. These findings highlight the importance of learning healthy emotional regulation strategies early in life and point toward the developmental roots of emotion regulation, often shaped by parenting practices and early relational experiences.

Both studies emphasize the significant role of early life experiences particularly parenting styles in shaping emotional regulation. Gross (1998) highlighted that adaptive emotion regulation strategies like cognitive reappraisal are linked to better mental health outcomes, while maladaptive strategies like suppression are associated with negative psychological effects. These abilities are often learned and modeled during early development, suggesting the influence of caregiving. Supporting this, Tetley et al. reviewed studies showing that individuals with eating disorders perceived their parents as less caring and more overprotective compared to non-clinical individuals. This indicates that low parental care and high control may disrupt emotional development, leading to long-term difficulties in managing emotions. Together, the findings from these studies underscore that parenting styles have a profound and lasting impact on emotional regulation and psychological well-being.

In summary, the numerous studies that I have explored the impact of parental bonding on psychological outcomes in childhood and adolescence, there is a significant lack of research focusing on how perceived parental bonding continues to influence emotional regulation in adulthood—particularly in the distinct life stages of young and middle adulthood. Existing literature often centers on either early developmental periods or generalized adult populations, overlooking potential developmental and psychosocial differences between young adults (who are forming identities and independence) and middle-aged adults (who are navigating stability, family responsibilities, and aging). There are limited studies examine the differential roles of maternal and paternal bonding in shaping emotion regulation capacities across these age groups. This gap highlights the need for age-specific, comparative research to better understand how early parental bonding patterns persist and affect emotional functioning across adulthood.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology outlines the systematic approach adopted in conducting the present study. It serves as a blueprint that guides the research process, ensuring clarity, consistency, and scientific rigor. This section provides a detailed description of the procedures used to investigate the relationship between perceived parental bonding and emotional regulation among young and middle-aged adults. The methodology includes the research design, sampling strategy, participant characteristics, inclusion and exclusion criteria, tools of data collection, and method of data analysis. A quantitative approach was deemed appropriate for the study, as it enabled the objective measurement and statistical analysis of the variables involved. By adopting a correlational-comparative design, the study aimed not only to explore associations between parental bonding dimensions and emotional regulation but also to identify differences across demographic groups. The methodology was carefully planned to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings and to maintain ethical standards throughout the research process.

Research methodology refers to the structured framework or strategy that guides the entire research process. It encompasses the principles, procedures, and techniques used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in order to answer a research question or test a hypothesis. It ensures that the study is conducted systematically, ethically, and scientifically.

In essence, research methodology provides the "how" of the research—it explains how the data will be gathered, what tools will be used, which population will be studied, and how the results will be interpreted. It involves several key components such as: Research Design – the overall plan (e.g., experimental, correlational, comparative, descriptive) that outlines how the study will be carried out, Population and Sample – who the research targets and how participants are

selected, Sampling Techniques – methods used to select participants (e.g., random, purposive, convenience sampling), Data Collection Methods – how information is gathered (e.g., surveys, interviews, observations, psychological tests), Tools/Instruments – the specific instruments or scales used for measurement (e.g., questionnaires, standardized tests), Data Analysis Techniques – the statistical or thematic techniques used to make sense of the data, Ethical Considerations – how the study protects participants' rights, privacy, and well-being.

3.1 Aim

The primary aim of the present study is to explore the relationship between perceived parental bonding and emotional regulation among young and middle-aged adults. Specifically, the study seeks to examine how various dimensions of parental bonding such as care, control, rejection, and autonomy influence individuals' abilities to understand, manage, and regulate their emotional experiences. By comparing these dynamics across different age groups and between maternal and paternal bonding patterns, the study aims to provide deeper insights into the long-term psychological effects of early parent-child relationships on emotional well-being and regulation throughout adulthood.

3.2 Research Questions

1. What are the levels of perceived parental bonding (care, control, rejection, and autonomy) among young and middle-aged adults?
2. How do maternal and paternal bonding patterns differ in their influence on emotional regulation?
3. Are there any significant differences in emotional regulation based on age (young vs. middle-aged).

