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**Remembered Parental Styles and Its Effect on Defense Mechanisms and
Personality Styles**

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Abstract

Previous research has demonstrated a reciprocal influence between parental styles, defense mechanisms and personality styles. This study aimed to investigate the impact of remembered parental styles on defense mechanisms and personality styles. Additionally, the study sought to illustrate the associations between different parental styles and their corresponding manifestations of defense mechanisms and personality styles. The sample size of the study was 46 (28 female, 16 male and 2 other) whose age ranged between 18 to 24. The data were collected through a questionnaire package including (i) demographic information, (ii) the Measure of Parental Style, a self-assessment tool used to measure perceived parenting styles across three measures: indifference, abuse and over control for both the mother and the father of the subject, (iii) the Defense Style Questionnaire which is designed to identify defensive functioning and coping styles and lastly, (iv) the Personality Inventory For DSM-5 Brief Form (PID-5-BF) - Adult which assesses personality domains; negative affect, detachment, antagonism, disinhibition and psychoticism.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Parental Styles

Parental styles have long been recognized as influential in shaping the psychological development of individuals. There has been studies conducting the relationship between parental styles and its influence on defense mechanisms and personality development. While a considerable body of literature exists on other associations between parental styles and psychological outcomes, there is a shortage of studies that delve exclusively into the connection between remembered parental styles and defense mechanisms and personality styles only. The present study aims to contribute to literature by exploring associations solely between parental styles and defense mechanisms as well as personality styles.

Parenting styles refer to the practices of parents socializing their children (Baumrind, 1991). Most family socialization theories see parenting behavior as a multifaceted construct that develops through a process of lifelong learning, both of which are thought to be essential to children's development (Baumrind, 1971, Lerner, 1894). According to Steinberg (2007), parenting styles are a range of attitudes that parents convey to their children along with the emotional atmosphere expressed through parental behavior. Parental support is crucial in child's development because it indicates positive outcomes such as a strong sense of self-worth and security, improved psychological health, and other favorable outcomes (Coplan et al., 2002; Steinberg, 2001).

Diana Baumrind and Stanford researchers (1967) categorized parenting styles as "authoritative," "permissive," "neglectful," and "authoritarian. Building on this model, McCoby and Martin (1983) introduced a new classification based on two dimensions: the level of warmth (or responsiveness) provided by the parent, along with the level of control exerted on the child. The combination of these two dimensions results in a fourth parental style, called "negligent", characterized by a lack of emotional availability and a lack of imposed control (Popescu, 2020).

The first variable this study focuses on is defense mechanisms. According to Freud, individuals use defense mechanisms to stop undesirable sexual and aggressive instincts from

entering consciousness and to shield the ego from unacceptable impulses (Freud, 1966). Freud (1926) defined a list of anxieties which are; “automatic anxiety”, “fear of loss of the object” , “fear of loss of the object’s love” and “castration anxiety”. These anxieties emerge in children due to their instinctual impulses which are often at odds with adults. To evade punishment, children internalize parental expectations and develop a responsible superego. However when conflicts between inner wishes and superego arise, defenses are activated to cope with the undesirable feelings and as a result, anxiety disappears from conscious awareness (Freud, 1966). Defense mechanisms also significantly influence the self’s relationships with internalized figures from past experiences or present significant others (Vaillant, 1994). Early childhood experiences influence the predominant use of defense styles in individuals’ lives, as suggested by Vaillant (1994). Thiemann, Shaw, and Steiner (1998) emphasize the connection between defense styles’ adaptiveness and the quality of the parental environment. Furthermore, Wallerstein (1983) and Main (1990) propose that defenses are shaped by relational interactions with primary caregivers during childhood.

The second variable this study examines is personality styles. Personality is defined as ongoing mental, emotional, and behavioral trait patterns of individuals (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). According to both the traditional view (Freud, 1953) and psychological theories (Rogers, 1961), distinctive features or personality patterns of adults are significantly related to the attitudes of parents towards them during their infancy and childhood. Various theorists, including object relations theorists (Fairbairn, 1952; Kernberg, 1976; Mitchell, 1995) and attachment theorists (Bowlby, 1982, 1973), emphasize the significance of close parental relationships in fostering a healthy sense of self and personality (Ülbe, 2016). Five broad domains were identified to capture the significant elements of the basic structural organization of 25 primary traits into broader personality domains. These five broad domains, include (1) negative affectivity vs. emotional stability, (2) detachment vs. extraversion, (3) antagonism vs. agreeableness, (4) disinhibition vs. compulsivity, and (5) psychoticism vs. lucidity (APA, 2013).

In light of these knowledges, the study hypothesizes that remembered parental styles influence defense mechanisms and personality styles. On the basis of this hypothesis, the study aims to contribute to the literature by finding regression analysis between specific parental styles with specific defense mechanisms and personality styles.

1.2 Remembered Parental Styles

Parenting style refers to a combination of parenting concepts, parenting behaviors, and emotional expressions toward children (Wei, 1999). According to Diana Baumrind, parenting styles pertain to the methods of parents socializing their children (Baumrind, 1991) and it is a multidimensional social phenomenon that evolves through a lifelong learning process of an individual (Lerner, 1894). According to Steinberg, parenting styles are a compilation of attitudes parents express to children and the emotional climate conveyed by parental behavior. Parents teach children social values and moral principles by means of their parenting styles (Deng, 2020). Furthermore, scholars in the field of parenting styles such as Darling and Steinberg (1993) describe parenting styles as a combination of methods through which parents interact and form emotional attachment with their child and express their views about certain aspects. Parents perform their role by employing these approaches concerning goal-directed and non-goal directed behaviors, such as signs, fluctuations in tone of voice, or certain signs of emotional cues (Rosli, 2014-488).

According to the object relations theory (1976), an individual's present way of interacting with others is influenced by the lingering effects of past relationships, particularly those with their mother. The construct proposes that the early establishment and distinction of psychological constructs can be explored by examining pre-oedipal development. Thus, understanding how these internal structures impact current interpersonal relationships and mental processes becomes possible. (St.Clair & Wigren, 2004).

Parental support holds significance because it predicts a strong sense of self-worth and security, greater psychological well-being, and various other positive outcomes (Coplan et al., 2002; Steinberg, 2001). In the absence of sufficient parental support, children are prone to experience anxiety, insecurity, aggression, hostility, low self-esteem, and inadequacy (Baumrind, 1971). Parental support is vital for children's self-esteem (Wei, 1999), learning behavior, and cognitive and social-emotional development (Zhang, 2023).

Diana Baumrind (1966, 1967 & 1971) introduced three parenting styles each representing different parenting typologies, named as authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. These parenting styles are based on "child care practices of parents" and are distinct from one another based on the levels of parental responsiveness and parental demandingness. Baumrind selected preschoolers in their normal setting for her research as she considered the age of preschoolers as the stage of original, automatic

reactions. Baumrind considered preschoolers' behavior to be a direct reflection of their parents' characteristics and the way they treated their children (Ashraf et al., 2019). According to Baumrind (1971), if parents are encouraging, children are mentally stable. If parents are strict, children feel incapable of living in their own way and as a result, they become mentally unstable.

