


The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Attachment Styles With Impulsivity and Resilience Among Mothers of Children With Specific Learning Disorders

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The primary objective of this research is to investigate the correlation between emotional intelligence and attachment styles in mothers of children with specific learning disorders, and how these aspects relate to levels of impulsivity and resilience.

Methodology: The study employed a descriptive design and focused on all mothers with a child diagnosed with a specific learning disorder who sought assistance from Rasht Learning Disorders Centers between 2017-18. A targeted sampling method was employed to choose 120 participants for the research. Surveys on emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997), Attachment style (Hazan and Shivar, 1987), Impulsivity Inventory (Dickman, 1985), and resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003) were administered. An essential correlation test was carried out. The statistical analysis in this study utilized SPSS-21 software.

Findings: The findings indicated that the focal correlation between the expected variables (emotional intelligence and attachment styles) and criteria variables (impulsivity and maternal resilience) showed a significant level of significance ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: In conclusion, the study found that increased emotional intelligence was associated with fewer mothers of children with specific learning disorders. However, it also improved the resilience of these mothers. As secure attachment styles increased, mothers showed decreased impulsivity towards their children with specific learning disorders, as well as increased concern and affection through secure and ambivalent attachment styles. Moreover, an increase in secure attachment patterns led to a decrease in resilience for mothers of children with specific learning disabilities. Adopting reciprocal attachment patterns resulted in an increase in resilience among these mothers.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Attachment styles, Impulsivity, Resilience, Specific learning disorder

1. Introduction

Learning disability is a neurodevelopmental disorder that has impacted the lives of many children globally, involving impairment of essential psychological processes related to understanding or applying spoken or written language, resulting in difficulties in listening, thinking, speaking, reading, spelling, or performing mathematical calculations (Rao, Pandey, Mishra, Deshmukh, & Jahan et al., 2023). The causes of this disorder may stem from delayed puberty, specific nervous system disorders, or injuries before or during birth or in early childhood. It can be categorized into three types consisting of challenges in learning, reading, dyslexia, writing dyslexia, or basic mathematical calculations (Seshadri, Agrawal, Singh, Geethanjali, & Mahesh et al., 2023). Learning disabilities are often referred to as comorbidities, demonstrating that individuals with learning disorders are more likely to have other related disorders compared to peers without learning disorders (Aro, Neittaanmäki, Korhonen, Riihimäki, & Torppa, 2024). Research findings have demonstrated that children with learning disorders exhibit distinct characteristics in speech and language, social, psychomotor, cognitive, and sensory skills compared to those without learning disorders (Firat & Bildiren, 2023). A study revealed that academic self-efficacy, behavioral issues, and executive functions play a mediating role in the association between social skills and attachment styles in children with learning disabilities (Khoda Bakhsh, Hashemi Razini & Nouri Ghasemabadi, 2022). Furthermore, research suggests that children with learning disabilities are at an increased risk of developing psychiatric conditions, consequently making them more susceptible to bullying (Weinreich, Haberstroh, Schulte-Körne & Moll, 2023). Commodari et al. (2022) also demonstrated that adolescents with specific learning disorders differ from those without interpersonal adjustment, general self-efficacy, and metacognitive skills in a school setting. Specifically, students with specific learning disorders tend to be more impulsive and have difficulties in managing social interactions (Commodari, La Rosa, Sagone & Indiana, 2022).

Disability in children not only imposes financial strain but also results in inadequate physical, mental, and social well-being for families (Kachroo, Reshi & War, 2023). The mental health challenges faced by family

members, particularly mothers of children with learning disabilities, may be linked to impulsivity. Indeed, impulsivity is a factor in an array of mental health issues (Sabet Dizkuhi, Abolghasemi & Kafi Masuleh, 2023). Impulsivity is commonly understood as acting in the moment for immediate reward without considering the potential consequences. From a personality trait point of view, it is seen as a lack of forethought/impulsivity, although it is also characterized by other terms like sensation seeking or multidimensional concepts such as self-control and conscientiousness (Ray & Jones, 2023). Additionally, a study revealed that low-income families experience an increase in social media dependency, which is associated with reduced inhibitory control, heightened stress, and increased impulsivity (He, Li, Ma & Liu, 2021). Research also indicated that helicopter parenting can impact psychological symptoms by promoting impulsivity (Zeynep, 2020).

