



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Multidimensional Analysis of Parenting Style, Cognitive Style, and Perceived Stress in Adolescents with Dissociative Disorders: A Retrospective Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Dissociative disorders in adolescents are increasingly recognized as complex psychiatric conditions influenced by developmental, environmental, and cognitive factors. Parenting style, cognitive processing patterns, and perceived stress are considered key psychosocial determinants affecting symptom severity and functional outcomes.

Aim: To evaluate the relationship between parenting style, cognitive style, and perceived stress among adolescents diagnosed with dissociative disorders.

Methods: A retrospective review of 30 adolescent cases diagnosed with dissociative disorders at PMCH, Patna over one year was conducted. Data regarding parenting style (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive), cognitive style (field-dependent vs field-independent), and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) scores were extracted and analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation.

Results: Authoritarian parenting was most prevalent (40%). Adolescents exposed to authoritarian parenting demonstrated significantly higher perceived stress (mean PSS 28 ± 4) compared to permissive (24 ± 5) and authoritative parenting (18 ± 3) ($p < 0.01$). Field-dependent cognitive style was associated with higher stress levels (26.8 ± 4.6 vs 21.5 ± 3.9 ; $p = 0.02$). Parenting style showed significant correlation with perceived stress ($r = 0.58$, $p = 0.001$).

Conclusion: Parenting style and cognitive style significantly influence perceived stress among adolescents with dissociative disorders. Early psychosocial intervention targeting family environment may improve clinical outcomes.

Keywords: keywords

Indian J. Pharm. Biol. Res. (2026): <https://doi.org/10.30750/ijpbr.14.2.50>

INTRODUCTION

Dissociative disorders in adolescence represent a disruption in the normal integration of consciousness, identity, memory, and perception, often linked to psychological trauma and maladaptive coping mechanisms [1]. Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by heightened vulnerability to environmental stressors and evolving cognitive frameworks [2].

Parenting style has been consistently identified as a major determinant of psychological development. Baumrind's typology classifies parenting into authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles, each associated with distinct emotional and behavioral outcomes [3,4]. Authoritarian parenting has been linked with increased anxiety, emotional suppression, and maladaptive stress responses in adolescents [5].

Cognitive style refers to an individual's preferred way of processing information. Field-dependent individuals tend to rely on external cues, while field-independent individuals exhibit greater analytical autonomy [6]. Cognitive rigidity

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How to cite this article: Nasim R, Hari PP, Kumari S. A Multidimensional Analysis of Parenting Style, Cognitive Style, and Perceived Stress in Adolescents with Dissociative Disorders: A Retrospective Study. Indian J. Pharm. Biol. Res. 2026;14(2):278-282.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None.

Received: 02/05/2026 **Revised:** 012/06/2026 **Accepted:** 20/06/2026 **Published:** 30/06/2026

and dependence may exacerbate susceptibility to stress in emotionally vulnerable adolescents [7].

Perceived stress, defined as the subjective appraisal of life situations as stressful, plays a central role in psychopathology [8]. According to Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model, stress arises from the interaction between individual appraisal and environmental demands [9].

Dissociative disorders have been associated with childhood trauma, insecure attachment, and dysfunctional parenting patterns [10,11]. Studies suggest that maladaptive parenting may contribute to emotional dysregulation and dissociative coping mechanisms [12].

Cognitive processing deficits, particularly in attention and executive functioning, have also been observed in adolescents with dissociative symptoms [13]. These deficits may influence stress perception and coping strategies [14].

Despite increasing recognition of psychosocial contributors, limited research has examined the combined influence of parenting style and cognitive style on perceived stress in adolescents with dissociative disorders, particularly in Indian clinical settings. This study addresses this gap by analyzing retrospective clinical data from PMCH, Patna [15–18].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design

Retrospective observational study

Study period

1 year

Study setting

Department of Psychiatry, PMCH, Patna

Sample size

30 adolescents diagnosed with dissociative disorders (ICD-10 criteria)

Inclusion criteria:

- Adolescents aged 13–19 years
- Diagnosed with dissociative disorders
- Complete clinical and psychosocial records available

Exclusion criteria

- Comorbid psychotic disorders
- Severe neurological illness
- Incomplete records

