



Article

Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator between Parenting Style and Antisocial Behavior among Youth in Malaysia

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Abstract: Despite the relentless effort by the local government, educational institutions and the social community, antisocial behaviors are still rampant in society, with 65% of those involved in antisocial behavior being youth. The main objective of this study was to investigate the mediation effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between parenting style and antisocial behaviors among the youth in Malaysia. Parenting style was separated into three categories: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage and understand one own's emotions as well as others' emotions. Besides the parent–child relationship, emotional intelligence also plays an important role in the relationship between youth and antisocial behaviors, as multiple studies have found that youth with higher emotional intelligence are less likely to engage with antisocial behavior. A total of 400 young individuals (mean age 22.70 years) participated in this quantitative study by answering the Parental Authority Questionnaire; in addition, the Subtypes of Antisocial Behavior Questionnaire and the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale were employed. Pearson's correlation coefficients, simple linear regression analysis, and covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) were used to analyze the data. The results indicate a negative association between permissive and authoritative parenting styles and antisocial behavior among youth, while authoritarian parenting displays a positive association with antisocial behavior. The results show that emotional intelligence acts as a significant full mediator of the relationship between the permissive parenting style and antisocial behavior in Malaysia. Thus, this study affirms the importance of instilling emotional intelligence in the youth and providing positive social sustainability development intervention programs that aim to reduce antisocial behaviors among the youth, especially for those with permissive parents.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; parenting style; antisocial behavior; youth; sustainability



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1. Introduction

Antisocial behavior can be defined as dysfunctional behaviors, attitudes and personality traits that an individual engages in that can result in negative interpersonal relationships and societal outcomes [1]. Statistics reveal that youth in the age category between 19 and 39 years old constituted about 65% (which is equivalent to 83,401 individuals) of drug and substance abusers in Malaysia in 2020 [2]. In 2020, out of the total crime cases reported such as theft, physical assault, house robbery, and rape, 538 involved school students as perpetrators [3]. In addition, it has been reported that almost 20 calls are received monthly by the *Pusat Perlindungan Pertubuhan Kebajikan Nur Hati*, a social welfare center in Malaysia, for the admission of pregnant teenage girls. Moreover, a murder case involving two young girls was reported in November 2020 at Hulu Terengganu [4]. The reported statistics show

a high prevalence of antisocial behaviors among Malaysian youth. After a decade of persistent efforts made by the local government, educational institutions and social community, the issue of antisocial behavior remains pressing. Studies reveal that there are two main contributing factors that lead youth to engage in antisocial behavior, namely, the family aspect and the individual aspect.

The family aspect includes parental restrictions [5], parental neglect, and a lack of intrafamilial relationships [5–8]. The youth that lack intrafamilial relationships have no one to confide in and receive less guidance from their parents, leading them to be more susceptible to the influence of their peers to engage in antisocial behaviors. Parental restrictions and a lack of intrafamilial relationships also eventually decrease the youth's attachment to their family. According to the social control theory proposed in [9], young individuals with a weaker attachment to their family are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior because they feel like they have nothing to lose since the relationship they have with their parents is already strained, and they do not care if their behavior ruins the reputation of their families. Youth that have a good relationship with their parents are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviors because they feel guilty for letting down their parents and do not want to ruin the trust they have built with their parents. It can therefore be argued that a healthy parental relationship could serve as a protective factor for antisocial behavior.

The quality of the parental relationship can be explained by the parenting style, which can be defined as a cumulation of parents' attitudes and behavior toward children and the expression of the parents' behavior depending on the emotional climate [10]. There are three types of parenting styles, namely, authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. The authoritative parenting style is defined as being nurturing, responsive and supportive, but such parents also set firm rules for their children [11]. Authoritative parents communicate with their children regarding the rules they set by explaining and discussing these rules with the children until reaching an agreement. The permissive parenting style is similar to the authoritative parenting style. That is, they are both nurturing; however, permissive parents do not set firm rules for their children and do not monitor their children closely [11]. Lastly, authoritarian parents are known for being strict, and they expect their children to follow all the rules they set without question; such parents also expect children not to challenge the parents' authority.

Regarding the individual aspect, inner frustration and errors in cognitive thinking have been identified as contributing factors to antisocial behavior [5]. Besides the parent–child relationship, emotional intelligence also plays an important role in the relationship between youth and antisocial behaviors, as multiple studies have found that youth with higher emotional intelligence are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviors [6,12,13].

