

INTRODUCTION

- Emerging adulthood (18-25 years) is a unique developmental period where many individuals are figuring out who they are and (potentially) exploring different opportunities to build their identities (Arnett, 2000). However, many are struggling with depression and anxiety (Browning et al., 2021; Conrad et al., 2021).
- Previous research has shown over-controlling parenting was associated with baseline personality disorder symptoms (Johnson, et al., 2011) and may impede the child’s ability to develop independence and decision-making skills (Perry et al., 2018) as well as to flourish (Toman et al., 2024).
- In addition, research has shown perceived parental psychological control and insecure attachment styles are negatively related to independent decision-making (Xiang & Liu, 2018).
- We hypothesized perceived parental psychological control would be negatively related to flourishing due to an increase in insecure attachment styles (i.e., anxious-preoccupied, fearful-avoidant, dismissive-ambivalent) and mental health factors (i.e., anxiety, depression, personality disorder symptomatology).**

METHODS

164 participants were included with 56.7% not enrolled in college and 26.3% enrolled in their first year at a large Midwestern university. The average age of the sample was 21.39. The majority of participants reported being White (82.2%) and female (65.2%). Participants completed the following questionnaires:

- Flourishing Scale (8 items)
- Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (24 items)
- Overparenting Scale (20 items)
- Attachment Styles Questionnaire (20 items)
- Self-administered Standardised Assessment of Personality – Abbreviated Scale (SA-SAPAS) (16 items)
- PROMIS Emotional Distress Depression Short Form (8 items)
- PROMIS Anxiety Short Form (8 items)

TABLE 1

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1: Flourishing	----								
2: Anxious-Preoccupied	-.38**	----							
3: Fearful Avoidant.	-.27**	.46**	----						
4: Secure	.51**	.19*	-.39**	----					
5: Dismissive	.12	.01	.31**	-.27**	----				
6: Controlling Parenting	-.13	.29**	.39**	-.15	.16	----			
7: Depression	-.73**	.50**	.35**	-.39**	-.07	.31**	----		
8: Anxiety	-.50**	.58**	.41**	-.32**	.03	.38**	.78**	----	
9: Personality Disorder.	-.35**	.35**	.33**	-.24**	.00	.33**	.51**	.50**	----
Mean	41.30	12.40	9.76	11.06	13.84	40.34	20.62	21.53	7.14
St Dev	9.94	4.62	4.09	3.39	3.82	17.53	9.12	8.48	2.69

RESULTS

Table 1 displays the zero-order correlations between the variables of interest along with descriptive information.

PROCESS (Model 4; Hayes, 2013) was used to examine the mediating hypotheses of the current study. Parents’ use of psychological control was related to flourishing due to depression ($B = -.15, [-.23, .07]$) and anxiety ($B = .04 [.00, .07]$) but not personality disorder symptomatology (see Figure 1).

Parents’ use of psychological control was also related to flourishing due to the relationship with anxious-preoccupied attachment ($B = -.04, [-.08, -.01]$; see Figure 2). The other attachment styles did not significantly mediated the relationship between psychological control and flourishing.

DISCUSSION

Our results indicated perceived parental psychological control is negatively related flourishing due to increased levels of depression, anxiety, and an anxious-preoccupied attachment style.

- A recent study found the anxiety dimension of attachment significantly and positively predicted depression (Fang & Wang, 2024). We see both of these factors being negatively impacted by parental psychological control.

CONCLUSION

This research explores and supports that parenting styles play a critical role in flourishing in emerging adulthood through these mediating factors. It could be beneficial to educate parents and future parents on how to provide support that does not involve high levels of psychological control. Future research should continue to explore how parenting practices impact flourishing in emerging adulthood and explore potential parenting interventions.

FIGURE 1: MENTAL HEALTH MEDIATION RESULTS

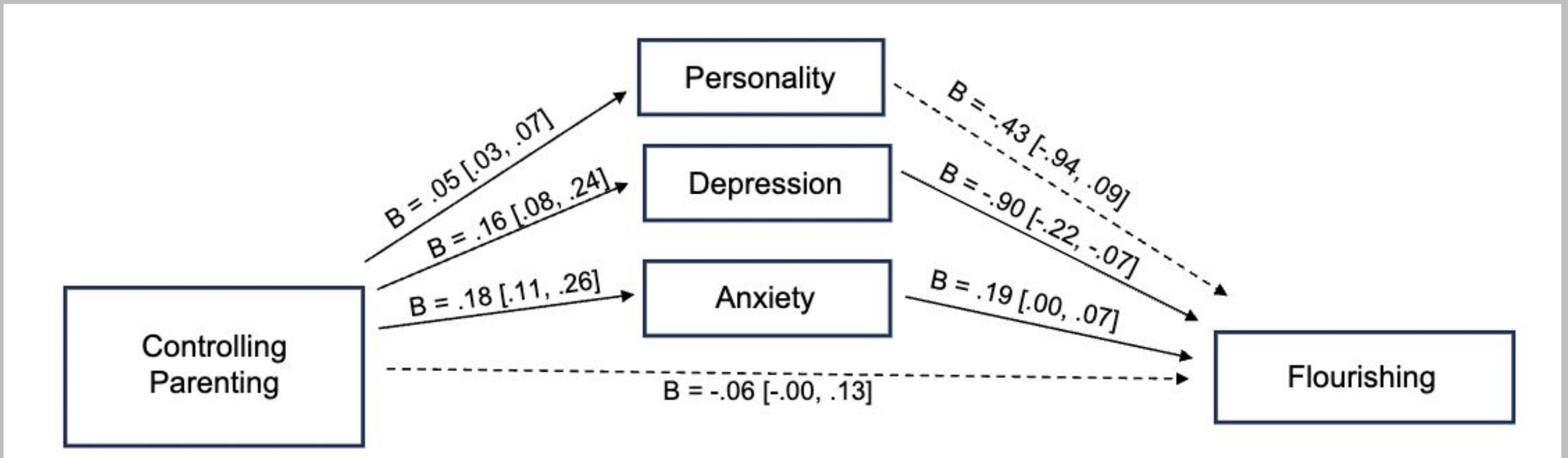


FIGURE 2: ATTACHMENT STYLE MEDIATION RESULTS

