

**Parental Control and Its Impact on Social Isolation and Parental Dependence among University Students: A Cross-Sectional Study**Urooj Aziz<sup>1\*</sup>, Ansa Quratulain<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> MS Scholar, Department of Psychology, Air University Islamabad, Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Air University Islamabad, Pakistan**Abstract**

The current research was set to explore the effects of parental control on social isolation and parental dependence on the students in the university, as well as to examine the gender differences in these variables. Quantitative, cross-sectional research design was used. The sample size was (N = 250) students in a university between the ages of 18-25 years and purposive sampling was applied. The standardized self-report measures were used to collect data, such as the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), UCLA Loneliness Scale, and Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire (PACQ). Statistical tests were performed by means of SPSS 25 involving the regression analysis and independent samples t-tests. It turned out that parental control was positively and non-significantly associated with social isolation, with 3 percent of the variance being explained. Conversely, parental dependence was positively and significantly predicted by parental control as it explained 4 percent of the variance. Such findings indicate that although parental control might not have a strong impact on the level of social isolation among students, it has a significant impact on instilling a sense of parental dependence among students in their early adulthood. The differences in genders revealed that females reported greater amounts of social isolation, and parental dependence than males, although majority of the differences were not significant with parental dependence being marginally significant. In general, the paper reveals that the parental control still has an effect on the psychological outcomes of college students, especially concerning dependency patterns. The results highlight the significance of encouraging autonomy-supportive parenting behavior in the effort of supporting healthy emotional and social growth. The research adds to the available literature by offering an input into the importance of parenting practices in young adulthood in a university setting. The relationships need to be studied in future research by longitudinal designs and other psychosocial factors.

**Keywords:** parental control, social isolation, parental dependence, university students, gender differences, emerging adulthood**Correspondence:** Ms. Urooj Azia (MS Scholar)

Department of Psychology, Air University Islamabad,, Pakistan.

Email: [222314@students.au.edu.pk](mailto:222314@students.au.edu.pk)

Pages 97-103/ Received, Jan 21 2026, Revision Received Feb 12, 2026, Accepted March 3, 2026

## 1. Introduction

The family is the main socialization environment where children acquire cognitive, emotional and social skills that define their performance throughout the lifespan. Control, which refers to the extent to which parents keep track of, control and limit the behaviours, choices and independence of their children, is one of the many dimensions of parenting that has attracted a lot of scholarly interest due to its widespread impact on child and adolescent development (Barber, 1996). The influence of parenting practices does not end when children become adults; instead, they continue to have an effect even in emerging adulthood, a developmental stage that is widely defined by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, and transition to independence (Arnett, 2000). University students, who are generally in this new adult category, are a population that is uniquely placed between the parental influence and the developmental need to be self-sufficient. The role of parental control in determining outcomes like social isolation and parental dependence in this population is thus of great theoretical and practical value.

The developmental literature has conceptualized parental control in two broad dimensions; behavioural control and psychological control. Behavioural control is defined as the efforts of parents to regulate and oversee the activities of their children by establishing rules, limits and observing behaviour and has been linked to positive developmental outcomes when done in an authoritative environment (Steinberg, 2001). Psychological control, in contrast, entails the application of emotionally manipulative strategies like the induction of guilt, withdrawal of love, and intrusion into the psychological world of the child and has been more reliably associated with adverse effects such as anxiety, depression, and poor autonomy (Barber, 1996). Soenens and Vansteenkiste (2010) also highlighted that psychologically controlling parenting frustrates the fulfilment of the basic psychological needs especially autonomy and relatedness, thus providing an environment that facilitates maladjustment. Parenting styles that were developed in childhood and adolescence still cast long shadows on the psychological and social functioning of students even in cases where geographic separation has taken place as they move into university life.