However, the assumptions in the current study were made based on studies conducted in Western countries; thus, the data could be inaccurate due to cultural and geographical differences between Malaysian and other Western countries. In addition, different sociocultural settings influence parents to raise their children according to their culture. This is illustrated by the fact that the authoritarian parenting style is detrimental in Western countries, but is beneficial to children in Asian countries such as Malaysia and the Indian community.

The ability to manage emotions can help prevent an individual from acting impulsively or rashly, such as by engaging in fights, trying drugs, smoking for the first time, etc. In addition, being able to understand emotion also helps an individual to cope with their stress or intense emotions healthily, such as by talking it out, taking a break, etc., instead of coping with maladaptive mechanisms such as abusing substances, physically or verbally fighting others, or committing property crimes to let out anger. This shows that emotional intelligence is a protective factor against antisocial behaviors in the youth.

Individuals with emotional intelligence are often associated with less aggression [6]. Moreover, Riasat et al. [12] found that a low level of emotional intelligence contributes to a greater level of aggression in reactive and proactive types. Megias et al. [13] asserted

that regulating emotion revealed a direct relationship with emotional intelligence, while the perception of emotion revealed an indirect relationship through the variable of negative affect. Additionally, Edobor and Ebiye [14] mentioned that emotional intelligence significantly impacts a person's decision to engage in antisocial behavior, as the higher their emotional intelligence, the less likely they are to exhibit antisocial behavior. In short, recognizing the meanings of emotion and the relationships between various emotions and having the ability to reason and solve problems using emotions are significant factors in addressing antisocial behavior.

Hypothesis Development

Prior studies positively correlate emotional intelligence with authoritative parenting. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles contribute significantly to students' antisocial behavior. However, an authoritative parenting style does not contribute significantly to students' antisocial behavior [8,15]. Additionally, Uzma et al. [8] noted that authoritarian parenting is linked with physical and social aggression behavior in youth, whereas permissive parenting is often associated with physical aggression and rule breaking. Schaffer et al. [16] explained that permissive parenting could contribute to low empathy levels, which foster antisocial behavior among the youth. On the contrary, Okorodudu [17] found no relationship between authoritarian parenting and youth delinquency in an Eastern context. Furthermore, Schaffer et al. [16] contended that authoritarian parenting has no effect on empathy levels and antisocial behavior.

Thus, the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behavior is inconclusive, and this gap must be addressed. Therefore, this study proposes the following research hypotheses:

H1. *There is no significant relationship between permissive parenting styles and antisocial behavior among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia.*

H2. *There is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and antisocial behavior among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia.*

H3. *There is no significant relationship between authoritative parenting styles and antisocial behavior among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia.*

Zareian et al. [18] found that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and emotional intelligence were among the most significant predictors of antisocial behavior. They also found that youth raised with these two parenting styles are more likely to develop antisocial behaviors, and that antisocial youth exhibit lower emotional intelligence. However, this study only found the relationship between each variable and not how emotional intelligence is associated with parenting style and antisocial behavior. Therefore, the current study investigates how emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors (Figure 1). The current study surmises that emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors.

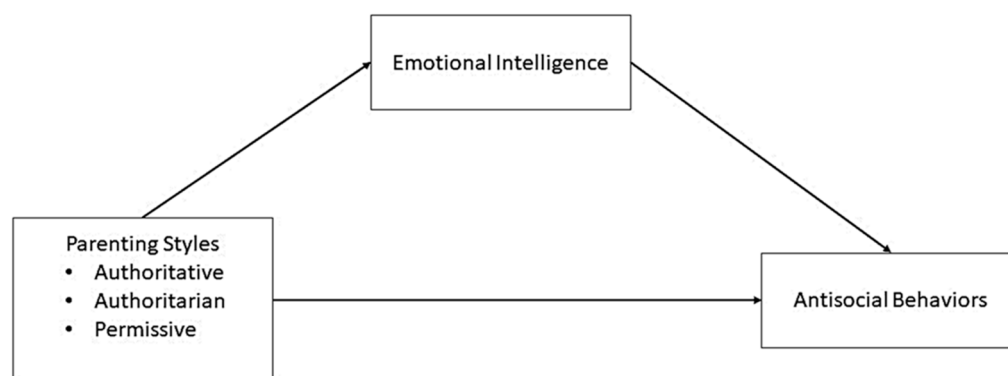


Figure 1. Research framework of emotional intelligence as a mediator of the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors.

H4. *There is no significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and antisocial behavior among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia.*

H5. *Emotional intelligence is not a significant mediator in the relationship between parenting style and antisocial behavior among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia.*

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This research study collected data through survey forms. The research design utilized a quantitative research method, which deals with quantifying and analyzing variables to obtain results [19]. The research subjects for this study were 20–25-year-old youth living in Selangor, Malaysia. According to the Malaysia Youth Data Bank System [20], there are currently 1,524,200 youth living in the state of Selangor. With a confidence level of 95% and confidence intervals of 5%, the total sample size required for this study was 400 youth.