Mothers of children with disorders may experience increased stress, which is measured as a significant risk factor for the mental and physical health of their children (van Rooij & Powers, 2024). Developing resilience can help mothers improve their mental health and safeguard both themselves and their children by enhancing their coping strategies. Resilience, defined as the ability to handle adversity and carry on with daily life, plays a crucial role in promoting well-being (Jia Yun, Motevalli, Abu Talib & Gholampour Garmjani, 2023). Research suggests that factors such as happiness, religious beliefs, and a secure attachment style contribute to resilience (Pourkord, Mirdrikvand & Karami, 2020). Furthermore, women who experience challenges related to family and work, along with low resilience levels, are at a heightened risk of suffering from psychological issues conforming to study findings (Kinser, Jallo, Amstadter, Thacker & Jones et al., 2021).

Emotional intelligence is considered a crucial factor in protecting individuals from stress and helping them adapt better to different situations. Parents' level of emotional intelligence can influence their children's ability to understand and manage emotions. Moreover, the perceived emotional intelligence of children towards their parents, and vice versa, can directly impact the mental health of children (Sánchez-Núñez, García-Rubio, Fernández-Berrocal & Latorre, 2020). Emotional intelligence is a psychological trait that relates to an individual's emotions and mental state, and it refers to the ability to remain calm and composed

under pressure, reducing the likelihood of experiencing negative emotions like anxiety, depression, and anger (Masoumparast, Zare Bahramabadi, Khoeini & Moradi, 2019). Saikia et al. (2024) suggest that interventions focusing on emotional intelligence can be effective in enhancing psychological resources such as resilience and coping skills, leading to reduced levels of anxiety and stress (Saikia, George, Unnikrishnan, Nayak & Ravishankar, 2024). Research has also shown a significant correlation between resilience, emotional intelligence, and overall psychological well-being (Bano & Pervaiz, 2020).

Attachment theory posits that individuals develop attachment styles, which are internalized representations of relationships, based on their interactions with primary caregivers. These attachment styles typically form in early childhood and are believed to shape one's behaviors and perceptions in relationships throughout their lifetime. There are four main attachment styles: secure, insecure, avoidant, and ambivalent (Malekzadeh, Namvar & Jomehri, 2020). Attachment is seen as a biological and behavioral mechanism that ensures the safety and proximity of an infant to its caregiver. It is thought that attachment relationships in both children and adults are governed by a single biological system (Bahmani, Naseri & Fariborzi, 2023). Studies indicate that the attachment styles of parents play a crucial role in the mental health outcomes of their children, particularly in adverse childhood experiences (Genc & Arslan, 2023). Research has also shown that attachment issues can be linked to challenging behaviors, as well as psychological problems like depression and maladaptive coping mechanisms (Rinaldi, Batsel  & Haelewyck, 2022). Additionally, evidence suggests that parental attachment anxiety may influence how caregivers respond to their child's distress in a supportive manner (Gross, Stern, Brett, Fitter & Cassidy, 2023). Rossi et al. (2023) found in their study that individuals with avoidant-insecure attachment tend to exhibit lower levels of interpersonal resilience (Rossi, Jannini, Ciocca, Cipriani & Socci et al., 2023).

Children who struggle with learning disabilities stand out from their peers for a variety of reasons, such as delayed progress. This can cause added stress not only for the child but also for their parents, particularly the mother, leading to potential cognitive challenges down the line (Baghban Baghestan, Shahabizadeh & Jafar Tabatabaei, 2023). Because of the lack of previous research on the subject, further exploration is necessary. Despite the significance of this topic, there is

a noticeable gap in studies focusing on the connections between emotional intelligence, attachment styles, impulsivity, and resilience in mothers of children with learning disabilities. This study aims to fill that void by examining how emotional intelligence and attachment styles impact the impulsivity and resilience of mothers in this context.