Social isolation, which can be defined as the objective or subjective lack of significant social relationships and interactions, is one of the most significant psychosocial issues of university students in modern educational settings (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006). Although solitude can be an intentional and beneficial state, social isolation is a deficit condition where people have inadequate access to social networks, low sense of belonging, and report loneliness and disconnection with their peers and community (Cacioppo & Hawkey, 2003). The literature on the subject of social isolation among undergraduates has been recorded in the context of higher education institutions, and the literature has shown that a significant percentage of students experience a high level of loneliness throughout their academic life (Lim et al., 2016). The effects of social isolation go far beyond subjective discomfort; longitudinal studies have associated chronic social isolation with increased vulnerability to depression, anxiety, poor cognitive performance and even physical health decline (Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2010). Social isolation is thus a condition with grave and far-reaching consequences in the context of university life, which, at once, requires social interaction to facilitate academic cooperation and provides unprecedented opportunities to interact with peers.

An increasing amount of empirical evidence has started to shed light on the mechanisms by which parental control leads to social isolation among young adults. Protective and psychologically

controlling parenting has been identified to impair the development of social competence in children and adolescents leading to deficits that are carried into adulthood (Rubin et al., 2002). By repeatedly limiting the social interactions of their children, intercept peer relationships, and creating a sense of dependence on the family unit to regulate their emotions, parents unwillingly deny children the essential social learning experiences that are required to develop confidence, interpersonal skills, and friendship maintenance strategies. Segrin and Flora (2005) established that family communication patterns that are characterized by conformity orientation, in which the parental authority is dominant and the expression of autonomy by children is discouraged, were associated with poorer social skills and increased social isolation among young adult children. More recently, a study by Kuppens et al. (2009) established that greater parental behavioural and psychological control was linked to greater social withdrawal and peer rejection in adolescence, which are predictors of social problems in college. The processes by which parental control leads to social isolation therefore seem to work by direct limitation of social opportunity and indirectly by undermining social self-efficacy.

Parental dependence, also referred to as filial dependence or failure to launch, is the overdependence on the parents in terms of emotional support, decision making, financial resources and daily functioning beyond the developmental stage where such dependence is considered normal (Fingerman et al., 2012). The self-determination theory, as described by Deci and Ryan (2000), can be used as a helpful theoretical framework to explain how parental dependence is developed: under the conditions when the parenting environment does not help to fulfil the inherent psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, the development of the intrinsic motivation and self-regulatory skills of healthy independent functioning is less likely. Psychologically controlling parenting, specifically, sends the message to children that their value is conditional and that they need parental approval to be validated, thus creating a continued inclination to parental figures to be guided and reassured. Helicopter parenting, a popularized yet empirically supported construct referring to the high levels of parental involvement and parental protection in the emerging adulthood, has been associated with the decreased self-efficacy, decreased resilience, and increased dependence on parents among university students (Lythcott-Haims, 2015; Schiffrin et al., 2014).

Parental control and parental dependence in university students have been empirically investigated with growing intensity. Mattanah et al. (2004) discovered that psychological autonomy granting (the opposite of psychological control), by parents, was a significant predictor of higher psychosocial adaptation and less parental dependence among first-year college students, highlighting the developmental importance of parenting style in the development of independence (Altaf et al, 2021). On the same note, Nelson et al. (2011) established that high control and low autonomy support of helicopter parenting were linked to higher levels of emotional dependence and reduced levels of self-determination in emerging adult samples. The mechanisms behind this relationship are conceptually consistent: the more parents are willing to solve problems on behalf of their children, to expose them to challenges they can handle, and to communicate that the child cannot navigate independently, the more they will develop the dynamics of learned helplessness that will persist well into adulthood (Seligman, 1975). Moreover, Schiffrin et al. (2014) showed that college students who perceived their parents as highly controlling reported considerably lower life satisfaction, increased anxiety, and increased dependence on parental decision-making than those whose parents granted them more autonomy, which supports the harmful downstream effects of excessive parental control.