A questionnaire was distributed online. Simple random sampling was adopted, wherein the researchers utilized two main strategies for surveying the general population using the Internet. One strategy involved randomly sampling and contacting people using another mode (mail, telephone or face-to-face) and asking them to complete a survey on the web. Consent forms and information regarding the confidentiality of data were presented on the first page of the survey form. Informed consent was gained from the parents/guardians of the subjects. This study was reviewed and approved by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (JKEtika 4/20 (11)).

2.2. Research Respondents

Table 1 reveals that most respondents were female ($n = 250$), making up 62.5% of the respondents. The remaining 150 respondents were male (37.5%). The age range of participants was between 20 and 25, with an average age of 22.70. Also, 44% of respondents were bachelor's degree holders ($n = 176$), while only four respondents' education levels reached a level of obtaining professional licenses. Lastly, most respondents were students ($n = 303$, 75.75%), which was followed by working people ($n = 58$, 14.5%), unemployed people ($n = 26$, 6.5%), part-timers ($n = 11$, 2.75%) and working students ($n = 2$, 0.5%).

Table 1. Respondents' demographic profile ($n = 400$).

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	150	37.5
Female	250	62.5
Age (years)		
20	57	14.3
21	53	13.3
22	76	19.0
23	58	6.5
24	81	14.5
25	75	18.8
Education level		
Diploma	184	46.0
Bachelor's degree	206	51.5
Master's degree	6	1.5
Professional license	4	1
Status		
Student	303	75.8
Working	58	14.5
Not Working/Unemployed	26	6.5
Working Temporary/Part-timer	11	2.8
Student and working	2	0.5

2.3. Research Instruments

Three instruments were selected for this study: the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), Subtypes of Antisocial Behavior Questionnaire (STAB) and Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS).

2.3.1. Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)

The PAQ, developed by Buri, was recorded as having an internal consistency from 0.77 to 0.85 in measuring parental styles from the children's point of view [21]. It consists of 30 items and uses a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neither agree nor disagree*), 4 (*agree*) and 5 (*strongly agree*). The PAQ is separated into three subscales: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. Each subscale contains 10 items. The respondents' parenting styles are determined by the subscale with the highest scores.

In this study, the PAQ's number of items was reduced to half; therefore, only 15 items were utilized, with each subscale comprising only five items. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) found satisfactory levels of construct reliability (CR = 0.751) and average variance extracted (AVE = 0.601) after the deletion of the original PAQ items. A few examples of the items include: "As I was growing up, my parents did not allow me to question any decision they had made," "As I was growing up, my parents took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but they would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it," and "My parents have always felt that what their children need is to be free to make up their minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want." The PAQ's reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.824, indicating good internal consistency.

2.3.2. Subtypes of Antisocial Behavior Questionnaire (STAB)

The STAB, a 32-item scale developed by Burt and Donnellan [22,23], recorded good reliability ($\alpha > 0.77$) in assessing students' antisocial behavior [23]. It contains three dimensions of antisocial behavior: physical aggression, social aggression and rule breaking [24]. Each subscale contains 11 items, except for physical aggression, which has only 10 items. The STAB employs a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (*never*), 2 (*hardly ever*), 3 (*sometimes*), 4 (*frequently*) and 5 (*nearly all the time*).

In this study, the STAB's number of items was reduced from 32 to 16. The subscales of physical and social aggression each had five items, while the subscale of rule breaking had six. CFA found satisfactory levels of CR (0.712) and AVE (0.530) after deleting the original STAB items. The sample items are: "made fun of someone behind their back," "threatened others," and "stole property from school or work." The STAB's reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.926, indicating good internal consistency.

2.3.3. Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)

The WLEIS, developed by Wong and Law in 2004, recorded an internal consistency from 0.83 to 0.90. It measures an individual's ability to understand their and others' emotions, regulate their emotions, and motivate themselves for better performance [25]. It consists of 16 items and is separated into four dimensions: self-emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, the regulation of emotion and the use of emotion. The WLEIS employs a 7-point Likert scale that includes: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*slightly disagree*), 4 (*neither agree nor disagree*), 5 (*slightly agree*), 6 (*agree*) and 7 (*strongly agree*). In this study, the WLEIS's number of items was cut from 16 to 8, with each dimension comprising only two items. CFA found satisfactory levels of CR (0.805) and AVE (0.612) after the deletion of the original WLEIS items. "I really understand what I feel," "I am a self-motivating person," and "I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions" are some of the items in the WLEIS. The WLEIS's reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.890, indicating good internal consistency.