Based on Baumrind's model, McCoby and Martin (1983) have developed a new classification system based on two dimensions: namely parental responsiveness and parental demandingness (Kuppens et al., 2018). "Parental responsiveness generally includes the level at which parents intentionally encourage originality, self-starting and self-assertion by being accommodative and encouraging to children's needs and demands" (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). Parental demandingness involves the expectations and disciplinary measures parents impose on their children to foster integration within the family and challenge disobedience. (Alkharusi et al., 2011) Based on the previously mentioned two dimensions, McCoby and Martin (1983) defined four parenting styles: authoritative (i.e., high demandingness and high responsiveness); authoritarian (i.e., high demandingness and low responsiveness); indulgent (i.e., low demandingness and high responsiveness); and neglectful (i.e., low demandingness and low responsiveness). Based on Maccoby and Martin's work, Baumrind (1989, 1991) expanded her typology with a fourth parenting style, namely the 'neglectful' parenting style (Kuppens et al., 2018).

In the Authoritarian parental style, parents with a more traditional mindset tend to assert absolute authority and expect their children to be obedient and submissive to their wishes (Baumrind, 1971; Zhang, 2023). This style of parenting often lacks emotional warmth and understanding, making it challenging for children to feel nurtured. This approach can lead to children becoming unassertive and show rebellious tendencies. In the indulgent parental style, parents in this scenario may lack a solid educational approach, but they possess a deep, instinctive love for their children, being protective and affectionate in their rearing. They tend to fulfill their children's desires regardless of reasonability, driven by boundless expectations and unconditional love. However, they seldom impose expectations on their children. As a consequence, these children may develop dependency, inconsistency, impulsiveness, immaturity, and selfishness as they grow, showing a lack of perseverance and patience in their endeavors. In the authoritative parental style, parents regard their children as integral family members, acknowledging both their rights and responsibilities within the household. They attentively listen to their children's requests and fulfill them reasonably. As children grow,

parents provide increased support and guidance, treating the child with respect, trust, and open communication. Such nurturing enables the children to develop positive character traits like self-confidence, independence, cooperation, optimism, and strong social skills over time (Baumrind, 1971; Zhang, 2023). In the neglectful parental style, parents neglect and are not involved in their children's development process; neither are they strict nor communicate with them. Children's emotions are often ignored, and children do not actively seek their parents' emotional care. They let them develop freely and have no involvement in the child's growth. This type of child has poor self-control, a negative attitude toward everything, and other negative psychological characteristics (Baumrind, 1989/1991; Zhang, 2023).

Baumrind conducted extensive research on the association between parenting styles and child development (1967, 1971, 1989, 1991). Findings consistently demonstrated that children of authoritative parents exhibited the most favorable developmental outcomes; authoritarian and permissive parenting were linked to negative developmental outcomes; while outcomes for children of neglectful parents were the least favorable (Kuppens et al., 2018). Authoritative parenting style has been associated with psychosocial competence (e.g., maturation, resilience, optimism, self-reliance, social competence, self-esteem) and academic achievement (e.g., Baumrind 1991; Lamborn et al. 1991; Steinberg et al. 1994). Other empirical work also shows that authoritative parenting is generally associated with the most beneficial child and adolescent outcomes (Coplan et al., 2002; Steinberg, 2001, Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Lamborn et al., 1991; Radziszewska et al., 1996; Steinberg et al., 1994). Based on other research, children and adolescents raised by authoritative parents compared with nonauthoritative parents report more favorable developmental outcomes, including greater self-esteem, self-control, moral development, social maturity, and academic performance (Radziszewska et al., 1996), as well as greater psychological well-being and less depression and substance use (Shah & Waller, 2000). Findings regarding permissive/indulgent parenting have been mixed, showing associations with both internalizing (i.e., anxiety, depression, withdrawn behavior, somatic complaints) and externalizing problematic behavior (i.e., school misconduct, delinquency), but also with social skills, self-confidence, self-understanding and active problem-solving abilities (e.g., Lamborn et al. 1991; Steinberg et al. 1994; Williams et al. 2009; Wolfradt et al. 2003). Authoritarian parenting style has consistently shown a correlation with negative developmental outcomes, such as aggression, delinquent behaviors, somatic complaints, depersonalization and anxiety (e.g., Hovee et al. 2008; Steinberg et al. 1994; Williams et al.

2009; Wolfradt et al. 2003). Children of neglectful parents have exhibited the least favorable outcomes across various domains, such as lack of self-regulation and social responsibility, poor self-reliance and social competence, poor academic competence, antisocial behavior and delinquency, anxiety, depression and somatic complaints (e.g., Baumrind 1991; Hovee et al. 2008; Lamborn et al. 1991; Steinberg et al. 1994).

A discernible pattern emerges when analyzing the literature, indicating that authoritative parenting style has the most favorable outcome when compared to non-authoritative. Non-authoritative approaches show links to negative developmental outcomes while permissive and indulgent parenting styles are also linked to negative outcomes. Consistently, authoritative parenting aligns with adverse outcomes, with neglectful parenting showing the least favorable results. Thus, this study hypothesizes that authoritative parenting style will be negatively related to adverse developmental outcomes whereas authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting styles will be positively related to less favorable outcomes.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Defense Mechanisms

The concept of ego defenses and their origin was initially explored by Sigmund Freud (Ülbe, 2016). According to Freud (1926) individuals develop defense mechanisms to protect the ego from unacceptable sexual and aggressive impulses. These mechanisms help control or modulate impulse expression in response to external and internal sources of stress.

Freud's structural model of the mind (1926) consists of three main concepts; id, ego and superego. The id is the most primitive and instinctual part of the mind and operates on the pleasure principle and seeks immediate gratification of basic needs and desires, such as hunger, thirst, and pleasure. The id is unconscious and does not consider the consequences of its actions. The ego is the rational and conscious part of the mind that develops in early childhood. It operates on the reality principle and seeks to balance the demands of the id with the constraints of the external world. The ego helps to mediate between the impulses of the id and the moral standards of the superego. The superego represents the internalized moral standards and values of society. It develops throughout childhood and is influenced by parental and societal influences. The superego acts as the conscience, imposing moral judgments and standards on the ego's behavior. However, when inner wishes come into conflict with the superego, to cope with these undesirable feelings, defenses are activated. Unconsciously, a defense or a set of defenses are employed to manage the condition. As a result, anxiety disappears from conscious awareness (Freud, 1966).

In Freud's theory, conflicts between these three components of the mind can lead to psychological distress and disturbances, as well as influence an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The dynamic interplay between the id, ego, and superego plays a crucial role in shaping human behavior and personality. (Freud, 1926)

Anna Freud (Freud, 1937/1968), building upon her father's theory (Freud, 1894), provided a more comprehensive explanation of defense mechanisms. She argued that the primary function of ego defenses is to prevent instincts from surpassing the boundaries of ego and reaching consciousness. Through defense mechanisms, ego defends its territory against the potential influence of instincts (Freud, 1937/1968). She further asserted that defense

mechanisms serve not only to protect the ego's boundaries but also to sustain emotional homeostasis when faced with overwhelming emotions, particularly anxiety, arising from unacceptable thoughts and feelings (Freud, 1937/1968). Anna Freud classified defense mechanisms into two; primitive and high level defenses (Freud, 1937/1968). In her dual classification, primitive defenses such as denial or projection are predominantly employed in the earliest stages of life. On the other hand, the formation of higher-level defense mechanisms requires more sophisticated cognitive skills, including object permanence.