3.3 Hypothesis

3.3.1 Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is **no significant relationship** between perceived parental bonding (in terms of care, control, rejection, and autonomy) and emotional regulation among young and middle-aged adults, and **no significant differences** exist based on parental role (maternal vs. paternal) or age group (young vs. middle-aged).

3.3.2 Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a **significant relationship** between perceived parental bonding (in terms of care, control, rejection, and autonomy) and emotional regulation among young and middle-aged adults, and **significant differences** exist based on parental role (maternal vs. paternal) and age group (young vs. middle-aged).

3.4 Research Design

The present study adopted a correlational comparative research design to explore the relationship between perceived parental bonding and emotional regulation among young and middle-aged individuals. This design was deemed appropriate as it enables the examination of associations between naturally occurring variables without manipulation, while also allowing comparisons between subgroups within the sample if necessary.

3.5 Population and Sample

The target population for this research consisted of individuals aged 16 to 39 years, representing both young and middle adulthood, a life span segment during which patterns of emotional regulation and internalized parental influences are significantly observable. A total of 215 participants were recruited using the convenience sampling method, owing to its

feasibility in reaching a diverse and accessible group of respondents within the time constraints of the study.

3.6 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain the homogeneity and relevance of the sample, inclusion criteria were established, permitting only individuals within the age range of 16 to 39 years to participate. The exclusion criteria filtered out participants who were raised by a single parent, specifically those who did not have either their mother or father present during their upbringing, as the study aimed to assess perceptions of bonding from both parents.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through online administration, allowing for wider geographical reach, greater convenience, and reduced logistical constraints. Participants were provided with an informed consent form before accessing the questionnaires, ensuring ethical compliance and voluntary participation. The online mode also facilitated anonymity and ease of response, which may enhance the accuracy and honesty of self-report data.

3.8 Instruments Used

The study employed standardized psychological assessment tools for data collection:

- Parental Bonding Instrument: Brief Current Version (PBI-BC) developed by Klimidis was used to measure perceived parental bonding. This instrument assesses two primary dimensions of parental behavior, care and over protection, as recalled by the individual, and is designed to capture both maternal and paternal bonding styles.
- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS-18) was used to evaluate emotional regulation difficulties. This shorter version of the original DERS assesses six key facets of emotional dysregulation: nonacceptance of emotional responses, difficulties

engaging in goal-directed behavior, impulse control difficulties, lack of emotional awareness, limited access to emotion regulation strategies, and lack of emotional clarity.

Both tools are widely validated and recognized for their reliability and psychometric robustness in assessing the respective constructs.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and range) were calculated to summarize the data. The Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to check for normality, and the results indicated that the data were not normally distributed. As a result, the following non-parametric tests were used: Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was applied to assess the relationship between the four dimensions of parental bonding (care, control, rejection, and autonomy—both maternal and paternal) and emotional dysregulation. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare emotional dysregulation scores between young adults and middle-aged adults. All tests were two-tailed, and statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

CHAPTER -4**RESULT & DISCUSSION**

Table No-1 Test of Normality

Variables	Statistic df	Shapiro-Wilk	Sig
Fathercare	.863 197	.000	
FR	.789 197	.000	
FC	.909 197	.000	
FA	.819 197	.000	
Father	.968 197	.000	
Total	.792 197	.000	
MC	.833 197	.000	
MR	.885 197	.000	
MCO	.814 197	.000	
MA	.952 197	.000	
Total			

Relationship Between Parental Bonding and Emotional Regulation

Variables	Statistic	Shapiro-wilk	Sig
Awareness	.95	197	.000
Clarity	6.9	197	.000
Goals	72.	197	.000
Impulse	961.	197	.000
Non- acceptance	970.	197	.000
Strategies	974.	197	.000
DERS	996	197	.000

The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the data were not normally distributed (p is less than 0.05).