2.4. Research Analysis

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25.0 and IBM AMOS Version 17. The research analysis employed for this study utilized descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics. Pearson's correlation was employed to determine the relationship between each variable (antisocial behavior, parenting styles, and emotional intelligence) and with each other. Next, simple linear regression was employed to ascertain if parenting style is a significant predictor of antisocial behavior. Then, covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) was employed to investigate if emotional intelligence acts as a mediator for the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors.

3. Results

3.1. Relationship between Parenting Styles, Antisocial Behaviors and Emotional Intelligence among the Youth in Selangor, Malaysia

Based on the results (shown in Table 2), Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) reveals that there is a negative and significant relationship between antisocial behaviors and the permissive parenting style, as $r(400) = -0.124, p < 0.05$. This reveals that youth raised by a permissive parenting style are less likely to exhibit antisocial behaviors. Therefore, the hypothesis null (H1) that stated, "there is no significant relationship between permissive parenting styles and antisocial behavior among youth in Selangor, Malaysia", is rejected.

Table 2. Pearson's correlation analysis for the relationship between antisocial behaviors, parenting styles and emotional intelligence.

	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Emotional intelligence
Permissive	-			
Authoritarian	-0.506 **	-		
Authoritative	0.548 **	-0.500 **	-	
Emotional intelligence	0.251 **	-0.231 **	0.324 **	-
Antisocial behavior	-0.124 *	0.358 **	-0.137 *	-0.233 **

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Pearson's correlation coefficient value between antisocial behaviors and an authoritarian parenting style is 0.358, revealing a positive and significant linear relationship. In other words, youth raised with an authoritarian parenting style are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors. Therefore, the hypothesis null (H2) that stated, "there is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and antisocial behavior among youth in Selangor, Malaysia", is rejected.

Based on the results (shown in Table 2), Pearson's correlation coefficient reveals a negative but significant relationship between antisocial behaviors and the authoritative parenting style, as $r(400) = -0.137, p < 0.05$. This suggests that youth raised with an authoritative parenting style are less likely to be involved with antisocial behaviors, much like youth raised with a permissive parenting style. Therefore, the hypothesis null (H3) that stated, "there is no significant relationship between authoritative parenting styles and antisocial behavior among youth in Selangor, Malaysia", is rejected.

Pearson's correlation coefficient value obtained for the relationship between emotional intelligence and antisocial behavior is $r = -0.233, p < 0.001$, as seen in Table 2. This reveals a negative and significant linear relationship between emotional intelligence and antisocial behavior among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia. In other words, the higher the emotional intelligence, the lower the tendency to demonstrate antisocial behavior.

3.2. Examining the Predictors of Antisocial Behavior

The regression model revealed (Table 3) that antisocial behaviors can be explained significantly, at 12.8%, by the authoritarian parenting style ($F(3334) = 52.354, p < 0.01$).

The results of the regression coefficients ($\beta = 0.587$, $t = 7.018$, $p < 0.01$) reveal that the authoritarian parenting style is a significant predictor of antisocial behaviors.

Table 3. Simple linear regression for the variables of parenting style and antisocial behaviors.

Criterion Variable	Predictor Variable	F	R ²	df	β	t	p
Antisocial behavior	Authoritative	49.248 **	0.128	3334	−0.055 *	1.295	0.023
	Authoritarian	52.354 **	0.368	3334	0.587 **	7.018	0.000
	Permissive	51.222 **	0.371	3334	−0.076 *	0.938	0.031
Control Variable							
Status of sample		32.333	0.110	3334	−0.233	1.222	0.061
Gender		33.233	−0.112	3334	0.234	1.223	0.062
Age		33.233	−0.112	3334	−0.223	1.222	0.65

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

The findings suggest that 36.8% of antisocial behaviors can be explained by the authoritative parenting style, as $F(3334) = 49.248$, $p < 0.05$; $\beta = -0.055$; and $t = 1.295$, $p < 0.05$. These results indicate that the authoritative parenting style is a significant predictor of antisocial behaviors. Moreover, 37.1% of antisocial behaviors can be explained by the permissive parenting style, as $F(3334) = 51.222$, $p < 0.05$; $\beta = -0.076$; and $t = 0.938$, $p < 0.05$. This indicates that the permissive parenting style is also a significant predictor of antisocial behaviors.