In contemporary psychodynamic perspective, the role of ego defenses extends beyond simply alleviating the burden of unconscious impulses. Instead, main objectives of defense mechanisms are to enable individuals to maintain their self-worth in case of narcissistic breakdown, experience of disappointment and shame, and to be able to maintain a sense of security in the threat of rejection or abandonment, and to keep the self away from external reality (Gabbard, 2004). As per Cramer (2006), defense mechanisms are unconscious mental processes that function beyond our awareness. These mechanisms operate by altering internal processes of individuals including their feelings, perceptions or interpretations of a situation. According to Berzoff, Flanagan, and Hertz (2008), defense mechanisms are activated automatically in response to anxiety, which can vary from mild discomfort to intolerable panic. Their purpose is to protect emotional well-being and minimize the degree of functional impairment. Vaillant (1994) argued that defense mechanisms come into play when the balance between internal and external environment is disrupted, defenses minimize the experience of cognitive dissonance by inducing a change in the perception of reality. In other words, similar to the immune system of the body, individuals utilize defense mechanisms to guard their psychological well-being from negative emotional input (Bowins, 2004).

Multiple perspectives exist concerning the specific number of defense mechanisms or their classifications (Ülbe, 2016). Cramer (1998) identified six defining features of defense styles: (1) they occur in the unconscious level, (2) they function to protect self-esteem through keeping unacceptable thoughts, impulses, and wishes out of awareness, (3) they serve to protect the individual from pathological anxiety, (4) they ensure normal personality functioning, (5) they can induce pathology in excessive use, and (6) they are different from each other. Whereas Vaillant (1977) classified defenses into four groups based on their separate features; The first group, primitive defenses, represents the most archaic mechanisms that disconnect individuals from the realities of life, (e.g., denial, distortion). Immature defenses, the second group, typically involve cognitive distortions and are commonly utilized

during childhood and adolescence and are expected to given up in adulthood. Continued use of immature defenses in adulthood can lead to socially inappropriate behaviors and maladaptive coping styles (e.g., passive aggression, acting out). The third group, neurotic defenses, is frequently employed in daily life to achieve short-term gains, but they do not provide healthy ways of coping with reality, (e.g., undoing, reaction formation). Therefore, they pose difficulties in many realms of everyday life. The fourth group, mature defenses, are regarded as the most adaptive among all defense types. They create a balance between external reality and internal pressures, (e.g., sublimation, humor, anticipation). Mature defenses are healthy ways of regulating overwhelming emotions by maintaining attunement with external reality and self-image, and facilitating constructive actions. Psychologically healthy adults mostly adopt mature defenses allowing them to cultivate positive interpersonal relationships and find satisfaction in many domains of their lives. (Vaillant, 1977). Wallerstein (1985) suggested that defense styles can be hierarchically ordered. This hierarchy ranges from immature defenses, which are suppressed into the unconscious, to ego-syntonic ones, readily accessible to consciousness due to their adaptiveness. McWilliams (1994), on the other hand, introduced a bipartite model that classifies defenses into two distinct groups: primitive and higher-order defenses. According to her, primitive defenses are related to the boundaries between self and external world. Conversely, higher-order defenses serve to manage internal boundaries between ego, superego and id, or between observing ego and experiencing ego.

However, if defense mechanisms are observed predominantly in individuals' lives, they can have detrimental effects on their daily functioning and interpersonal relationships. (Bowins, 2010) Primitive defenses, which are the initial psychological coping mechanisms of infants, may persist into adulthood when psychological maturation is hindered. Although these defenses can reduce anxiety to some degree, they are regarded as inflexible ways of experiencing the self and others due to their rigidity and crudity (Koenigsberg et al, 2000). This can be illustrated with an analogy: Just as a normal heartbeat is essential for life, an excessively rapid or irregular heartbeat can lead to cardiac problems. Similarly, when certain defense mechanisms occur with a frequency far beyond the normal range, they can disrupt healthy adaptation in daily life (Cramer, 2006).

According to Anna Freud, the development of ego plays a crucial role in determining whether the use of defense is pathological or not. For instance, certain ego defenses, such as denial or projection, are acceptable for use in the early childhood period, but inappropriate for

use in the adulthood period. Therefore, if the ego defenses are not adopted in an age-appropriate context, they are deemed as pathological (Freud, 1936/ 2004). As per Cramer (2006), denial as a defense mechanism is considered immature when utilized by a 25-year-old, but is appropriate when used by a 5-year-old.

Research indicates that defense mechanisms hold significant predictive power for mental health. Immature defenses have been found to be associated with poor psychological adjustment and the presence of psychopathological symptoms (Cramer & Block, 1998; Muris & Merckelbach, 1996; Watson, 2002). Relying on immature defenses in adulthood may be an indication of psychological difficulties at the age when these defenses were developmentally predominant (e.g., denial in early childhood). In an attempt to protect against excessive anxiety and maintaining self-esteem, the child makes strong use of the defenses available at that time. As a consequence of this overuse, the defenses remain a prominent feature of the individual's personality, continuing to function long past the developmentally appropriate age (Cramer & Block, 1998).

2.2 Remembered Parental Styles and Defense Mechanisms

According to Freud (1926), defense mechanisms help control or modulate impulse expression in response to external and internal sources of stress. As per his theory (1926), there are different types of anxiety, the three are, “automatic anxiety” triggered by frustration, “fear of loss of the object” which means fear of being abandoned by a primary caregiver, “fear of loss of the object’s love” associated with the threat of losing the caregiver’s love and self-esteem. These levels of anxiety are particularly concerning for young children due to their instinctual and impulsive (id) attitudes, which are not always well-received by adults. Thus, to protect themselves from potential punishment, children internalize parental representations and develop a sense of responsibility to adhere to moral rules, which leads to the development of the superego. However, when inner wishes (id) come into conflict with the superego, ego perceives one of these anxieties, and to cope with these undesirable feelings, defenses are activated. Unconsciously, a defense or a set of defenses are employed to manage the condition. As a result, anxiety disappears from conscious awareness (Freud, 1966).

Cramer (2006) claimed that infants employ immature defense mechanisms as a way to protect themselves from separation anxiety and frustration arising from negative parental reactions. So if a child possesses desires and emotions considered unacceptable by parents or caregivers, the child is inclined to repress them, avoiding negative reactions from significant others, and thereby keeping these undesirable feelings and wishes from entering their conscious awareness, and as a result, the experience of separation anxiety is precluded (Cramer, 2006). Bowlby (1980) also suggested that distressing information, like the unavailability of caregivers, can be excluded from conscious awareness, or be separated from the source of distress (cognitive disconnection).