Therefore, a non-parametric test such as Mann-Whitney U is used for further analy

Table 2: Correlation between the subscales of the parental bonding scale and the total DERS scale score

Variable		Father care	DERS Total score
Father Care	Pearson	1	- .149
	Correlation		
	Sig(2-tailed)		0.029
	N	215	215
DERS SCORE	Pearson	-0.149	1
	Correlation	0.029	
	N	215	215

There is a significant negative correlation between father care and emotional dysregulation (DERS score) among the participants, $r(215) = -0.147$, $p = 0.030$. This indicates that as perceived care from the father increases, difficulties in emotion regulation tend to decrease. Although the relationship is statistically significant, the strength of the correlation is weak (since values closer to 0 represent weaker associations).

Table 4: Correlation between Father rejection and DERS score

Variable		FR	DERS Total
FR	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.181
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.049
DERS	Pearson Correlation	-0.181	
SCORE	Sig (2-tailed)	0.049	

Since the p-value is 0.049, which is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant at the 5% level. There is a statistically significant negative correlation between father rejection and emotional dysregulation (as measured by the DERS scale). This means that as the score for father rejection increases, the DERS score tends to decrease.

Table 5: Correlation between Father autonomy and DERS score

Variable	FA	DERS Score
Pearson Correlation	1	-0.140
Total Score	Sig(2-tailed)	0.040
FA		
DERS	Pearson Correlation	-0.140
SCORE	Sig(2-tailed)	0.040

The p-value is 0.040, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the result is statistically significant at the 5% level. There is a statistically significant negative correlation between Father Autonomy (FA) and Emotional Dysregulation (DERS Score). This means that as the father's promotion of autonomy increases, the level of emotional dysregulation decreases among participants.

Table 6: Correlation between Father control and DERS score

Variables	FC	DERS SCORE
FC	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.169
DERS	Pearson Correlation	0.169
SCORE	Sig(2-tailed)	0.013

Correlations of Mothers' care, autonomy, rejection, and control

Table 10: Correlation between mother control and DERS score

Variables	Total Scores	Mother control
Total Score Pearson Correlation	1	221
Sig(2-tailed)		0.01
N	217	217
Mother control Pearson Correlation	.221	1
Sig (2-tailed)	.001	
N	217	217

There is a statistically significant positive correlation between mother control and emotional dysregulation ($r = 0.221$, $p = 0.001$).

Discussion

The findings of the present study partially align with previous research on the relationship between parental bonding and emotional regulation, while also presenting notable differences. Similar to earlier studies (such as Mannarini et al., 2018, and Wilson et al., 2024), the current results revealed that controlling parenting—particularly maternal control—was significantly associated with greater emotional dysregulation. This supports the widely accepted view that overcontrolling parenting can interfere with emotional autonomy, making it more difficult for individuals to manage their emotions effectively. Likewise, the positive association between father control and emotional dysregulation is consistent with prior research, while the negative correlation between father care and emotional dysregulation reflects the protective role of paternal warmth. The association between father autonomy and better emotional regulation

further supports the idea that when fathers promote independence, it positively contributes to emotional development.

However, the study diverged from previous research in that maternal care, rejection, and autonomy did not show significant associations with emotional dysregulation. These differences may be attributed to several contextual factors. First, cultural expectations and gender roles may influence how participants perceive and evaluate maternal behavior, particularly in Indian families where mothers are traditionally seen as emotionally available. As a result, certain behaviors—such as strictness or emotional distance—may be normalized or overlooked. Second, participants' current life stage as young or middle-aged adults may influence how they recall or interpret past parenting experiences. With increasing age and life experience, individuals may gain emotional independence or receive emotional support from spouses, peers, or their own parenting roles, which can buffer or reshape earlier parental influences. Third, memory recall and social desirability may have influenced how participants reported on their mothers' behaviors, possibly minimizing negative experiences. Additionally, the findings suggest a relatively stronger influence of paternal bonding in this sample, which may reflect changing father–child dynamics in recent generations. As fathers have become more emotionally engaged and involved in parenting, their influence on long-term emotional regulation may be more pronounced among today's adult population.