3.3. Determining Whether Emotional Intelligence Acts as a Mediator of the Relationship between Parenting Styles and Antisocial Behaviors among the Youth in Selangor, Malaysia

CB-SEM was carried out to determine how emotional intelligence acts as a mediator of the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia. Mediation analysis was conducted once for each parenting style category: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative.

Based on the results presented in Figure 2, permissive parenting is a significant predictor of antisocial behavior ($\beta = 0.777$, standard error (SE) = 0.211, $p < 0.001$), and emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of antisocial behavior ($\beta = -0.139$, SE = 0.301, $p < 0.001$). Permissive parenting did not significantly predict antisocial behavior after controlling for the mediator of emotional intelligence ($\beta = -0.139$, SE = 0.256, $p > 0.05$), indicating complete mediation. The indirect effect ($\beta = -0.108$, SE = 0.165, $p < 0.001$) accounted for 43.70% of the total effect between the permissive parenting style and antisocial behaviors. In conclusion, emotional intelligence fully mediates the relationship between the permissive parenting style and antisocial behaviors.

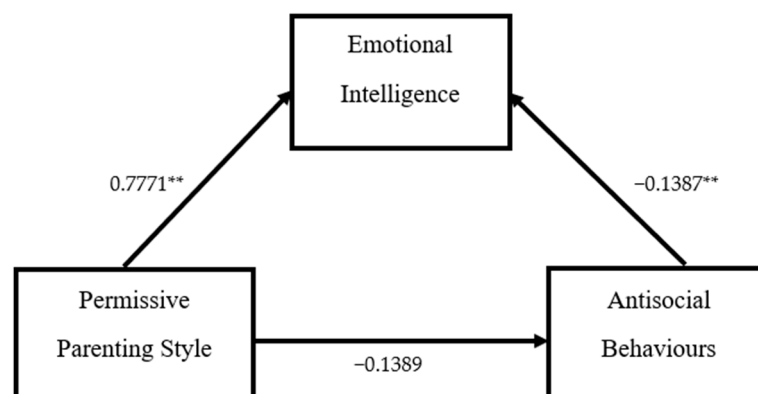


Figure 2. Mediation analysis between permissive parenting style, emotional intelligence and antisocial behaviors. ** $p < 0.001$.

Based on the results presented in Figure 3, authoritative parenting is a significant predictor of antisocial behavior ($\beta = 0.857$, SE = 0.264, $p < 0.001$), and emotional intelligence

is a significant predictor of antisocial behavior as well ($\beta = -0.136$, $SE = 0.352$, $p < 0.001$). Authoritative parenting remains a significant predictor of antisocial behavior after controlling for the mediator of emotional intelligence ($\beta = -0.118$, $SE = 0.333$, $p < 0.001$), indicating partial mediation. The indirect effect ($\beta = -0.117$, $SE = 0.174$, $p < 0.001$) accounted for 10.30% of the total effect between an authoritative parenting style and antisocial behaviors.

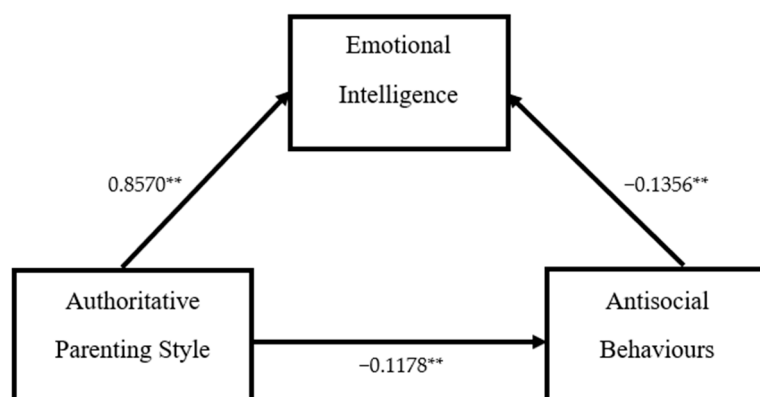


Figure 3. Mediation analysis between authoritative parenting style, emotional intelligence and antisocial behaviors. ** $p < 0.001$.

Based on the results presented in Figure 4, authoritarian parenting is a significant predictor of antisocial behavior ($\beta = -0.590$, $SE = 0.227$, $p < 0.001$), and emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of antisocial behavior as well ($\beta = -0.102$, $SE = 0.262$, $p < 0.001$). Authoritarian parenting remains a significant predictor of antisocial behavior after controlling for the mediator of emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.526$, $SE = 0.309$, $p < 0.001$), indicating partial mediation. The indirect effect ($\beta = 0.060$, $SE = 0.201$, $p < 0.001$) accounted for 49.66% of the total effect between an authoritarian parenting style and antisocial behaviors (Table 4).