Coping with unacceptable thoughts and feelings is not the sole function of defense mechanisms, they also play a crucial role in shaping relationships of the self with objects. These objects can be internalized figures from past experiences or significant others in current times (Vaillant, 1994). Hence, early childhood experiences will influence which type of defense styles individuals predominantly use in their lives, as stated by Vaillant (1994). Similarly, Thienemann, Shaw, and Steiner (1998) indicate that the adaptiveness of defense styles is closely linked to the quality of the parental environment. Wallerstein (1983) and Main (1990) suggest that defenses are shaped by relational interactions with primary caregivers during childhood. According to McWilliams (2010), the defense repertoire, their type and severity is formed by the interaction of at least four factors: (1) one's structural temperament, (2) early childhood stressful experiences, (3) observations and imitation of caregivers' defense styles, and (4) learning from one's own experiences.

Vaillant (1994), detailed that negative childhood experiences predict an individual's inclination to distort reality and adopt immature defense styles, whereas positive early experiences enhance the use of mature ego defenses by equipping individuals with more adaptive coping skills (Vaillant, 1994). According to Rogers (1959), when a child perceives attention, care, and warmth from their parents, they are more likely to develop a sense of self-worth. Consequently, they may not experience significant separation anxiety and may not need to suppress unacceptable impulses intensely. Instead, they are more likely to adopt adaptive coping strategies, leading to the frequent use of more mature defense mechanisms. Defenses are thus believed to shape the development of mental representations that guide the perception and behavior in current and future relationships in general (Prunas et al., 2018)

According to St.Clair and Wigren (2004), in order to cope with intense needs, fears, and feelings, defense mechanisms such as projection, introjection, splitting, and projective identification are activated in infants' mental process. In the projection defense, infants perceive their inner experiences as if they originated from the outside, projecting their inner feelings or impulses onto the external world and experiencing them as external (McWilliams, 2010). Therefore, when the infant reaches gratification through nurturing and feels pleasure, they attribute these good feelings to an external object (St.Clair & Wigren, 2004). In contrast, in introjection, infants tend to take external experiences in, they believe external experiences belong to the self. Attitudes, affects, and behaviors of caregivers are introjected by the infant (McWilliams, 2010). Splitting, on the other hand, involves separating feelings and aspects of the self as good and bad to protect the self from undesirable experiences. Infants isolate feelings of gratification from distorted and dangerous feelings through this splitting process (St.Clair & Wigren, 2004). When infants face inner anxiety and need to resolve this issue, they initially split off the undesirable part of the self, externalize it, and modify it in the outer world through projective identification. Eventually, the infant reinternalizes the good object, completing the projective identification process (McWilliams, 2010).

According to a study, immature defenses are linked to maternal rejection, paternal over-protection, and paternal warmth. Younger participants who perceive their mothers as more rejective, and their fathers as more protective and less emotionally warm are more prone to using immature defenses. Additionally, since paternal over-control might lead to frustration, younger individuals may rely on immature defenses as a means to protect themselves from these uncomfortable feelings. Regarding neurotic defenses, maternal warmth, and maternal over-protection are significantly associated. Younger female participants and those who perceive their mothers as more emotionally warm and more overprotective tend to report more neurotic defenses. Mature defenses are solely associated with maternal emotional warmth (Işık, 2016).

Another study indicates that, there is an association between childhood emotional abuse and the prevalence of immature defense mechanisms. Findings showed that the more severe the experience of childhood emotional abuse the higher the levels of immature defense mechanisms. Another study revealed that individuals who report limited maternal congruence, which refers to the genuineness, openness, and consistency in parent-child relationships (Barrett-Lennard, 2015), tend to employ immature defense mechanisms more frequently.

Findings of a different study state that securely attached individuals, who likely had supportive caregivers, tend to have a more realistic view of their caregivers and childhood experiences. In contrast, avoidant individuals, who may have had rejecting caregivers, tend to idealize their caregivers and childhood, despite a lack of supporting memories or details. On the contrary, anxious-ambivalent individuals, whose caregivers are inferred to have been unloving, neglecting or rejecting, tend to use projective-identification, perceiving others in terms of their own self-descriptions, in order to deny separation from significant others (Prunas et al., 2018).

Another research suggests that negative parental environments characterized by parental conflict, lack of cohesion and expressiveness were linked to higher use of immature defenses. Conversely, the use of mature defenses was strongly associated with positive parental environments that fostered cohesion, independence, and expressiveness. (Ülbe, 2016)

Upon analysis of the literary work, it is observable that early childhood experiences influence which type of defense styles individuals predominantly use in their lives and negative childhood experiences is linked to immature defense styles, whereas positive early experiences is associated with the use of mature ego defenses. Thus, this study hypothesizes that authoritarian parenting style will be positively correlated with immature defenses. Indulgent parenting style will be positively correlated with immature and neurotic defenses. Neglectful parenting style will be positively correlated with immature defenses and authoritative parenting style will be positively correlated with mature defenses and negatively correlated with both immature and neurotic defenses.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Personality Styles

Personality is defined as ongoing mental, emotional, and behavioral trait patterns of individuals. In fact, each individual has a consistent and unique personality pattern (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Personality contains both the individual's uniqueness and two essential aspects related to the term "personality": (1) it comprises both outward behavior and inner character, and (2) understanding the connection between external behavior and internal character is complex, yet achievable through the examination of behavioral patterns in various settings (Wang, 2008). According to Khazan (2022) and Corr (2009), personality is an integrated framework including interconnected behavioral, cognitive, and emotional patterns shaped by both biological and environmental influences. While these patterns tend to remain relatively stable over time, they also undergo transformation throughout an individual's lifespan. Personality can be considered as a complex pattern of stable psychological characteristics or traits that are expressed in different areas of human functioning (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981; Millon & Davis, 1996; Phares, 1988; Schultz & Schultz, 2002)

However, when unique patterns of personality cannot adapt to societal norms and expectations, individuals experience difficulties in cognition, emotiveness, interpersonal functioning or impulse control, and as a result, they are diagnosed with personality disorders (PDs) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Patients diagnosed with personality disorders (PDs) who consistently display hostile, detached, needy, antisocial, or obsessive behaviors throughout their lives are frequently encountered in clinical settings (APA, 2000). Due to the pervasive impact of their symptoms on interpersonal relationships, social life, and occupational functioning (APA, 2000), and their limited insight into their issues, patients with personality disorders often display reluctance to seek professional help (Işık, 2016).