The university situation presents a unique environmental set of demands that interplay with previous parenting experiences in complicated manners. To most students, admission to university is the initial long-term geographic and functional distance between the family house and the student, which imposes adaptive pressures on students and their parents (Tanner, 2006). This transition can be especially difficult to students who have been brought up in high parental control conditions, as they do not have the psychological resources and practiced skills to cope with living independently, developing new social networks, and making independent choices. Making these issues even more difficult is the aspect of cultural context: in collectivist cultures, parental influence and interdependence tend to be culturally desirable and are not always felt as controlling and problematic as in individualist cultural systems (Kagitcibasi, 2005). The studies of South Asian and Middle Eastern university samples have emphasized the cultural embeddedness of parenting behaviour, and high parental monitoring often goes hand in hand with strong filial duty norms, and the separation of problematic control and culturally-determined involvement is especially significant (Cheah et al., 2013). The fact that the students of the university are the target population of this study, therefore, requires a special consideration of the developmental and cultural aspects of parental control and its consequences.

Although evidence has been accrued to the effect that parental control is associated with negative psychosocial outcomes, there are still several significant gaps in the literature that this paper aims to fill. First, most of the previous studies have focused on parental control as it relates to either social isolation or parental dependence in isolation, but not both of them in the same empirical study. It is significant to understand how parental control can predict either of these two outcomes differently or together since social isolation and parental dependence are two different but possibly related expressions of impaired psychosocial independence. A highly parent-dependent student might be socially isolated against peer networks, and vice versa, social isolation may support parental dependence as the main relational resource- which implies potential reciprocal relationships that should be investigated. Second, the majority of the existing studies have been carried out in Western, mostly individualist cultural settings, which restricts the extrapolation of the results to non-Western university students in which parenting standards and intergenerational demands vary significantly. Third, the cross-sectional research of these variables among university student's samples is still rather sparse, especially in the settings where the emergence of adulthood is conditioned by the conflicting cultural demands of filial piety and personal freedom. The current research thus seeks to close these gaps by exploring how parental control influences social isolation and parental dependence among the university students thus adding empirically based information to the developmental and educational psychology literatures. The results will be likely to have practical implications on counselling services in universities, parenting education programs, and intervention programs that seek to promote independent functioning and social integration among emerging adult populations.

There are three main objectives that guide this study. First, it will explore the effects of parental control on social isolation among university students. Second, it aims at investigating how parental control influences parental dependence levels among university students. Third, the research will focus on understanding the gender difference between university students in regards to parental dependence, social isolation, and parental control. In order to deal with these objectives, three hypotheses have been developed. The first hypothesis (H1) will be that parental control will positively influence social isolation among university students. The second hypothesis (H2) suggests that parental

control will have a positive impact on parental dependence among university students. Hypothesis (H3) is that there will be a great disparity of gender in parental control, social isolation and parental dependency in university students.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Design

The present research design was a quantitative, cross-sectional study that investigated the relationships between parental control, social isolation, and parental dependence in university students.

### 2.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size that was used to carry out the current study was (N = 250) university students aged 18 to 25 years who were recruited in the study area universities. The sample (n = 125) included males and females of different academic levels (n = 159) Bachelor's students, (n = 87) Master's students, and (n = 4) PhD students. Regarding socioeconomic status, (n = 50) were in the lower, (n = 92) in the middle and (n = 108) in the upper classes. The G\*Power software was used to calculate the sample size to ensure adequate statistical power. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, thereby guaranteeing representation of the target population in terms of predefined inclusion criteria. Participants were all invited to participate on a voluntary basis and informed consent was sought of all members prior to data collection.

**2.2.1 Inclusion Criteria.** The study involved participants who were enrolled in a university, aged between 18 and 25 years, willing to participate in the study, of any socioeconomic background, had completed intermediate level education or higher, and were day scholars living with their families.

**2.2.2 Exclusion Criteria.** Participants were excluded from the study if they had any physical disability or diagnosed psychological disorder.

### 2.3 Measures

**2.3.1 Demographic Information Sheet.** A demographic sheet was used to gather the necessary socio-demographic data, such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and education level.

**2.3.2 Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI).** Parental Bonding Instrument is a 25-item self-report instrument created by Parker et al. (1979) to determine how individuals perceive the behaviour of their parents in childhood. The instrument has been split into two distinct parts assessing the mother and father separately. Being a retrospective measure, it is given to people aged 16 years and older, who answer it according to their memories of their interactions with their parents in the first 16 years of their lives. The PBI evaluates two parenting dimensions, namely, care and control/overprotection. The instrument has high internal consistency with Cronbach alpha of 0.87 and 0.89 in the mother and father forms respectively (Parker et al., 1979).