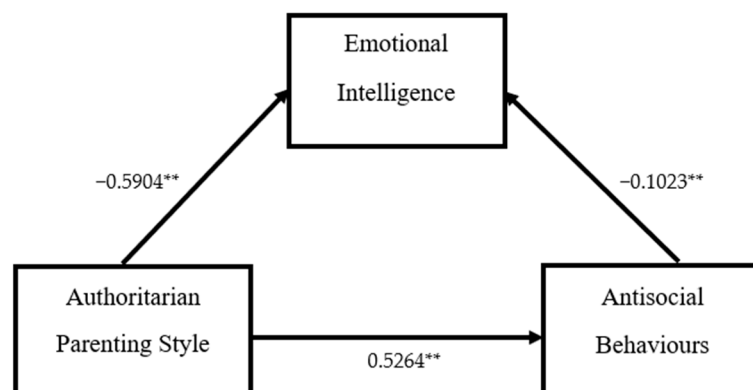


Figure 4. Mediation Analysis between Authoritarian Parenting Style, Emotional Intelligence, and Antisocial Behaviors. ** $p < 0.001$.

In conclusion, according to the mediation results displayed in Figures 2–4, emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia.

Table 4. Direct effect and indirect effect of parenting styles, emotional intelligence and antisocial behavior.

Model		β	SE	<i>p</i>
1	Direct effect			
Full mediation	Permissive parenting -> Emotional intelligence	0.777	0.211	**
	Emotional intelligence -> Antisocial behaviors	−0.139	0.301	**
	Permissive parenting -> Antisocial behaviors	−0.139	0.256	0.067
	Indirect effect			
	Permissive Parenting -> Emotional intelligence -> Antisocial behaviors	−0.108	0.165	**
2	Direct effect			
Partial mediation	Authoritative parenting -> Emotional intelligence	0.857	0.264	**
	Emotional intelligence -> Antisocial behaviors	−0.136	0.352	**
	Authoritative parenting -> Antisocial behaviors	−0.118	0.333	**
	Indirect effect			
	Authoritative parenting -> Emotional intelligence -> Antisocial behaviors	−0.117	0.174	**
3	Direct effect			
Partial mediation	Authoritarian parenting -> Emotional intelligence	−0.590	0.227	**
	Emotional intelligence -> Antisocial behaviors	−0.102	0.262	**
	Authoritarian parenting -> Antisocial behaviors	0.526	0.309	**
	Indirect effect			
	Authoritative parenting -> Emotional intelligence -> Antisocial behaviors	0.060	0.201	**

** $p < 0.01$

4. Discussion

4.1. The Relationships between Permissive, Authoritarian and Authoritative Parenting

These results reveal that youth raised with permissive parenting are less likely to exhibit antisocial behaviors. A permissive parenting style is known for its warmth but a reluctance to enforce rules [26], where permissive parents give youth complete freedom to determine whatever they want to do and decide things by themselves. Permissive parents are non-punitive, and they accept their children fully, regardless of said child's impulses, desires and behavior; additionally, permissive parents grant more autonomy rather than control their children [27]. Thus, youth raised with a permissive parenting style face multiple difficulties, such as developing unhealthy habits due to a lack of guidance from their parents [28]. There are pros and cons to being raised with permissive parenting: although they develop self-esteem and have decent social skills, they can also be impulsive, demanding, selfish and lacking in self-regulation [8,28]. Thus, youth raised with a permissive parenting style would be hypothetically more likely to exhibit antisocial behaviors due to the lack of guidance from their parents and being indulged by their parents regardless of their poor behaviors. They are also less likely to be held accountable for their behaviors, causing them to engage further in antisocial behaviors [29]. However, the current findings found a significant but negative linear relationship between a permissive parenting style and antisocial behavior among the sample of this study. In other words, youth raised with a permissive parenting style are less likely to exhibit antisocial behaviors.

This result conflicts with past research that found that youth raised with a permissive parenting style are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors [8,15–17,23]. The contradiction may be because a permissive parenting style often yields inconsistent findings regarding internalizing and externalizing problem behavior, social skills, self-confidence,

self-understanding and active problem-coping skills. Furthermore, different geographical settings should also be considered, as each country has its own unique culture. Thus, the conflicting findings may be due to the different interpretations of a permissive parenting style by this study's participants.