Over the past century, significant transformations proposing vastly different treatment approaches, theories, conceptualizations, criteria, and assessment methods for personality disorders have been suggested (Işık, 2016). In the early version of The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-I), the criteria for personality disorders (PDs) were primitive, classifying them into five main headings: personality pattern disturbance,

personality trait disturbance, sociopathic personality disturbance, special symptom reactions, and transient situational personality disorders (APA, 1952). In DSM-II, the subheadings of personality disorders (PDs) were removed, and instead, each disorder was categorized and briefly described (APA, 1968). Yet, these descriptions were still not based on clinical trials in DSM-II (Sperry, 2003). DSM-III established a differentiation between symptom disorders (Axis I) and personality disorders (Axis II) (APA, 1980). In DSM-IV, diagnostic criteria were clarified substantially (APA, 1994) but has given insufficient information about the nature of PDs (Wakefield, 2013). This suggests that theoretical speculations regarding PDs are still ongoing (Sperry, 2006). To address the gaps in the diagnosis and treatment of PDs, DSM-5 introduced a "personality disorder - trait specified" model, emphasizing the assessment of an individual's personality traits within the defined parameters for diagnosis (Wakefield, 2013). According to DSM-5, in order to diagnose a trait specified personality disorder, impairments in personality functioning and the presence of pathological personality traits has to be observed. DSM-5 employs 25 specific elements (such as anhedonia, depressivity, grandiosity, impulsivity, etc.) to define maladaptive personality traits, also known as trait facets. Moreover, five broad domains were identified to capture the essential components of the basic structural organization formed by these 25 primary traits into broader personality domains. These five domains are: (1) negative affectivity vs. emotional stability, (2) detachment vs. extraversion, (3) antagonism vs. agreeableness, (4) disinhibition vs. compulsivity, and (5) psychoticism vs. lucidity (APA, 2013). The aim of these domains is to describe the personality characteristics of all patients, regardless of whether they have a personality disorder or not (Wakefield, 2013).

In this regard, Jung proposed that introversion is an "attitude-type characterized by a focus on subjective psychic contents in life," while extraversion is an "attitude-type characterized by a concentration of interest on the external object." (Jung, 1995). Based on Eysenck's Personality Theory, personality is a hierarchical structure, with behaviors and groups of behaviors forming its organic organization. The lowest level include specific reactions and behaviors that can be directly observed. The higher levels are habitual behavioral tendencies that develop from repeated specific responses. The next higher level is a trait, an organic combination of habitual responses, such as anxiety and stubbornness. At the highest level, personality types are formed by organic combinations of related traits with highly generalized features that broadly impact human behavior. Eysenck (1947) proposed two dimensions of personality, introversion-extroversion (E) and emotional volatility-stability

(N). Subsequently, he expanded his research and analysis, leading to the inclusion of a third dimension, psychopathy (P), in 1952 (Shi, 1998).

Five Factor Model is defined as a hierarchical representation of personality traits, which encompass long-lasting tendencies related to consistent cognitive, emotional and behavioral patterns exhibiting individual variations among people (Costa & Widiger, 2002). FFM emerged from a lexical approach to understanding personality structure. The lexical approach suggested that all significant personality traits central to human interactions are central in natural language. (Goldberg, 1981). Costa and Widiger (2002) briefly described these dimensions in their review. They stated that neuroticism (N) is associated to the “chronic level of emotional adjustment and instability”. On the other hand, extraversion (E) concerns interpersonal interactions. Those with high extraversion levels tend to be sociable, active, talkative, person-oriented, optimistic, funny, and affectionate, while individuals with low extraversion levels, also known as introverts, are more likely to be quiet, withdrawn, solitary, and aloof, without necessarily being unhappy or pessimistic. Openness to experience (O) characterized by active seeking and appreciation of experiences. Open individuals are described as curious, imaginative, and open to adopting new ideas and values. Conversely, closed individuals are considered more conventional and reliant on their established beliefs and attitudes. Agreeableness (A) is related to interpersonal interactions, just like Extraversion, but individuals high in Agreeableness exhibit traits such as being softhearted, good-natured, honest, charitable, merciful, responsive, empathic, and altruistic. On the other hand, individuals low in Agreeableness, who display antagonistic traits, tend to be misanthropic, rude, mistrustful, uncooperative, and irritable. They may also exhibit manipulative, vindictive, and ruthless behaviors. Individuals high in Conscientiousness are known for being organized, reliable, hardworking, and punctual. On the other hand, individuals with low levels of Conscientiousness are described as purposeless, unreliable, lazy, careless, relaxed, and pleasure-oriented (Costa & Widiger, 2002)

Cattell proposed a similar model to Eysenck (1947). In his theory, the fundamental building block of personality is a trait. He identified a total of 16 terms to characterize human traits, they are: Agreeableness (A), Intelligence (B), Stability (C), Bullying (E), Excitability (F), Constancy (G), Daring (H), Sensitivity (I), Skepticism (L), Imagination (M), Worldliness (N), Apprehension (O), Experimentation (Q1), and independence (Q2), self-discipline (Q3), and tension (Q4). Trait personality theory is founded on the belief that individuals possess a diverse range of traits, some shared universally, while others are distinct to each person.

Consequently, researchers in the field of trait theory define and explore personality as an amalgamation of characteristic traits (Zhang, 2023).

3.2 Remembered Parental Styles and Personality Styles

Both traditional perspectives and psychological theories (Freud, 1953; Rogers, 1961) suggest that the personality patterns of adults are strongly influenced by the attitudes of their parents during infancy and childhood.

Various researchers, who mainly focus on object relations and attachment emphasize the significance of close parental relationships in fostering a healthy sense of self and personality (Ülbe, 2016). According to the attachment theory, the way infants experience their relationship with parents or caregivers influences their perceptions of self and others (Bowlby, 1980). Consequently, this early relationship shapes the individual's identity formation and influences their emotional and psychological development in later years (Bowlby, 1980). From the object relations theorists' perspective, the formation of self is significantly influenced by primary caregivers' responsiveness to their infants and the quality of interactions during early development (Fairbairn, 1952; Mitchell, 1995). As a result, individuals experiencing adverse perceived parental relationships are more susceptible to developing psychopathological symptoms due to the vulnerability of their self and personality development (Ülbe, 2016). Rogers (1961) also draws attention to the crucial role of the quality of parental relationships in shaping personality development. Rogers (1961) posits that individuals possess both an intrinsic motivational system and a regulatory system, which evaluates and adapts their behaviors based on feedback from others. The person's innate drive for self-actualization, which is a tendency to obtain congruence between self and experience, seeks congruence between self and experience, leading their regulatory system to assess experiences in alignment with this tendency. As the child distinguishes between experiences garnering positive and negative regard from others, their behaviors adjust to seek positive regard and avoid negative regard (Rogers, 1961). Positive regard encompasses favorable attitudes such as warmth, love, protection, and acceptance, typically received from significant others, especially parents (Rogers, 1961). These experiences strengthen the learned need for positive regard, vital for healthy development (Rogers, 1959).

Lopes, Putten, and Moormann (2015) tested Rogers' theory on the role of unconditional positive regard in healthy personality development. They found that perceiving

conditional positive regard predicted various psychological distresses like depression, anxiety, sensitivity, hostility, and neuroticism. Another study examined the effects of parental emotional and cognitive empathy on self-functioning and psychological well-being. Results indicated that parental empathy was associated with higher self-esteem, adjusted narcissism, and fewer depressive symptoms (Trumpeter et al., 2008). Stern, Borelli, and Smiley (2015) asserted that a child's perception of parental affection, care, and love was positively related to parental empathy.

According to the self-discrepancy theory, temperament and the child-parent relationship are key factors in the development of the self-system, including self-concept, self-regulation, and self-appraisal. (Manian, Strauman, & Denney, 1998). During the socialization process, children learn the emotional consequences of their actions through positive and negative feedback, which internalizes external values into self-standards, serving as self-guides (Manian, Strauman, & Denney, 1998). Therefore, the quality of interaction between caregivers and children significantly influences the development of these self-guides (Higgins, 1989).