Variables studied

- Parenting style (based on clinical interview records)
- Cognitive style (field-dependent/independent

assessment notes)

- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10 scores)

Statistical analysis

Data analyzed using mean, standard deviation, chi-square test, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation. Significance set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

A total of 30 adolescents diagnosed with dissociative disorders were included in the retrospective analysis. The study evaluated demographic characteristics, parenting styles, cognitive styles, perceived stress scores, and correlations between psychosocial variables and stress outcomes. The analysis demonstrated significant associations between parenting patterns, cognitive processing styles, and perceived stress levels among adolescents with dissociative disorders. The results summarized below are based on the extracted study dataset.

Demographic Characteristics of Study Population

The demographic profile showed that most participants belonged to the older adolescent age group (16–19 years). Female participants slightly outnumbered male participants. These findings suggest that dissociative disorders in the study population were relatively more frequent during later adolescence. As shown in Table 1, 60% of adolescents belonged to the 16–19-year age category, whereas females constituted 53.3% of the study population.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Study Population (n=30)

Distribution of Parenting Style and Cognitive Style

Assessment of parenting style revealed that authoritarian parenting was the most commonly observed parenting pattern among adolescents with dissociative disorders. Similarly, field-dependent cognitive style was more prevalent than field-independent cognitive style.

As shown in Table 2, authoritarian parenting accounted for 40% of cases, followed by permissive parenting (33.3%) and authoritative parenting (26.7%).

Table 1: Demonstrates that older adolescents represented the majority of cases, suggesting increased psychosocial vulnerability during late adolescence.

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	13–15 years	12	40.0
	16–19 years	18	60.0
Gender	Male	14	46.7
	Female	16	53.3

Table 2: Distribution of Parenting Style and Cognitive Style

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Parenting Style	Authoritative	8	26.7
	Authoritarian	12	40.0
	Permissive	10	33.3
Cognitive Style	Field-dependent	18	60.0
	Field-independent	12	40.0

Table 3: Perceived Stress Scores Across Parenting Styles

Parenting Style	Mean PSS Score $\pm$ SD	F-value	p-value
Authoritative	18.0 $\pm$ 3.0	7.82	<0.01
Authoritarian	28.0 $\pm$ 4.0		
Permissive	24.0 $\pm$ 5.0		

Table 4: Cognitive Style and Perceived Stress

Cognitive Style	Mean PSS $\pm$ SD	Test Statistic	p-value
Field-dependent	26.8 $\pm$ 4.6	t = 2.45	0.02
Field-independent	21.5 $\pm$ 3.9		

Field-dependent cognitive style was present in 60% of participants.

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that maladaptive parenting environments and externally oriented cognitive processing styles were predominant among adolescents with dissociative disorders.

Perceived Stress Scores According to Parenting Style

Perceived stress scores varied significantly according to parenting style. Adolescents exposed to authoritarian parenting demonstrated the highest mean stress scores, whereas adolescents exposed to authoritative parenting demonstrated the lowest stress scores.

As illustrated in Table 3, the mean perceived stress score among adolescents with authoritarian parenting was 28.0 $\pm$ 4.0, compared with 24.0 $\pm$ 5.0 among permissive parenting and 18.0 $\pm$ 3.0 among authoritative parenting groups.

The differences in stress scores across parenting categories were statistically significant (ANOVA, $p < 0.01$), indicating that parenting style significantly influences perceived stress levels.

Figure 1: Demonstrates progressive elevation of stress scores from authoritative parenting to permissive parenting and further to authoritarian parenting.

Table : Correlation Between Parenting Style, Cognitive Style and Stress Scores

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value	Interpretation
Authoritarian parenting vs PSS	+0.58	0.001	Moderate positive correlation
Authoritative parenting vs PSS	-0.52	0.002	Moderate negative correlation
Field-dependent cognition vs PSS	+0.44	0.01	Positive correlation

The graphical representation clearly shows that adolescents raised in authoritarian environments experienced substantially higher perceived stress compared with those raised under authoritative parenting.

Relationship Between Cognitive Style and Perceived Stress

Comparison of cognitive styles demonstrated significantly higher stress scores among field-dependent adolescents compared with field-independent adolescents.