Next, the current research found that authoritarian parenting has a very significant and positive linear relationship with antisocial behaviors, so youth raised with an authoritarian parenting style are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors. This finding is supported by past research that found an authoritarian parenting style significantly contributes to antisocial behaviors [8,23]. Authoritarian parents are known for being stern and strict with their children. Authoritarian parents often expect their children to live up to their expectations and punish children that do not follow the rules or betray expectations. Authoritarian parents also rarely communicate with their children when making decisions, even though said decision may involve the child's life, wellbeing, or future. As a result, youth raised with an authoritarian parenting style struggle to manage their anger as they are not given proper guidance, increasing their aggression levels [28,29]. High levels of aggression can lead youth to impulsively engage in antisocial behaviors like physical fights, verbally insulting someone or vandalism, which may include scratching someone's car or kicking down a public trash can. The strict rules and punishments of authoritarian parents also influence youth to rebel against authority figures [28] and act out to release stress. Antisocial behaviors help these youth who feel restricted and controlled to feel a bit more freedom and less burdened by their parents.

The current study found a significant but negative relationship between authoritative parenting styles and antisocial behaviors among the youth in Selangor, Malaysia, suggesting that youth raised with an authoritative parenting style are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviors. This finding is in line with the established past literature [8,23,30]. The authoritative parenting style is known for encouraging adolescents to consider rules determined by the parents as resources [31]. Authoritative parents invite their children to communicate and discuss with them if the rules set by them make the children unhappy. Unlike authoritarian parents, authoritative parents do not punish their children when they do not follow the rules, as these parents believe that their rules are not absolute and that children should have some input into the rules set. Even though authoritative parents give their children freedom, they always give clear guidelines and explain the expectations set for their children [28]. As a result, youth raised with an authoritative parenting style are confident, responsible and able to self-regulate [28]. They can accomplish goals independently because they receive constant guidance from their parents, and they also grow to develop high self-esteem [28]. Thus, the current study proves that youth raised with an authoritative parenting style are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviors. This is because youth raised with an authoritative parenting style have high self-esteem, protecting them from the peer pressure to engage in antisocial behaviors as they know their worth is not determined by their peers. Clear guidance from their parents also helps them determine right and wrong, which prevents them from participating in antisocial behaviors.

Social control theory states that the reason people do not engage in crime or delinquency is because the bonds they have developed with people around them give them too much to lose [32]. Youth and their authoritative parents have good bonds with each other, thus reducing their likeliness of behaving antisocially, as the trust and bonds these youth have built with their parents are too important to lose. They do not want to disappoint their parents by acting antisocially due to the attachment they have with their parents.

4.2. The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence

The results reveal how emotional intelligence fully mediates between a permissive parenting style and antisocial behavior. This indicates that children with permissive parents need higher emotional intelligence to avoid antisocial behavior. Therefore, a permissive parenting style must encourage children to increase emotional intelligence to avoid antisocial behavior [6,12–14]. The permissive parenting style is known for its

warmth and reluctance to enforce rules [26]. Permissive parents are non-punitive and accept their children fully, regardless of their impulses, desires and behaviors. Also, they grant more autonomy rather than controlling their children [27], giving them full support and absolute freedom without setting limits and monitoring them [33]. All of these traits are advantageous for youth to develop their emotional intelligence. Therefore, children raised with a permissive parenting style are more mature, and all their experiences can help develop their emotional intelligence further as they learn from past mistakes and can explore further without limits.

On the other hand, emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, understand and regulate one's and others' emotions. The ability to understand and control one's emotions prevents one from acting impulsively [14]. Moreover, individuals who can manage emotions well also have better coping skills when facing stressful situations, such as talking things out with a trusted person instead of engaging in maladaptive behavior like alcohol and drug consumption. A study revealed youth with lower emotional intelligence may have a maladaptive emotional perception, in which they attribute others' emotions wrongly, causing them to react angrily [6]. Therefore, we can conclude that emotional intelligence plays a vital role as a full mediator between a permissive parenting style and antisocial behavior [34,35].

Furthermore, the findings reveal that a highly authoritarian parenting style contributes to lower emotional intelligence in youth, and low emotional intelligence leads to greater involvement in antisocial behaviors. The authoritarian parenting style is also directly correlated with antisocial behaviors. Thus, we suggest a model of partial mediation. This finding supports past research that indicates an authoritarian parenting style as a significant contributor to antisocial behaviors [8,23,36], and supports the association between the authoritarian parenting style, emotional intelligence and antisocial behaviors [37–40]. The authoritarian parenting style is known for being stern and strict to children. Authoritarian parents often expect their children to live up to their expectations and punish their children who do not follow the rules or fulfil their expectations. Authoritarian parents rarely communicate with their children when making decisions [36]. Failure to participate in decision making could lower children's self-confidence and sense of responsibility [33]. This could then increase their tendency to be involved in antisocial behaviors as their social bonds are weak [32]. The lack of parental warmth can also trigger youth to act more aggressively and disruptively, leading to antisocial behaviors.