Methods and Material

1.1. Study Design and

Participants

This was a correlational study using path analysis. The statistical population comprised all the mothers of students with SLDs visiting SLD centers in Rasht (Iran), along with their mothers, in 2017-18. Based on Kline's (2011) suggestion, researchers should enroll at least 10 to 15 participants per estimated parameter. In the present study, there are 9 variables, taking into account the possibility of dropping out of participants, 25 samples were considered for each variable. It should be noted that the enrollment of about 25 participants in each parameter increases the adequacy of the data for testing the model. With the consent of the officials of the SLD centers and upon coordination with the mothers, 230 mothers were selected conveniently, and the questionnaires were administered to them. The inclusion criteria were the mothers' and children's informed consent for participation, the diagnosis of the child's SLD, the mothers' age of 28-50 years, the mother's minimum literacy to understand the questionnaires (finishing junior high school), and living with the spouse. The exclusion criteria were unwillingness to continue participation and the failure to complete the questionnaires. In the next step, the questionnaires were collected and analyzed. After removing incomplete questionnaires, 120 questionnaires were finally analyzed. To comply with ethical considerations, the participants were assured that their data would remain confidential, and informed consent was obtained from the participants.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i):

The EQ-i is a self-report measure of emotionally and socially intelligent behavior that provides an estimate of emotional-social intelligence. The EQ-i was the first measure of its kind to be published by a psychological test publisher (Bar-On, 2004), the first such measure to be peer-reviewed in the Buros Mental

Measurement Yearbook (Bar-On, 2004), and the most widely used measure of emotional-social intelligence to date (Bar-On, 2004). In brief, the EQ-i contains 133 items in the form of short sentences and employs a 5-point response scale with a textual response format ranging from "very seldom or not true of me" (1) to "very often true of me or true of me" (5). A list of the inventory's items is found in the instrument's technical manual (Bar-On, 2004). The minimum and maximum scores for this questionnaire were 90 and 450. Reliability of the Persian version of EI questionnaire (Bar-on) was assumed 0.94 based on Cronbach's alpha (Nejati & Meshkat, 2016).

2.2.2. Shaver & Hazan Adult Attachment Scale (AAS)

This scale developed by using Shaver & Hazan's (1987) attachment test materials and has been normalized in students. The items are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale are graded using six options (1=entirely untrue of me, 6=describes me perfectly). This questionnaire has three subscales of secure attachment style, avoidant attachment style, and ambivalent attachment style. Shaver & Hazan obtained the re-test reliability of this scale as 0.81 and its reliability based on Cronbach's alpha as 0.87. In Iran, Pakdaman (2004) has examined the validity and reliability of this questionnaire and reported them satisfactory.

2.2.3. Impulsivity Inventory

Created by Dickman (1985), the impulsivity inventory is employed to evaluate two factors, namely functional impulsivity and dysfunctional impulsivity. It includes 23 yes/no questions, where scores of 1 and 0 are respectively assigned to yes and no responses, respectively, with higher scores representing greater impulsivity. The range of scores of this questionnaire is between 0 and 23. Ekhtiari and et al (2008) reported the reliability of this questionnaire based on Cronbach's alpha of 0.75. The validity of the Impulsivity Inventory was confirmed with a CVI of 0.91 and a CVR of 0.88 (Ekhtiari, Safaei, Esmaceli Djavid, and Atefvahid, et al., 2008). In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.80 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

2.2.4. Connor and Davidson Resilience Questionnaire (CD_RCS)

This questionnaire was designed by Connor & Davidson (2003), to assess people's resilience and was translated and standardized in Iran by This questionnaire has 25 Connor, K. M., & Davidson, J. R. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC). Depression and

anxiety, 18(2), 76-82. items and its answers are based on a five-point Likert scale of (never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always) and are scored from zero to four (never: 0. Rarely: 1; Sometimes: 2; Often: 3; Always: 4). The range of scores is between zero and 100, and a score above 50 indicates high resilience. Connor and Davidson³, reported the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha method as more than 0.89 and confirmed its structural and content validity. In Iran, Khoshouei tested the reliability of this tool using Cronbach's alpha method of 0.87 and reported its validity using factor analysis (Khoshouei, 2009).