**2.3.3 UCLA Loneliness Scale.** The UCLA Loneliness Scale is a 20-item scale that was created by Russell and others (1980) to measure subjective feelings of social isolation and loneliness. The respondents will rate each item on a scale of four response options: O (I often feel this way), S (I sometimes feel this way), R (I rarely feel this way), or N (I never feel this way). Since the initial publication of the scale, it has been revised twice to include reverse-scored items and to simplify the language. Reverse scoring is used on item 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, and 20, where higher scores reflect more loneliness. The scale has a high internal consistency as indicated by a coefficient alpha of .96 (Russell et al., 1980).

**2.3.4 Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire (PACQ).** Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire is a 26-item self-report scale that was created by Peisah and colleagues (1999) to measure the relationship between the adult and the parent on three dimensions:

Control (parental authority), Responsibility (feeling responsible to the parent), and Regard (perceived intimacy and filial reciprocal). The participants will be asked to rate how well each item describes their relationship with their parents on a 4-point scale, where 0 (not true at all) means that the item does not accurately describe their relationship, and 3 (very true) means that the item accurately describes their relationship. The measure has a good high internal consistency with Cronbach alpha of 0.74 to 0.87 between subscales of mother and father versions (Peisah et al., 1999).

**2.4 Procedure**

The present research was a quantitative research study involving university students, using a purposive sampling method. The participants were approached via their respective institutions of learning and informed of the purpose of the study and asked to answer all the items fully. They were assured that any information they gave would be kept in strict confidence and would not be used in any other way other than research. All participants were informed about the study and gave their consent before data collection, and high ethical standards were upheld during the study to ensure voluntary participation, participant privacy, and avoid discomfort and harm. Validated self-report questionnaires, including the Parental Bonding Instrument, the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and the Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire, were used to collect data both face-to-face and online. The data collected were then analyzed in SPSS 25. Correlation analysis, regression analysis and independent samples t-tests were used to examine relationships and impact among parental control, social isolation and parental dependence.

**3 Results**

**Table 1**  
**Socio-demographic Characteristics of participants (N=250)**

Variables	n	%
Age		
18-19 years	62	24.8
20-22 years	121	48.4
23-25 years	67	26.8
Gender		
Male	125	50
Female	125	50
Socio Economic Status		
Low	50	20.0
Middle	92	36.8
High	108	43.2
Education		
Bachelors	159	63.6
Masters	87	34.8
Ph.D.	4	1.6

Note. f=frequency. M= Mean. SD= Standard Deviation

The frequency and percentage of different demographic data, such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and education level are presented in Table 1. Ages were lowest in the young category of 18-19 years (n = 62, 24.8%), followed by the oldest category of 23-25 (n = 67, 26.8%) one, whereas the middle age category of 20-22 years had the highest number of representation (n = 121, 48.4%). Regarding gender, there was a balanced sample as there was an equal amount of male participants (n = 125, 50%) and female participants (n = 125, 50%). On the level of

education, the largest number was represented by the student population of the Bachelor's level (n = 159, 63.6%), then the Master's level (n = 87, 34.8%), and the PhD population was the minimal (n = 4, 1.6%). In terms of the socioeconomic status, the upper class was the most represented (n = 108, 43.2%), followed by the middle class (n = 92, 36.8%), and the least represented were the lower class (n = 50, 20.0%).

Table 2

**Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's alpha of Variables (N=250)**

Scales	K	Range	M	SD	Cronbach's $\alpha$
PBI	50	56-150	125.0	13.1	.76
UCLA	20	56-60	26.28	12.72	.91
PACQ	26	55-78	49.91	11.58	.82

Note. K= No. of items, M= Mean, SD=Standard Deviation PBI= Parental Bonding Instrument, UCLA=Loneliness Scale, PACQ= Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire

Table 2 presents the psychometric properties of the instruments used in the present study. The results indicated that the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) was found to have acceptable internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .76 (> .70). It further demonstrated that the UCLA Loneliness Scale had good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .91 (> .70). Also, the findings indicated the Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire (PACQ) had a Cronbach's alpha of .82 (> .70) which also had good internal consistency, implying that all the three measures adopted in the current study had satisfactory reliability