The strictness and punitive behavior seen in authoritarian parents influence youth to rebel against authority figures [28] as a way of acting out and releasing stress [36]. Authoritarian parenting can result in unhappiness, insecurity and becoming more likely to react with hostility or aggression when stressed [28,29]. Youth raised with an authoritarian parenting style face difficulty in managing their anger as they were not given proper guidance and were taught to suppress negative emotions, which leads them to develop high levels of aggression [28,29]. High levels of aggression can lead youth to impulsively engage in antisocial behaviors, such as physical fights, verbally insulting others or vandalism. This is in line with the findings of the study of Hosokawa and Katsura. Thus, we conclude that the interaction between the authoritarian parenting style and antisocial behavior is partially mediated by emotional intelligence.

Thirdly, the findings reveal that the authoritative parenting style contributes to the partial mediation of emotional intelligence in youths, and high emotional intelligence prevents antisocial behaviors. The authoritative parenting style is also negatively correlated with antisocial behaviors. These findings are in line with past studies [8,23,30,37–41]. The authoritative parenting style is known for encouraging adolescents to consider rules that were determined by the parents as resources [31]. Authoritative parents invite their children to communicate and discuss with them if the rules make them unhappy. Unlike authoritarian parents, authoritative parents negotiate punishments with their children when the latter act against the rules, as the former believe that their rules are not absolute and that children should have some input in the rules set as well. These traits develop

a warm and healthy parental relationship, and this strong bond reduces the tendency of antisocial behavior in youth [32]. As a result, children raised with an authoritative parenting style grow up confident, responsible and able to self-regulate and manage their negative emotions more effectively [28,42,43]. A good response ability to emotion protects youth from antisocial behavior, as has been supported by multiple studies [6,12–14,44,45]. In short, youth raised with an authoritative parenting style develop high self-esteem and good emotional intelligence, which protects them from life stress and peer pressure to engage in antisocial behaviors [46–48].

4.3. Implications

These findings allow higher institutions to apply these lessons on developing emotional intelligence in youth to reduce antisocial behaviors among permissive parenting styles. This study can advise permissive parents on how they can help their children to be more emotionally intelligent and less antisocial.

Next, intervention programs that make changes to parenting styles can be effective in reducing antisocial behaviors among youth, particularly among permissive parents. These intervention programs could increase the sustainable development among children involved in antisocial behavior.

Increases in personal autonomy, changes in family relationships, the transition from specific to formal thinking, shifting social relations, and so on are factors that shape the psychosocial sustainable development of an individual, in which the family plays a central role. Parents with a permissive parenting style should focus more on the emotional intelligence of their children so that they do not become involved in antisocial behavior. This will automatically increase the children's social sustainability and educational development.

5. Conclusions

The current study has achieved its main objective to determine the mediation effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors. Emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors. Therefore, emotional intelligence is a vital factor between parenting styles and antisocial behaviors among youth, especially regarding the permissive parenting style. To reduce antisocial behavior among children, parents should be authoritative to monitor their children's behavior more closely. Permissive parents should also develop emotional intelligence in their children. This will help their children avoid antisocial behavior, increasing positive social sustainability among Malaysian children.

Malaysia is notable for its plural society, consisting of major ethnicities such as Malays, Chinese and Indians [49].

Cross-cultural studies on parenting have shown the importance of culture in parenting styles [50] and parent–child relationships [51].

Family values are central to Malaysian society, but rich ethnocultural elements influence child rearing and the relationship between parents and children. As a multiracial country, some studies support its collectivistic nature, although Malaysia seems to be shifting from collectivism to individualism due to urbanization.

The findings of this research reveal permissive and authoritative parenting styles as good, especially in reducing antisocial behavior. However, Asian authoritarian parenting should not be universally associated with negative outcomes. It depends on parental involvement and psychological control [52].

Children from collectivistic societies like Malaysia are encouraged to strictly follow their parents' rules and regulations, while those from individualistic societies are given more autonomy to make their own decisions; this is partly due to cultural norms. Malaysia still reflects a collectivistic society, where an authoritarian parenting style is better than styles from individualistic societies. However, families may struggle to raise their children with authoritarian values in individualistic societies. Consequently, parenting styles are congruent with the cultural norms and social dimensions of society, and culturally con-

formed parenting provides more positive and consistent experiences for an optimal family environment to thrive [53].

Lastly, further studies should investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, parenting styles and antisocial behaviors, particularly among youth, considering how a permissive parenting style often yields inconsistent results.

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