

# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN PARENTING STYLE PERSPECTIVE

**Puja Kumari**

Research Scholar,

Department of Psychology,

L. N. Mithila University

**Abstract :** *Studies have shown significant associations between parenting practices, life satisfaction, and self-esteem, and the role of parenting practices in adolescent adjustment, emphasizing its influence on wellbeing. Objectives: To analyze the relationships between parenting practices, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, and test the mediating effect of self-esteem on the relationship between the different parenting practices and life satisfaction of adolescents. Method: The sample came to a total of 742 adolescents, with an average age of 15.63 (SD = 1.24; range 13–19). The Parenting Style Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale were used. Results: Perception by adolescents of high levels of affect and communication, self-disclosure, and a sense of humor related to their parents, as well as low levels of psychological control, explained the life satisfaction of the adolescents. Self-esteem exerted a partial mediating effect on the relationship between parenting practices and satisfaction with the life of the adolescent. Finally, self-esteem also appeared to be a moderator variable, specifically in the effect of self-disclosure on the life satisfaction of the adolescent. Conclusions: The results reinforce the role of personal variables, especially self-esteem, in parent-child interaction and in the improved subjective wellbeing of the adolescent.*

## INTRODUCTION

In adolescence, the family continues exerting a strong influence on individuals' socialization, but in a context where they are less and less physically and psychologically dependent on their family of origin and enjoy and share daily experiences, not only with their parents, but also with their peers, and in particular with their friends. Although in this phase of development, conflicts may arise, partly because discrepancies between expectations of parents and their children depend in large part on the parenting practices and the adolescent stage. Nevertheless, the quality of educational practices of parents is determinant for adolescents to feel satisfied with life and have positive self-esteem, both factors related to better affective and social adjustment, where the family has a role of protecting them from risk behaviors. This study had as its main objective to study parent-child relations from the perspective of parenting practices and their influence on the life satisfaction of adolescents, considering the magnitude of the effect that self-esteem can have on this relationship.

In India, Fathers' generally are more physically distant as compared to mothers and father-child relationship generally is marked by obedience and compliance while most of the time of mothers is spent taking care of their children (Ranganath and Ranganath,1997). Overall, Much of research work is required in the area of parenting in South Asian families especially in India since researches based on predominant parenting styles practiced and their effect of self-esteem of children and adolescents in India are scarce.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Studies have analyzed the relationship of parenting practices with life satisfaction of adolescents, finding that democratic and permissive educational styles were associated positively with life satisfaction. In this direction, the importance of parental support (acceptance, open communication, expressive, instrumental and sensitivity), understood as one of the most important predictors of life satisfaction, has been emphasized. In this study, parenting practices and their influence on life satisfaction of adolescents were analyzed, considering the aspects related to parenting, an emerging theme in current society, and with an impact on one of the most prominent health problems among adolescents, such as violence.

Moreover, the family context must be taken into account, in this study, the self-esteem was also analyzed to find out whether it has a moderating and mediating role in the relationship established between parenting practices and life satisfaction. Several studies have been found in which the behaviors of one or the other influence interaction in different contexts [52]. Summarizing, the specific objectives of this study were: (1) Find out whether there is a relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction in adolescence, (2) Study the correlations existing between parenting practices and the above two variables (self-esteem and life satisfaction); (3) Identify homogeneous groups of adolescents by level of self-esteem, and compare them to their level of life satisfaction, (4) Analyze the predictive value of the parenting practices for adolescent life satisfaction, and (5) Explore the moderating and mediating effect of self-esteem with regard to parenting practices and life satisfaction.

*Driscoll (2011)*, studied the link between self-esteem and parenting styles at four stages of life with four different age points. The results showed that self-esteem was lowest during 14 years of age for the children in general, reason being it's the stage when they experience tough times in the sense that there are various changes that they have to deal with ranging from their body to the relationships they have with their friends and family and most common type of parenting changes to permissive parenting during 18-23 years of age, in general. Children from authoritative families had higher self-esteem at all four age points as compared to children from authoritarian families. Even permissive parenting was found to result in higher self-esteem levels in comparison to authoritarian parenting.

*MacDonald, Steger and Adams from University of British Columbia* did a study on Child rearing-behaviors and Adolescent Self-esteem - An examination of reciprocal effects. In this study the influence of perceived parental support and control on adolescents' self-esteem was examined. Their result showed a reciprocal relationship between perceived parental behavior and adolescent's self-esteem, a positive association between parental support and adolescent self-esteem and a negative association between parental control and their adolescent self-esteem was found.