3. Data Analysis

To present the information, a percentage, and frequency distribution table, as well as tables and graphs, were utilized. For the analysis of the data based on the scale used to measure the research variables and hypotheses, parametric statistical tests such as the focal correlation test and Pearson's correlation coefficient were employed. The statistical analysis in this study was conducted using the SPSS-21 statistical software. The results displayed that the z value from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for impulsivity and resilience is not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$), indicating a normal data distribution, which allows for the use of the focal correlation test.

3.1. Findings and Results

The mean age of mothers participating in this research is 37.71, with a standard deviation of 3.14. According to the data, 0.66% of mothers had jobs in the private sector, 0.32% in government roles, and 0.02% were retired. The table also reveals that 0.08% of fathers had education levels below a diploma, 0.47% had a diploma, 0.33% had a post-diploma or bachelor's degree, and 0.12% possessed a master's degree or higher. The average scores for emotional intelligence, impulsiveness, and resilience were recorded as 129.01, 42.87, and 132.09 respectively, along with their respective standard deviations. When it comes to attachment styles, the highest average is for avoidance at 27.8, with a standard deviation of 6.65.

Variable	The correlation coefficient	Significance level
Emotional intelligence, impulsiveness	0.28-	0.001

Table 1

Correlation between research variables in mothers of children with specific learning disorders

Emotional intelligence, resilience	0.72	0.001
Avoidance, impulsiveness	0.29	0.01
Safe, impulsive	-0.36	0.01
Ambivalent, impulsive	0.43	0.01
Avoidance, resilience	0/18	0.05
Safe, resilient	0.37+	0.01
Ambivalent, resilient	-0.25	0.01

impulsivity and resilience of mothers, advanced statistical analysis such as focal correlation was used.

Table 2

Summary of multivariate analysis of variance on the set of criterion variables

Multivariate tests	The value	F	Df	p
Pillai's trace	0.629	13.21	230	0.001
Hotelling's effect	1.34	18.97	226	0.001
	0.409	16.02	228	0.001

Based on the results presented in Table 1, there is a clear relationship between the emotional intelligence of mothers with children who have specific learning disorders and their impulsivity levels ($r = -0.28$), which has been shown to have statistical significance ($P \geq 0.01$). This indicates that as emotional intelligence increases, the impulsivity of these mother's decreases with a high level of certainty. The data also indicates a connection between emotional intelligence and resilience of mothers in similar circumstances ($r = 0.72$), once again with significant statistical support ($P \geq 0.01$). Therefore, it can be confidently concluded that an increase in emotional intelligence results in higher levels of resilience among mothers of children with specific learning disorders.

Analyzing the information provided in the table, it is clear that different attachment styles, such as avoidant, secure, and ambivalent, are associated with impulsivity levels in mothers of children with specific learning disorders ($r = 0.29$ for avoidant, -0.36 for secure, and 0.43 for ambivalent), with statistical significance ($P \geq 0.01$). An increase in secure attachment styles is associated with a decrease in isolation among these mothers, but higher isolation is linked to an increase in avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles.