Table 3

**Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Social Isolation from Parental Control among University Students (N=250)**

Variables	B	SE	$\beta$	p	95% CL	
					LL	UL
Constant	25.15	2.52		.18	20.17	30.13
Social Isolation	.08	.06	.007	.18	-.04	0.20
R <sup>2</sup>	0.03					
F	1.76					

Note. B= Unstandardized Coefficient, SE= Standard Error,  $\beta$ = Standardize Coefficients, CL= Class Limit, LL=Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit.

The outcomes of the regression model showed that the conditions of multicollinearity were satisfied (VIF = 1.00). The assumption of independent residuals was also met as the Durbin-Watson value of 2.1 showed. Table 3 indicated the effect of parental control on social isolation. The findings showed that parental control had 3 percent of the variance in the social isolation (R<sup>2</sup> =.03, F (1, 248) = 1.76). Results showed that social isolation was positively predicted by parental control (non-significantly), which was 0.007 (p=.18). In conclusion, the regression model indicated parental control as a positive predictor of social isolation.

Table 4

**Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Parental Dependence from Parental Control among University Students (N=250)**

Variables	B	SE	$\beta$	p	95% CL	
					LL	UL
Constant	45.02	2.23		.01	40.63	49.41
Parental Dependence	.25	.07	.20	.01	.11	.39
R <sup>2</sup>	0.04					
F	12.76					

Note. B= Unstandardized Coefficient, SE= Standard Error,  $\beta$ = Standardize Coefficients, CL= Class Limit, LL=Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit.

The results of the regression model indicated that the assumption of multicollinearity was met ( $VIF = 1.00$ ). The independence assumption of the residuals was also met as shown by the Durbin-Watson value of 2.3. Parental dependence was affected by parental control as indicated in Table 4. The findings showed that parental control had an  $R^2$  of 4% of

the variance in parental dependence ( $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F(1, 248) = 12.76$ ). Results were presented that parental control was a positive and significant predictor of parental dependence ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p = .01$ ). In conclusion, the regression model indicated that parental control is positively related to parental dependence.

**Table 5**  
Mean Comparison of Gender (Male and Female) on Study Variables ( $N=250$ )

Variables	Male ( $n = 125$ )		Female ( $n = 125$ )		$t(248)$	$p$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$		
PC	77.53	13.35	76.75	11.71	.49	.62
SL	39.61	5.56	40.27	4.75	-1.01	.31
PD	71.68	7.79	73.64	8.38	-1.91	.05

Note. PC= Parental Control, SL= Social Isolation, PD= Parental Dependence

Table 5 revealed the gender differences among study variables. Regarding parental control,  $t(248) = .49$ ,  $p = .62$ , males scored higher ( $M = 77.53$ ,  $SD = 13.35$ ) than females ( $M = 76.75$ ,  $SD = 11.71$ ) with a medium effect size, however the difference was non-significant. With respect to social isolation,  $t(248) = -1.01$ ,  $p = .31$ , females scored higher ( $M = 40.27$ ,  $SD = 4.75$ ) than males ( $M = 39.61$ ,  $SD = 5.46$ ) with a small effect size, however the difference was also non-significant. Finally, on parental dependence,  $t(248) = -1.91$ ,  $p = .05$ , the female scored higher ( $M = 73.64$ ,  $SD = 8.38$ ) than the males ( $M = 71.68$ ,  $SD = 7.79$ ) with a small effect size, which shows that there is a slightly significant difference between males and females in parental dependence.

#### 4 Discussion

The current research examined how parental control predicts social isolation and parental dependence and explored the gender disparity in terms of these variables in higher education students. The results are added to the accumulating literature on the parenting behaviours and their psychological implications at emergent adulthood. Parenting styles, especially those that are excessive control and overprotective, have long been regarded as important antecedents of psychological and social functioning among young adults (Barber, 1996). The University shift is an important developmental period where people are supposed to be more autonomous and independent, but the effects of early parental life experiences still affect their relationships and social paths (Arnett, 2000). It is against this background that the current study aimed to test how parental control is displayed in terms of social isolation and parental dependence during this period of transition as well as testing whether the dynamics varies by gender.