However, according to McCrae and Costa (1988), parents' attitudes toward children are not the only factors affecting personality development. Genetic traits, environment, socio-economic status, peer groups, and life experiences in adulthood may also influence personality (McCrae & Costa, 1988).

According to a study, personality traits are influenced by permissive and authoritative parenting style. Permissive parenting style has been found to be the most influential parenting style on personality traits (extraversion, conscientiousness and openness) whereas authoritative parenting significantly influences openness (Ashraf et al., 2019). According to another study, authoritative parenting styles have a positive impact on adolescent extraversion. Parental warmth and understanding are significantly and positively associated with extraversion, while parental punishment, severity, rejection, and denial are negatively associated with extraversion. Father's excessive interference, denial, and rejection, along with harsh punishment have the most negative correlation with extraversion. Mothers' emotional warmth and understanding show a stronger correlation with introversion and extraversion (Zhang, 2023). As indicated by (Prinz et al., 2009, apud. Prinz et al., 2012) authoritative parenting style characterized by responsiveness to the child's needs and behavioral control is

linked to extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and increased openness.

The literature refers to 'negative reactivity,' a concept representing a low biological threshold for punishment system stimulation (Kagan et al., 1987, apud. Anaya & Pérez-Edgar, 2019). This leads to heightened sensitivity to stimuli, with a tendency to assess them as dangerous. During childhood, this may manifest through crying, avoidant behavior, and delayed responses. If these behaviors are reinforced by overly protective parents, there is an increased risk of developing anxiety, internalizing behavior, and neurotic traits. This relationship is especially evident in mothers with high sensitivity to children's fears, leading them to respond with excessive control even in low-risk situations. Such parenting practices may alter the child's social inclusion capacity during preschool age (Luebke et al., 2011; Anaya and Pérez-Edgar, 2019), aligning with the authoritarian parenting model proposed by McCoby and Martin (1983). Conversely, the literature also explores 'positive reactivity,' referring to a child's tendency to approach new stimuli with enthusiasm and exuberance. These children have a higher threshold for punishment system stimulation, requiring more stimulation from the environment and displaying curiosity instead of fear. If this is reinforced in a family environment lacking teaching of effortful control and self-regulation of attention, it may manifest later through externalizing behaviors linked to low agreeableness and conscientiousness. This, in turn, may lead to aggressiveness and antisocial behaviors (Miller et al., 2008, Anaya & Pérez, 2019). Such outcomes are often observed in families with permissive parents who seldom impose rules on their children.

According to Thimm (2010), individuals with Cluster A (irrational suspicions and mistrust of others, lack of interest in interpersonal relationships and restricted emotional expression, and extreme discomfort while interacting with others (APA, 2000)) and Cluster B personality pathologies (dramatic, over-emotional, and unpredictable thoughts or behaviors (APA, 2000)) perceive their parents as rejective and less emotionally warm. These perceptions are linked to the development of personality symptoms associated with these clusters during adulthood. Additionally, rejection from fathers is specifically associated with Cluster C personality symptomatology (intense social anxiety and fear of rejection; excessive dependence on others; or an unwavering and inflexible pursuit of perfection varying according to the type of the condition (APA, 2000)). Specifically, patients with borderline personality disorder tend to perceive both parents as less emotionally warm and overprotective (Parker et al., 1979; Nickell, Waudby, & Trull, 2002) while patients with

antisocial personality disorder report low levels of emotional warmth from both the mothers and fathers (Norden, Klein, Donaldson, Pepper, & Klein, 1995). Schizoid personality symptoms are correlated with less emotional warmth from mothers and overprotection from fathers (Norden et al., 1995).

Timmerman and Emmelkamp (2005), and Thimm (2010) indicated that, Cluster A symptomatology is linked to low maternal care, including more rejection and less emotional warmth. Timmerman and Emmelkamp (2005) also reported that less care and more protection from both parents while Nordahl and Stiles (1997) suggested that only parental over-protection; and Thimm (2010) proposed that rejection from both parents and less emotional warmth from mothers were the related variables for Cluster B PDs pathology.

Based on the study results (Işık, 2016), younger male participants who perceived their mothers as excessively protective and their fathers as more rejecting, and who used more immature defenses and fewer neurotic defenses, showed a higher likelihood of exhibiting symptoms associated with Cluster A PDs. Younger participants who perceived their mothers as more over-protective and their fathers as more rejecting, and who employed more immature defenses and fewer mature defenses, were more likely to exhibit Cluster B PDs symptoms. For *Cluster C PDs symptomatology*, age, paternal over- protection and emotional warmth, maternal over-protection; and immature, mature, and neurotic defenses were significantly associated variables.

The literature examination demonstrates that infants' interactions with parents or caregivers shape their self-perceptions and views of others and those facing negative parental relationships are more prone to developing psychopathological symptoms. In light of the literature, this study hypothesizes that higher personality domain scores in detachment, psychotocism, antagonism and disinhibition and negative affectivity will be positively correlated with authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles and negatively correlated with indulgent and authoritative parenting style.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Current Study

In line with the empirical findings on both the relation between parental styles and defense mechanisms and parental styles and personality styles, the current study aims to test the following hypothesis: (i) authoritarian parenting style will be positively correlated with immature defenses (ii) indulgent parenting style will be positively correlated with immature and neurotic defenses (iii) neglectful parenting style will be positively correlated with immature defenses (iv) authoritative parenting style will be positively correlated with mature defenses and negatively correlated with both immature and neurotic defenses (v) higher personality domain scores in detachment, psychoticism, antagonism and disinhibition and negative affectivity will be positively correlated with authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles and negatively correlated with indulgent and authoritative parenting style.

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Participants

Participants consisted of 46 people with a mean age of 21 (SD=1.51). The majority of participants are female full-time students who are largely single. More information on the socio-demographic variables of the participants were shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

<i>Age of the participants</i> Mean (SD; Range)	21.22 (1.51;18-24)
<i>Sex of the participants</i>	
Female	28 (60.9%)
Male	16 (34.8%)
Other	2 (4.4%)
<i>Occupation of the participants</i>	
Full-time worker	36 (78.3%)
Part-time worker	1 (2.2%)
Full-time student	3 (6.5%)
Student-worker	6(13.0%)
<i>Relationship status of the participants</i>	
In a relationship	19 (41.3%)

Single	27 (58.7%)
<i>If you are in a romantic relationship, do you live with your partner?</i>	
Yes	5 (35.7%)
No	14 (64.3%)
<i>Nationality</i>	
Turkish	21 (45.7%)
Italian	8 (17.4%)
Other	17 (36.9%)
<i>City</i>	
İstanbul	15 (32.6%)
Padova	15 (32.6%)
Other	16 (34.8%)
<i>Type of area of the city</i>	
Urban	42(91.3%)
Rural	4(8.7%)
<i>Participants with sisters</i>	
One Sister	12 (26.1%)
Two Sisters	4 (8.7%)
Three Sisters	2 (4.3%)
<i>Participants with brothers</i>	
One Brother	16 (34.8%)
Two Brothers	4 (8.7%)

4.2.2 Procedure

Participants were recruited through social networks and word of mouth. The psychological tests were implemented on the Qualtrics online platform, which can be accessed via a web link. For assessing remembered parental styles, the Measure of Parental Style (MOPS; Parker, G. , Roussos, J. , Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., 1997) test was completed by the participants. As for defense mechanisms, the participants compiled the Defense Style Questionnaire (DSQ-40) (Andrews, Singh, & Bond, 1993) test. For assessing personality styles, The Personality Inventory for DSM-5—Brief Form (PID-5-BF) (Krueger, R. F., Derringer, J., Markon, K. E., Watson, D., Skodol, A. E., 2013) was used.