The table also shows a correlation between different attachment styles and the resilience of mothers ($r = -0.18$ for avoidant, $+0.37$ for secure, and 0.25 for ambivalent), once again with statistical significance ($P \geq 0.05$). This suggests that an increase in secure and avoidant attachment styles is related to a decrease in resilience among mothers of children with specific learning disorders, whereas an increase in ambivalent attachment style leads to an improvement in resilience. To understand how predictor variables like emotional intelligence and attachment styles impact the

Table 2 presents the results of a multivariate analysis of variance for the criterion variables of mothers' individualism and resilience. Significant findings in all three statistical tests ($P < 0.01$) indicate a strong correlation between the two variables. The significant Wilks's lambda test in the table confirms a notable relationship between the research variables with a 99% certainty. This test suggests at least one significant connection between the sets of research variables. By examining the link between predictor variables (emotional intelligence and attachment styles) and criterion variables (mothers' impulsivity and resilience), the amount of explained variability for each criterion variable is established through specific correlation analysis.

Table 3

Summary of focal correlation dimensions of predictor variables

Focal	focal correlation value	Common variance	P
1	0.747	0.559	0.001
2	0.267	0.071	0.037

The results of the focal correlation analysis in Table 3 show a significant association between predictor variables (emotional intelligence and attachment styles) and criterion variables (impulsivity and resilience of mothers) with a p-value of 0.05 or higher. This suggests that the predictor and criteria variables explain 56% of the variability in the first focus and 7% in the second focus.

Table 4

Loads and coefficients of focal scores of predictor variables

Variable	Focal 1	Focal 2
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	Focal loads A	Standard coefficients B	Focal loads A	Standard coefficients B
Emotional intelligence	0.67	0.09	0.16	0.04
Secure attachment style	0.24	0.01	0.20	0.03
Insecure attachment style	0.25	0.01	-0.74	0.15
Ambivalent attachment style	-0.45	0.05	0.62	0.16
Impulsivity	-0.43	0.08	0.54	0.07
Resilience	0.60	0.57	0.07	0.46

A :Coefficients Conoical; B: Standardized Conoical Coefficients

Table 4 illustrates that the standardized focal correlation coefficients indicate the strongest relationship between emotional intelligence and attachment styles with impulsivity and resilience of mothers. Specifically, emotional intelligence and ambivalent attachment style show a focal correlation coefficient of 0.67 and -0.45 respectively. The square of each structural value of the dependent variable explains the percentage of variance attributed to the main or focal variable. For instance, emotional intelligence explains 45%, and ambivalent attachment style explains 20% of the variance in impulsivity and resilience of mothers. Additionally, safe style and ambivalent style show a focal correlation with mothers' impulsivity and resilience in the second focal point. The square of each structural value of the dependent variable explains the percentage of variance attributed to the main or focal variable. Specifically, secure attachment style explains 55% and ambivalent attachment style explains 38% of the variance in impulsivity and resilience of mothers.

4. Discussion

The analysis revealed that there is a significant statistical correlation between the predictor variables (emotional intelligence and attachment styles) and the criterion variables (impulsivity and resilience of mothers) with a central correlation value. This result aligns with the research findings of Sabet Dizkuhi, Abolghasemi & Kafi Masuleh, 2023, Kachroo, Reshi & War, 2023, Ray & Jones, 2023, and Farrokhian, Alamdarloo & Asadmanesh, 2020. Resilience is a valuable psychological tool that enables individuals to cope with life's challenges, enhancing their social skills and problem-solving abilities even in the face of adversity. It is characterized by qualities such as strength, optimism, adaptability, and altruism (Khoshnood, Nematollahi & Monemi 2023). Research findings suggest that resilience can have a positive impact on the

Success in life is linked to emotional intelligence, which typically increases with age and encompasses abilities and characteristics. Studies suggest that individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to be happier, more productive, and healthier (Collado-Soler, Trigueros, Aguilar-Parra & Navarro, 2023). Additionally, research indicates a strong connection between emotional intelligence and various parenting styles, with a positive correlation observed (Israel, Oseni, Timothy & Obi, 2023). Furthermore, findings suggest that a secure attachment to parents is positively related to emotional intelligence, as identified in a recent study (Yanti & Mariyati, 2023). Lastly, it has been shown that emotional intelligence can indirectly impact stress levels through cognitive reappraisal and resilience, as demonstrated in research outcomes (Thomas & Zolkoski, 2020).