Overall, these findings highlight that while both parents contribute to emotional development, the nature and impact of their influence may vary depending on cultural context, age group, shifting parental roles, and individual coping mechanisms. This underlines the importance of considering sociocultural and developmental factors when examining the lasting effects of parental bonding on emotional regulation.

CHAPTER- 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

This study highlights the role of parental bonding in emotional regulation. It was found that certain parenting behaviors, particularly those involving high levels of control or the promotion of autonomy, may significantly influence how individuals manage their emotions. While most aspects of parental care, rejection, and autonomy did not show a strong connection to emotional regulation, the presence of controlling behavior from mothers appeared to be associated with greater emotional difficulties. On the other hand, when fathers supported and encouraged independence, it seemed to contribute positively to emotional regulation. These findings suggest that the quality of parental involvement especially in terms of how much autonomy or control is exercised can have lasting effects on an individual's emotional well-being. The study underscores the importance of fostering a parenting style that balances guidance with respect for the child's independence.

Major

Maternal Control and emotional Dysregulation : A significant association was found between high levels of maternal control and increased emotional difficulties in individuals. Participants who perceived their mothers as overly controlling exhibited greater challenges in emotional regulation. **Paternal Autonomy Support and emotional regulation:** Fathers who encouraged autonomy were found to positively influence emotional regulation. Participants who perceived their fathers as autonomy-supportive demonstrated healthier emotional functioning and adaptability. **Minimal Impact of Other Dimensions:** Other components of parental bonding, such as care, rejection, and general autonomy, did not show a statistically

strong relationship with emotional regulation in this sample, suggesting that the effects may be more nuanced or context-dependent.

Implications of the Study

Parental Guidance and Emotional Development: The findings highlight the need for balanced parenting styles—avoiding excessive control while promoting appropriate independence—to support the development of emotional regulation.

Targeted Parenting Interventions: Programs and interventions aimed at improving parent-child relationships should emphasize the detrimental effects of controlling behavior, especially from mothers, and the benefits of autonomy promotion, especially from fathers.

Informing Mental Health Practices: Mental health professionals working with adolescents and adults can use insights from parental bonding patterns to better understand emotional dysregulation and tailor therapeutic strategies accordingly.

Educational Programs: These results can inform parenting workshops and school-based family education programs, helping caregivers recognize how their interactions influence long-term emotional well-being.

Limitations of the Study

Sampling Method: The study utilized convenience sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Participants were selected based on availability rather than random selection, which could introduce sampling bias.

Self-Report Measures: Data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which are subject to social desirability bias and recall bias. Participants may not have accurately remembered or honestly reported their childhood experiences or emotional patterns.

Cross-Sectional Design: As the study adopted a cross-sectional research design, it only provides a snapshot of the relationship between parental bonding and emotional regulation. Causal relationships cannot be firmly established.

Limited Age Range: The study focused on individuals aged 16 to 39, thereby excluding older adults or children. As a result, the findings may not be applicable across all age groups or developmental stages.

Cultural Context: The research was conducted within a specific socio-cultural context, which may limit its applicability to different cultural or familial settings where parenting styles and emotional expressions differ significantly.

Exclusion Criteria: Individuals raised by a single parent were excluded, which overlooks the experiences of a significant portion of the population and limits the scope of understanding how different family structures affect emotional regulation.

Suggestions for Future Research

Adopt a Longitudinal Design Future studies should consider using a longitudinal research design to track the influence of parental bonding on emotional regulation over time. This would help in establishing causal relationships rather than just correlations. **Include Diverse Family Structures** to gain a more comprehensive understanding, future research should include individuals from varied family backgrounds, such as those raised by single parents, grandparents, or in blended families, to examine how different caregiving contexts influence emotional regulation. **Expand the age range** including children, adolescents, and older adults in future samples would provide insight into how the impact of parental bonding on emotional regulation evolves across the lifespan.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons future research could compare parental bonding and emotional regulation across different cultural settings to determine how cultural norms and values shape parenting styles and emotional development. **Incorporate Qualitative Methods** along with quantitative tools, future studies could use qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or focus groups to explore participants' lived experiences and gain richer insights into the nuances of parental bonding.