The initial hypothesis was that parental control would positively forecast social isolation of university students. The results indicated that parental control positively but non-significantly predicted social isolation ( $\beta = .007$ ,  $p = .18$ ), thus partially supporting H1. The direction of the relationship was in line with the hypothesis but the effect was not statistically significant. Partly, these results align with earlier studies that propose that overprotective and controlling parenting styles limit children to chances of independent social development, thus, leading to social withdrawal and isolation (Barber, 1996). Rodriguez-Meirinhos et al. (2020) also discovered that the presence of high levels of psychological control by parents was linked to higher levels of social difficulties in adolescents and young adults. The insignificant finding of the current study could be explained by the fact that in the university environment students are able to create other forms of social support that mitigate the impact of parental control on social functioning (Bukowski

et al., 2021). Additionally, Hwang et al. (2020) found that social isolation in young adults is a multidimensional construct that depends on a set of personal, interpersonal, and situational factors other than parenting, which could be the reason why parental control was not very predictive in the current sample.

Based on these results, the second hypothesis was that parental control would be a positive predictor of parental dependence in university students. The current results validated H2 and show parental control to have significant and positive predictive value of parental dependence ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p = .01$ ), explaining the variance of parental dependence at 4 percent. The findings are in line with theoretical formulations which postulate that overprotection of the parent compromises the development of autonomy, self-efficacy and independent functioning in the developing adults (Kins et al., 2011). Parents who practice high levels of control in the years of development may instill into children the dependency on parental direction and approval consequently creating dependency habits that may be carried into adulthood (Baumrind, 1991). Peisah et al. (1999) pointed out that the adult children who have a sense of high parental authority in the relations are the ones who report more responsibility feelings towards their parents and dependency on them. More recently, Sissons (2023) highlighted that emotionally manipulative and excessively controlling parent-child relationships correlate with increased dependency, low self-esteem, and reduced autonomy in young adults, which is similar to the current results. Combined, these findings provide evidence that these controlling parenting behaviours in childhood and adolescence have a long-term effect on the relational functioning of college students, and they reflect as an increased dependence on parental figures even in the face of emerging adulthood. Expanding the discussion to the gender factor, the third hypothesis was that there would be considerable gender variation between parental control, social isolation and parental dependence among university students. The current results partially supported H3. Parental control had a marginally higher score in males than in females but was not significant ( $p = .62$ ). Women scored higher in both social isolation and parental dependence, and the difference in gender in parental dependence was marginal ( $p = .05$ ). The insignificant gender discrepancy of parental control contradicts certain previous research which has indicated the difference in parenting behaviors in sons and daughters, with daughters usually being monitored and restricted more (Leve & Fagot, 1997). The marginal gender difference in parental dependence is however congruent with the socialization theories that females may be more likely to be socialized to relational and affiliative tendencies, which include higher emotional dependency on family members (Cross & Madson, 1997).

Likewise, the increased scores on social isolation in females, but not significantly, are consistent with the results of Qualter et al. (2015), who have found that young women can be more vulnerable to the perceived social disconnection and relationship losses. Collectively, these results indicate that gender has a subtle influence on the psychological implications of parental control, and it should be explored in the future studies.

### Study Implications

The results of the current research have some crucial theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the research builds on the literature that has already been established in the area of parenting and emerging adulthood by showing that parental control continues to be a valuable predictor of psychological outcome, specifically parental dependence, well into their university years. In practice, the results suggest that psychoeducational interventions aimed at parents of university students should be implemented to promote a gradual loss of control in favour of the development of autonomy. When dealing with students in universities, counsellors and mental health professionals ought to evaluate dependency patterns based on the controlling of relationships with parents, since they can sabotage academic performance, social adaptation, and wellbeing. The counselling centres of universities can be improved by integrating the family systems perspectives into their therapeutic models, especially in situations when they deal with the students who bring about the social withdrawal or dependency issues.