Emotional intelligence is related to success in life, increases with age and is divided into two concepts: abilities and characteristics. Evidence shows that people with emotional intelligence are happier, more productive and healthier (Collado-Soler, Trigueros, Aguilar-Parra & Navarro, 2023). In a study, it was found that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant relationship with different parenting styles (Israel, Oseni, Timothy & Obi, 2023). Research results also showed that there is a positive relationship between secure attachment to parents and emotional intelligence (Yanti & Mariyati, 2023). Also, based on research evidence, emotional intelligence has an indirect effect on stress through cognitive reappraisal and resilience (Thomas & Zolkoski, 2020).

Zimmer-Gembeck, Rudolph, Kerin, & Bohadana-Brown (2022) found that children of mothers who possess effective emotional regulation skills are more likely to be attentive to their peers' emotions and engage in helping behaviors. In general, parents with better emotion regulation skill or fewer difficulties are higher in positive parenting behaviors and have children with better emotion regulation and fewer internalizing

symptoms. Evidence was less clear-cut for child externalizing behaviors. Masten and Quatsort (1998) argue that the quality of primary care provided by parents, the emotional bond between children and their parents (referred to as attachment quality), and the level of cognitive development all play a role in shaping a child's social relationships and academic progress (Sun, Oubibi, & Hryshayeva, 2025). Additionally, they emphasize the influence of nurturing individuals in a child's life. According to their perspective, attachment style and cognitive development contribute to increased resilience. The theory of resilience asserts that individuals are not confined by inherent weaknesses, but instead possess unlimited potential. Resilience is viewed as an interactive process involving the individual, family, and community, aimed at promoting reintegration and optimal functioning following life stressors and obstacles. Attachment styles are shown to enhance an individual's resilience through their impact on self-esteem (Tang, 2024).

The research findings suggest that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in human development and performance. According to Mayer and Salvi, emotional intelligence can act as a guiding force for emotional and social growth. Social skills are closely linked to emotional intelligence, with the former being a part of the overall structure of the latter. Individuals with a deep understanding of others' emotions are able to effectively manage their own emotions and prevent negative reactions. The ability of parents to regulate their emotions can impact the emotional intelligence of their children. Mothers' emotional intelligence influences their emotion-oriented behaviors, which in turn shape their children's development. High emotional intelligence can help individuals navigate stressful situations and contribute to the enhancement of their social skills. Connor and Davidson highlighted that individuals with low emotional intelligence tend to have insecure attachment styles and struggle with forming deep connections with others. This can lead to difficulties in social interactions and limited friendships.

The research may have limitations due to the time-consuming nature of implementing the questionnaire and the parents' inability to provide accurate answers. It is recommended that future studies focus on mothers of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, with the children being separated by gender.

Furthermore, it is suggested that research be conducted on the correlation between fathers' attachment styles and resilience in children with intellectual disabilities, and that this be compared to other exceptional groups such as the visually impaired, hearing impaired, and hyperactive children. The impact of resilience training on various learning disorders, including reading, writing, mathematics, and hyperactivity, should be examined individually. Different educational levels and grades should be studied separately, with the results being compared.

5. Conclusion

Effective planning in education can play a key role in helping mothers of children with learning disabilities and hyperactivity develop resilience and prevent impulsive behaviors. According to attachment theory, families and educators of children with learning challenges should provide emotional support and create a secure, warm, and accepting environment for these children. In addition to interventions aimed at academic progress, parents, teachers, and other caregivers of children with learning difficulties should also provide emotional support to promote their overall growth and resilience. Enhancing parents' understanding of the behavioral traits of children with learning disabilities and ensuring appropriate treatment for them are important considerations to help these children thrive.

Authors' Contributions

The author were responsible for conducting the interview and collecting data, and responsible for analyzing the data and writing the article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model Chat GPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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