Examine the role of Siblings and Peers Future research could also investigate how other familial and social relationships, such as with siblings or close peers, interact with parental bonding to affect emotional regulation. **Consider Parental Mental Health and Stress**

Further studies might explore how parental mental health, stress levels, or parenting stress moderate or mediate the relationship between parental bonding and children's emotional outcomes. **Use Multi-Informant Reports**

Future research should consider including multiple informants (e.g., parent reports, teacher observations) to reduce bias from self-report measures and improve the validity of emotional regulation assessments.

Conclusion

The study explored the relationship between parental bonding and emotional dysregulation among young and middle-aged adults. The findings suggest that the way parents interact with and guide their children particularly through control or autonomy can have a meaningful impact on emotional regulation later in life. While not all dimensions of parental bonding showed a strong influence, the presence of controlling behavior from mothers appeared to be linked with greater emotional difficulties, whereas the promotion of autonomy by fathers was associated with healthier emotional functioning. These insights highlight the importance of parenting approaches that encourage independence while avoiding excessive control. The study

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reinforces the need for awareness and education around parenting styles, as early relational experiences can play a significant role in shaping emotional well-being in adulthood

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1. APPENDICES

a) Informed Consent

I am ____ M.Sc Counselling Psychology student at ____ . As part of my PG program, I am doing a study on relationship between parental bonding and emotion regulation among young and middle age – adults

This study focuses on individuals in the young adult age range of 16 to 39 years. The questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Please answer all questions honestly and with sincerity. Kindly ensure that no items are left unanswered, as your responses will contribute to valuable findings.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes. By continuing, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the above information and agree to take part in this research study.

b) Socio-Demographic Data

Age:

Gender: Male/Female/ Other:

c) Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI)

Instructions:

Please rate how you perceived your father and mother during the first 16 years of your life using the following scale:

Never

Sometimes

Usually

Father Version

No.	Item
-----	------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | My father seems to understand my problems. |
| 2 | My father makes me feel better when I am upset. |
| 3 | My father helps me as much as I need. |
| 4 | My father seems emotionally cold towards me. |
| 5 | My father tries to control everything I do. |
| 6 | My father treats me like a baby and tries to protect me from everything. |
| 7 | My father likes me to make my own decisions. |
| 8 | My father gives me as much freedom as I want. |

Mother Version

No.	Item
-----	------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 9 | My mother seems to understand my problems. |
|---|--|

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- 10 My mother makes me feel better when I am upset.
- 11 My mother helps me as much as I need.
- 12 My mother seems emotionally cold towards me.
- 13 My mother tries to control everything I do.
- 14 My mother treats me like a baby and tries to protect me from everything.
- 15 My mother likes me to make my own decisions.
- 16 My mother gives me as much freedom as I want.

d) DERS-18

Instructions: This includes statements about your emotions and how you respond to them.

Please read each statement carefully and indicate how often each statement applied to you.

Almost Never (0-10%)

Sometimes (11-35%)

About Half the Time (36-65%)

Most of the Time (66-90%)

Almost Always (91-100%)

1. I pay attention to how I feel.
2. I have no idea how I am feeling
3. I have difficulty making sense out of my feelings.
4. I am attentive to my feelings.
5. I am confused about how I feel.
6. When I'm upset, I acknowledge my emotions.
7. When I'm upset, I become embarrassed for feeling that way
8. When I'm upset, I have difficulty getting work done.
9. When I'm upset, I become out of control..
10. When I'm upset, I believe that I will remain that way for a long time.
11. When I'm upset, I believe that I'll end up feeling very depressed.
12. When I'm upset, I have difficulty focusing on other things.

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13. When I'm upset, I feel ashamed with myself for feeling that way.
14. When I'm upset, I feel guilty for feeling that way.
15. When I'm upset, I have difficulty concentrating.
16. When I'm upset, I have difficulty controlling my behaviors.
17. When I'm upset, I believe that wallowing in it is all I can do.
18. When I'm upset, I lose control over my behaviors.