### Limitations and Future Suggestions

There are a number of weaknesses of the current study. To begin with, the cross-sectional design does not allow the causal conclusions about relationships between parental control, social isolation, and parental dependence. To determine the directional and developmental nature of these relationships over time, future studies need to use longitudinal designs. Second, the purposive sampling used can restrict the applicability of the results to the larger university populations and in future studies, probability-based sampling methods should be employed to maximize the external validity. Third, the use of self-report measures opens the chances of response bias and social desirability effects, especially due to the sensitive nature of parental relationship constructs. Multi-informant methods, such as parent-report and observational measures, can be used in future research. Fourth, the current research was limited to a sample of students in a university within an urban environment and the results might not apply to students in a rural environment or students of other cultural backgrounds. Further studies are needed to investigate these associations in different cultural and socioeconomic settings to make the ecological validity of the results more robust. Lastly, further research on potential mediating/moderating factors, including attachment style, emotional regulation, and peer relationships, should be conducted to assist in elucidating the processes by which parental control can have an impact on social and relational outcomes among emerging adults.

### Conclusion

The current paper examined how parental control predicts social isolation and parental dependence in university students and how the variables are different between the genders. The results showed that parental control was a positive yet non-significant predictor of social isolation and a significant and positive predictor of parental dependence. There was also some gender differences with females reporting higher levels of parental dependence marginally as compared to the males. Such results emphasize the long-term impact of parental control on the psychological functioning of adults in their emergent stage and the relevance of promoting autonomy-supportive parenting behaviours in

universities. The current findings should be expanded in future studies through the use of longitudinal and cross-cultural designs to enhance the knowledge on the complex interplay between parenting behaviours and young adult development.

### References

- Altaf, S., Hassan, B., Khattak, A. Z., & Iqbal, N. (2021). Relationship of parenting styles with decision-making and self-concept among adolescents. *Foundation University Journal of Psychology*, 5(2).
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.55.5.469>
- Barber, B. K. (1996). Parental Psychological Control: Revisiting a Neglected Construct. *Child Development*, 67(6), 3296. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1131780>
- Baumrind, D. (1991). The influence of parenting style on adolescent competence and substance use. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 11(1), 56–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02724316911111004>
- Bukowski, W. M., Castellanos, M., Vitaro, F., & Brendgen, M. (2021). Socialization and experiences with peers. In J. E. Grusec & P. D. Hastings (Eds.), *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research* (3rd ed., pp. 228–252). Guilford Press.
- Cacchione, T., Call, J., & Zingg, R. (2009). Gravity and solidity in four great ape species (Gorilla gorilla, Pongo pygmaeus, Pan troglodytes, Pan paniscus): Vertical and horizontal variations of the table task. *Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 123(2), 168–180. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013580>
- Cacioppo, J. T., & Hawkley, L. C. (2003). Social Isolation and Health, with an Emphasis on Underlying Mechanisms. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 46(3), S39–S52. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.2003.0049>
- Cheah, C. S. L., Leung, C. Y. Y., & Zhou, N. (2013). Understanding “tiger parenting” through the perceptions of Chinese immigrant mothers: Can Chinese and U.S. parenting coexist? *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 4(1), 30–40. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031217>
- Cross, S. E., & Madson, L. (1997). Models of the self: Self-construals and gender. *Psychological Bulletin*, 122(1), 5–37. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.122.1.5>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “What” and “Why” of goal pursuits: human needs and the Self-Determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1104\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1104_01)
- Fingerman, K. L., Cheng, Y., Wesselmann, E. D., Zarit, S., Furstenberg, F., & Birditt, K. S. (2012). Helicopter Parents and landing pad Kids: Intense parental support of grown children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 74(4), 880–896. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.00987.x>
- Hawkley, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2010). Loneliness Matters: A theoretical and empirical review of consequences and mechanisms. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 40(2), 218–227. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-010-9210-8>
- Heinrich, L. M., & Gullone, E. (2006). The clinical significance of loneliness: A literature review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 26(6), 695–718. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2006.04.002>
- Hwang, T., Rabheru, K., Peisah, C., Reichman, W., & Ikeda, M. (2020). Loneliness and social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Psychogeriatrics*, 32(10), 1217–1220. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1041610220000988>
- Kagitcibasi, C. (2005). Autonomy and relatedness in cultural context. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 36(4), 403–422. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022105275959>
- Kecmanovic, D. (1999). Psychiatrists in times of Ethnonationalism. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 33(3), 309–315. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1614.1999.00544.x>
- Kuppens, S., Grietens, H., Onghena, P., & Michiels, D. (2008). Associations between parental control and children’s overt and relational aggression. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 27(3), 607–623. <https://doi.org/10.1348/026151008x345591>