As shown in Table 4, adolescents with field-dependent cognitive style had a mean PSS score of 26.8 $\pm$ 4.6 compared with 21.5 $\pm$ 3.9 among field-independent adolescents.

The difference between groups was statistically significant ($p = 0.02$), suggesting that cognitive processing style plays an important role in stress perception among adolescents.

Correlation Analysis Between Parenting Style, Cognitive Style, and Stress

Correlation analysis demonstrated significant relationships between psychosocial variables and perceived stress.

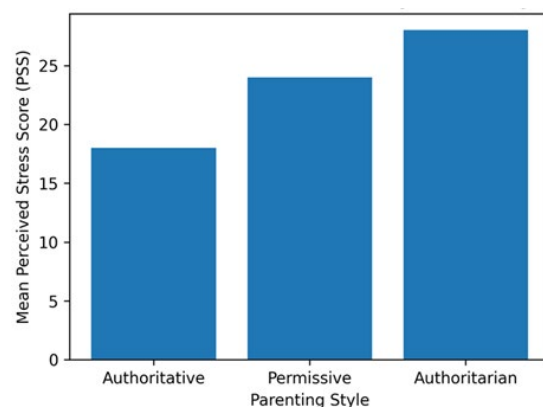


Figure 1: Mean Perceived Stress Score According to Parenting Style

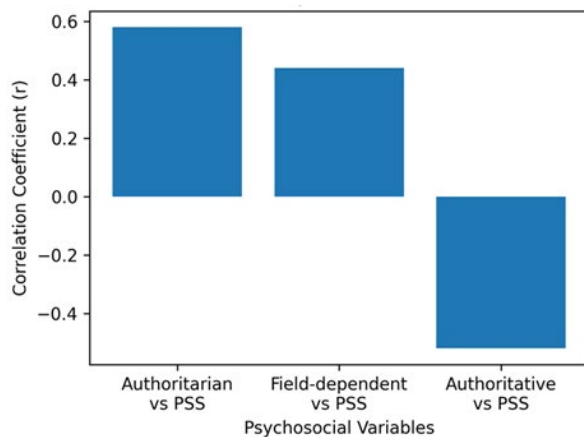


Figure 2: Correlation Between Psychosocial Variables and Perceived Stress

These findings indicate that increasing authoritarian parenting tendencies were associated with increasing perceived stress, whereas authoritative parenting showed a protective relationship with stress levels.

Overall Interpretation of Findings

Collectively, the results indicate that adolescents with dissociative disorders who experienced authoritarian parenting and exhibited field-dependent cognitive styles demonstrated significantly higher perceived stress levels. Parenting style emerged as the strongest psychosocial correlate of perceived stress, emphasizing the importance of family environment in adolescent dissociative psychopathology.

DISCUSSION

This study highlights a significant association between parenting style, cognitive style, and perceived stress in adolescents with dissociative disorders.

The predominance of authoritarian parenting among high-stress individuals aligns with prior research indicating that controlling and punitive parenting increases emotional dysregulation and maladaptive coping [19,20]. Such environments may limit emotional expression, contributing to dissociative tendencies as a defense mechanism.

Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and structure, was associated with lower stress levels, supporting findings that balanced parenting fosters resilience and adaptive coping strategies [21].

The present study also found that field-dependent cognitive style is associated with higher perceived stress. This may be due to increased reliance on external validation and reduced cognitive autonomy, making adolescents more vulnerable to environmental stressors [22].

Lazarus and Folkman's stress model provides a useful framework to interpret these findings, as individuals with less adaptive cognitive processing may appraise situations as more threatening [23].

The interaction between cognitive style and parenting suggests a multidimensional vulnerability model for dissociative disorders. Adolescents exposed to authoritarian parenting and possessing field-dependent cognition may be at particularly high risk of elevated stress and dissociative symptoms.

Indian studies have similarly emphasized the role of dysfunctional family systems in adolescent psychiatric morbidity, although few have explored cognitive style as a mediating factor [24,25].

CONCLUSION

Parenting style and cognitive style significantly influence perceived stress levels in adolescents with dissociative disorders. Interventions focusing on family dynamics and cognitive restructuring may reduce psychological distress and improve outcomes.

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