4.2.3 Measure

Measure of Parental Style (MOPS)

MOPS (MOPS; Parker, G. , Roussos, J., Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., 1997) is a A 21-item questionnaire with items capturing: (i) refined PBI-defined dimensions of care and protection; (ii) parental interactions inducing insecurity, guilt and failure; and (iii) parental abuse and separation experiences, with the aim being to capture the principal domains and dimensions of parenting. The questionnaire instructed subjects to rate ‘ how true ’ they judged each of the 21 items as a description of their mother’s and (separately) their father’s behaviors toward them in their first 16 years, with rating options being ‘ extremely true ’, ‘ moderately true ’, ‘ slightly true ’ and ‘ not true at all’ (Parker, G., Roussos, J., Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., 1997) Concerning the validity of the measurement, it has been suggested that the MOPS has the capacity to serve as a broad-brush measure of the likelihood of exposure to dysfunctional parenting and has adequate sensitivity as a screening measure in later studies (Parker, G., Roussos, J., Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., 1997).

Defense Style Questionnaire (DSQ-40)

The 40 items in DSQ-40 (Andrews, Singh, & Bond, 1993) measure 20 ego defenses. The test can provide scores for the 20 individual defenses and scores for three factors; mature, neurotic and immature. The DSQ-40 derives from a previous 88-item version (Bond et al., 1983) that was first relabeled in terms of DSM-III-R defenses (Andrews et al., 1989). Concerning the face validity of this test, a major portion of DSQ-40 items appeared to be excellent (Chabrol et al., 2005).

The Personality Inventory for DSM-5—Brief Form (PID-5-BF)

This Personality Inventory for DSM-5—Brief Form (Krueger, R. F., Derringer, J., Markon, K. E., Watson, D., Skodol, A. E., 2013) is a 25-item self-rated personality trait assessment scale for adults age 18 and older. It evaluates maladaptive personality traits for the diagnosis of personality disorders (PDs) It assesses 5 personality trait domains including negative affect, detachment, antagonism, disinhibition, and psychoticism, with each trait domain consisting of 5 items. Concerning its validity, psychometric properties of the PID-5-BF showed adequate reliability and validity (Zhang et al., 2021; Venema et al., 2021; Anderson et al., 2018; Athar et al., 2023).

4.3 Results

Descriptive and correlational examinations were carried out to evaluate the data outcomes, using the Jasp software. For continuous variables, parameters such as mean, standard deviation, and range were computed, whereas categorical data like family socio-demographics were analyzed based on counts and frequencies. Additionally, the Shapiro-Wilk test was employed to assess the normal distribution of scores for each measurement.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of MOPS

	Mean (SD)	Minimum score	Maximum scores	Shapiro-Wilk test (p-value)
Mother Abuse	2.33 (2.90)	0	11	0.800 (< .001)*
Mother Indifference	2.39 (3.31)	0	13	0.751 (< .001)*
Mother Over-Control	5.20 (2.82)	0	11	0.975 (0.417)
Father Abuse	4.85 (4.93)	0	22	0.842 (< .001)*
Father Indifference	3.74 (4.48)	0	16	0.796 (< .001)*
Father Over-control	3.91 (3.01)	0	12	0.927 (0.007)*

As a result of the Shapiro-Wilk test, it was found that the subscales of mother abuse, mother indifference, father abuse, father indifference and father over-control had abnormal distribution. Therefore, Spearman's Rho was used to assess the correlations of these variables. The rest of the correlations were computed by Pearson's R.

For the calculation of indulgent parenting style scores, a score value was assigned to each variable based on the general data. The maximum score for indifference was set at 1 due to the distribution of the data, while the maximum score for overcontrol was set at 3 for the same reason. Subsequently, participants falling within the predetermined score range were identified, totaling 11 out of the initial 47. The immature and neurotic defense styles of these 11 participants were then examined.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of DSQ-40

	Mean (SD)	Minimum score	Maximum scores	Shapiro-Wilk test (p-value)
Immature	65.12 (10.55)	45	92	0.985 (0.822)
Neurotic	15.94 (3.38)	10	22	0.949 (0.041)*
Mature	28.33 (4.13)	21	37	0.963 (0.152)

neurotic için

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of PID-5-BF

	Mean (SD)	Minimum score	Maximum scores	Shapiro-Wilk test (p-value)
Negative Affect	7.91 (3.13)	1	14	0.967 (0.222)
Detachment	5.63 (3.26)	0	13	0.958 (0.097)
Antagonism	3.96 (2.81)	0	11	0.953 (0.060)
Disinhibition	5.35 (3.53)	0	13	0.959 (0.101)
Psychoticism	7.17 (3.31)	1	14	0.968 (0.231)

Variables with related asterisk (*) was measured using Spearman's Rho due to their Shapiro Wilk test's p-value. p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

For measuring correlations between DSQ-40 and parental styles, the total scores were summed and divided into categories. Since the variables had normal distribution, the calculations were conducted by using Pearson's R.

Table 5

Correlations for subscales of DSQ-40 and Mother and Father Abuse, Indifference and Over-control

	Mother Abuse	Mother Indifference	Mother Over-control	Father Abuse	Father Indifference	Father Over-control
Immature	0.523***	0.580***	0.456**	0.306*	0.336*	0.329*
Neurotic	0.316*	0.246	0.347*	0.191	0.138	0.274
Mature	0.256	0.209	0.154	0.091	0.096	0.027

To assess correlations between Mother Over-Control, Immature and Mature Pearson's R was used. Other variables were processed by Spearman's Rho. *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

A significant correlation was found between variables; mother abuse and immature and neurotic defense mechanism with $r= 0.523$, $p= 0.001$ and $r=0.316$ $p=0.05$, mother indifference and immature defense mechanism with $r=0.580$, $p=0.001$, mother over-control

and immature with $r=0.456$, $p=0.001$ and neurotic defense mechanisms with $r=0.347$, $p=0.05$, and between father abuse, indifference over-control and immature defense mechanism with $r=0.306$, $r=0.336$ and $r=0.329$ respectively with $p=0.05$, for all.