- Lim, M. H., Rodebaugh, T. L., Zyphur, M. J., & Gleeson, J. F. M. (2016). Loneliness over time: The crucial role of social anxiety. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 125*(5), 620–630. <https://doi.org/10.1037/abn0000162>
- Lythcott-Haims, J. (2015). *How to raise an adult: Break free of the overparenting trap and prepare your kid for success*. Henry Holt and Company.
- Mattanah, J. F., Hand, L., & Carroll, A. (2004). Parental autonomy support and adjustment in adolescence: Examining its role in fostering self-reliance. *Psychology in the Schools, 41*(5), 537–549.
- Nelson, L. J., Padilla-Walker, L. M., & Nielson, M. G. (2015). Is hovering smothering or loving? An examination of parental warmth as a moderator of relations between helicopter parenting and emerging adults' indices of adjustment. *Emerging Adulthood, 3*(4), 282–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696815576458>
- Parker, G., Tupling, H., & Brown, L. B. (1979a). A parental bonding instrument. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 52*(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8341.1979.tb02487.x>
- Parker, G., Tupling, H., & Brown, L. B. (1979b). A parental bonding instrument. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 52*(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8341.1979.tb02487.x>
- Peisah, C., Brodaty, H., Luscombe, G., Kruk, J., & Anstey, K. (1999). The Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire (PACQ): The assessment of the relationship of adult children to their parents. *Aging & Mental Health, 3*(1), 28–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607869956415>
- Qualter, P., Vanhalst, J., Harris, R., Van Roekel, E., Lodder, G., Bangee, M., Maes, M., & Verhagen, M. (2015). Loneliness across the life span. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 10*(2), 250–264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691615568999>
- Rodríguez-Meirinhos, A., Antolín-Suárez, L., Brenning, K., Vansteenkiste, M., & Oliva, A. (2019). A bright and a dark path to adolescents' functioning: the role of need satisfaction and need frustration across gender, age, and socioeconomic status. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 21*(1), 95–116. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-018-00072-9>
- Russell, D., Peplau, L. A., & Cutrona, C. E. (1980). The revised UCLA Loneliness Scale: Concurrent and discriminant validity evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39*(3), 472–480. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.39.3.472>
- Schiffirin, H. H., Liss, M., Miles-McLean, H., Geary, K. A., Erchull, M. J., & Tashner, T. (2013). Helping or hovering? The Effects of Helicopter Parenting on College Students' Well-Being. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 23*(3), 548–557. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9716-3>
- Smith, P. B., Dugan, S., & Trompenaars, F. (1997). Locus of control and affectivity by gender and occupational status: A 14 nation study. *Sex Roles, 36*(1–2), 51–77. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02766238>
- Segrin, C., & Flora, J. (2005). Family communication. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1975). Helplessness: On depression, development, and death. W. H. Freeman.
- Soenens, B., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2009). A theoretical upgrade of the concept of parental psychological control: Proposing new insights on the basis of self-determination theory. *Developmental Review, 30*(1), 74–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2009.11.001>
- Steinberg, L. (2001). We know some things: Parent-Adolescent relationships in retrospect and prospect. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 11*(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1532-7795.00001>
- Sissons, C. (2023). *Parental dependency: Signs, causes, and how to cope*. Medical News Today. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/parental-dependency>
- Tanner, J. L. (2006). Recentering during Emerging Adulthood: a critical turning point in life span human development. In *American Psychological Association eBooks* (pp. 21–55). <https://doi.org/10.1037/11381-002>