Table 6

Correlations for subscales of PID-5-BF and Mother and Father Abuse, Indifference and Over-control

	Mother Abuse	Mother Indifference	Mother Over-control	Father Abuse	Father Indifference	Father Over-control
Negative Affect	0.213	0.211	0.093	0.196	0.210	0.109
Detachment	0.203	0.107	0.018	0.105	0.022	0.047
Antagonism	0.277	0.313*	0.228	0.231	0.448**	0.134
Disinhibition	0.398 **	0.552 ***	0.332*	0.350 *	0.307*	0.044
Psychoticism	0.27	0.403 **	0.196	0.302*	0.276	0.162

To assess correlations with Mother Over-Control Pearson's R was used. Other variables were processed by Spearman's Rho. * $p<0.05$
** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$

A significant correlation was found between variables; antagonism and mother indifference with $r=0.313$, $p=0.05$, antagonism and father indifference with $r=0.448$ and $p=0.001$, disinhibition with mother abuse with $r=0.398$, $p=0.01$, mother indifference with $r=0.552$, $p=0.001$, mother over-control with $r=0.332$, $p=0.05$, father abuse with $r=0.350$, $p=0.05$, father indifference with $r=0.307$, $p=0.05$ and psychoticism with mother indifference with $r=0.403$, $p=0.01$ and father abuse with $r=0.302$, $p=0.05$.

CHAPTER 5

5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to contribute to the existing literature by investigating the associations between distinct parental styles and the resultant displays of defense mechanisms and personality styles. Following a detailed review of literature on all focal variables, specific hypotheses were formulated for testing within the current study. A more comprehensive discourse on these hypotheses is elaborated upon in the forthcoming sections.

The first hypothesis (i) of this study was that authoritarian parenting style will be positively correlated with immature defenses. Our study lends support to this hypothesis since the findings show a positive correlation between immature defenses and mother abuse of $r=0.523$, $p=0.001$, father abuse of $r=0.306$, $p=0.05$, mother over-control of $r=0.456$, $p=0.01$ and father overcontrol of $r=0.329$. Previous research lends support to this hypothesis (Barrett-Lennard, 2015; Işık, 2016; Prunas et al., 2018; Ülbe, 2016).

The alternate hypothesis (ii) of this study postulated a positive correlation between indulgent parenting style and immature and neurotic defense mechanisms. No statistically significant values or correlations were found. The correlation between immature defense style and indulgent parenting style is $r=0.286$, $p=0.803$ and the correlation between neurotic defense style and indulgent parenting style is $r=0.021$, $p=0.525$. This could potentially be attributed to the study's limited participant pool and the skewed distribution of mother indifference. It's possible that the range for setting the maximum scores for overcontrol and indifference could have been extended for a more comprehensive assessment.

The next hypothesis (iii) of this study stated that neglectful parenting style will be positively correlated with immature defenses. Our findings support this hypothesis since there is a strong positive correlation between mother indifference and immature defenses of $r=0.580$, $p=0.001$ and a positive correlation between father indifference and immature defenses of $r=0.336$, $p=0.05$. Research conducted previously corroborates this hypothesis (Prunas et al., 2018).

Another hypothesis (iv) of this study states that authoritative parenting style will be positively correlated with mature defenses and negatively correlated with both immature and

neurotic defenses. The correlations between mature defenses and mother and father abuse, over-control and indifference have no significant values and low correlation. Perhaps the hypothesis is still true, but the experimental design was neither sensitive to the purpose nor did it include factors that interact with the measurements.

The last hypothesis (v) pertaining to personality styles posited that higher personality domain scores in detachment, psychoticism, antagonism and disinhibition and negative affectivity will be positively correlated with authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles and negatively correlated with indulgent and authoritative parenting style. The findings support this hypothesis in large and a more detailed discussion follows in the subsequent sections.

Findings show a positive correlation between antagonism and mother indifference of $r=0.313$, $p=0.05$ and father indifference of $r=0.448$, $p=0.01$ which supports this study's hypothesis that antagonism will be positively correlated to neglectful parenting style. Evidence from a previous research supports this hypothesis (Thimm, 2010).

Additionally, the research observed a positive correlation between disinhibition and mother abuse with $r=0.398$, $p=0.01$, father abuse with $r=0.350$, $p=0.05$, mother indifference with $r=0.552$, $p=0.001$, father indifference with $r=0.307$, $p=0.05$ and mother over-control with $r=0.332$, $p=0.001$. These findings lend support to our hypothesis asserting a positive correlation between disinhibition and the authoritative parenting style, as evidenced by the alignment with occurrences of mother and father abuse and mother over-control. Additionally, these findings also support the notion that neglectful parenting style correlates positively with disinhibition, supported by the alignment with instances of father indifference. Earlier investigations offer validation for this hypothesis (Timmerman and Emmelkamp, 2005; Thimm, 2010; Nordahl and Stiles, 1997).

Moreover, this study also revealed a positive correlation between psychoticism and mother indifference with $r=0.403$, $p=0.01$ and father abuse with $r=0.302$, $p=0.05$. These findings support our hypothesis that psychoticism will be positively associated with neglectful parenting style as evidenced by the alignment with occurrences of mother indifference. Furthermore, the findings also support that psychoticism will be positively correlated with authoritative parenting style, as substantiated by the alignment with instances of father abuse. The outcomes of previous investigations substantiate this hypothesis (Timmerman and Emmelkamp 2005; Thimm, 2010).

In both the domains of negative effect and detachment, no significant values and weak correlations are observed. This raises the possibility that the test might not have accurately assessed the targeted construct. Alternatively, it could suggest that the domains of negative effect and detachment within personality are not influenced by variations in parenting styles.

In the context of the correlations between defense mechanisms and personality styles, it becomes evident that variables related to mother abuse, indifference, and over-control consistently exhibit stronger correlation values compared to their counterparts; father abuse, indifference, and over-control. This disparity implies a potentially more pronounced impact of adverse childhood experiences stemming from the mother as opposed to those stemming from the father. Furthermore, the analysis of correlations within both defense mechanisms and personality styles consistently reveals that the highest correlation, accompanied by the smallest p-value, pertains to mother indifference. This particular finding underscores the salience of mother indifference in this context, potentially suggesting its heightened influence on defense mechanisms and personality styles in comparison to other factors. Regarding father over-control, no discernible impact on personality styles has been noted, unlike all other factors which exhibit a positive correlation with at least one personality style domain, even if only in isolated instances. This might suggest that father over-control does not wield an influence of importance on personality styles.

A potential constraint of this study emerged from the extensive questionnaire administered to participants, comprising a precise total of 107 questions. The length of this questionnaire could potentially have led to participant fatigue, and may have impacted the accuracy of their responses. Additionally, the sensitive and private nature of the questions might have induced discomfort or triggered personal reservations, leading to a potential lack of sincerity in their answers. To address this concern, a shorter version of the questionnaire could have been utilized for the survey; however, this introduces its own limitation in terms of accurately measuring the intended constructs. Another limitation of this study may be language barrier, as the questionnaires were presented in English and the majority of participants were Turkish and Italian. This limitation could have been eliminated by incorporating Turkish and Italian versions of the questionnaire for participants to select from.

In conclusion, the current study contributed to the literature by supporting the already proposed hypothesis of parental styles influencing defense mechanisms and personality

styles. Several statistically significant correlations were identified among the variables under investigation, however, there remains potential for further inquiry in this area.

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