*Fletcher, Steinberg and Sellers (1999)*, studied how the well-being of adolescents is connected to the Inter-parental Consistency perceived by the adolescents. The comparison was made between adolescents from families where inter-parental consistency was existent with adolescents who were from homes where inter-parental consistency was absent. It was found that adolescents who had parents who exercise consistent inter-parenting but authoritarian or non-authoritative parenting were lower in their academic achievements as compared to those who had single authoritative parent. Also, adolescents having one authoritative and one authoritarian parent were having higher internalized distress in comparison to those who had consistent parental practices.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Purpose and Objectives of the Study:*

The present study aimed at studying the parenting styles and its effect on self-esteem of adolescents, to assess the effect of inter-parental consistency on the self-esteem of adolescents and to assess the effect of parenting style on self-esteem influenced by the gender of the adolescents. It was hypothesized that: there would be no significant difference between authoritative and permissive parenting style both associated with high self-esteem among adolescents, Authoritarian parenting style would be associated with low self-esteem among adolescents, there would be a significant difference between inter-parental consistency and interparental inconsistency on the self-esteem of adolescents and that there would be a significant difference in the self-esteem between male and female adolescents.

**Sample :**

The selected sample consists of the total of 120 participants (60 males 60 females) selected from Delhi and NCR (Noida and Gurgaon) in India in the ages between 16-18 years with no mental and physical disability, regular school going adolescents, with nearly same socioeconomic background and only those from unbroken nuclear families with mothers who were homemakers.

**Tools:** **1.** Coopersmith Inventory Adult Form- developed by Coopersmith in the year 1987. It has 25 items to be answered by the respondents. **2.** Parental Authority Questionnaire (both forms) – developed by Dr. John R. Buri in the year 1991. It has 30 items per form. Statistical Analysis : Separate total scoring done for the two tests based on scoring method to be applied for both the tests individually. - Finding Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, t-test , Correlation Coefficient and Graphical representations of the results found

**Results**

The results revealed positive and significant correlations between "acceptance-involvement" and "psychological autonomy-granting" parenting styles and self-esteem (Table 1).

Table1. Correlation matrix of self-esteem and parenting styles

Variable	1	2	3	4
1- Acceptance-involvement	1			
2- Psychological autonomy-granting	0.36*	1		
3- Behavioral strictness-supervision	0.11**	-0.001	1	
4- Self-esteem	0.53**	0.40**	-0.03	1

p<0.05    \*\* p<0.001

Simultaneous multiple regression of self-esteem total score on the parenting styles subscales, revealed that the "acceptance-involvement" and "psychological autonomy-granting" styles were significant positive predictor of the self-esteem, whereas the "behavioral strictness-supervision" style didn't had a significant predict power for the self-esteem (Table 2).

Table2. Multiple regression of parenting styles on self-esteem

Criterion Variable	Self-esteem							
	Prediction Variables	R	R2	B	ùt		P<	
Acceptance-involvement					1.54	0.45	11.37	0.001
Psychological autonomy-granting			0.58	0.34	0.87	0.24	6.19	0.001
Behavioral strictness-supervision					-0.22	-0.01	1.38	N.S

The results of analysis t-test showed that the mean score of girls was significantly greater than boys in the "behavioral strictness-supervision" style. However, there wasn't significant difference between girls and boys in "acceptance-involvement" and "psychological autonomy-granting" parenting styles and self-esteem

**DISCUSSION**

The aim of the present study was to study the effect of parenting styles on the self-esteem of the adolescents. The sample selected comprised of 120 adolescents (60 males and 60 females). The adolescents were in the age range of 16-18 years (late adolescence). The very first parameter on which this study focuses was to find out how each type of parenting style effects the self-esteem of adolescents in Indian urban society. The results of hypothesis 1 part (a and b) makes it evident that there actually exists no significant difference between the adolescents who have mothers and fathers with permissive style of parenting and those whose mothers and fathers adopts authoritative style of parenting. Also, that most of the adolescents with permissive and/or authoritative

mothers and fathers had higher self-esteem levels. Had there been fewer gaps between the number of adolescents with permissive fathers and those with authoritative fathers, there is a high possibility that even this slight difference might not have occurred.

A major reason for which is that majority of the adolescents (both males and females) received authoritative parenting from at least one of the parent. In the present time in Indian urban context there are maximum instances of parents adopting and providing authoritative parenting without consciously discriminating upon their parental approach based on the traditional beliefs of North Indian patriarchal culture linked to 'gender' of their child, which tends to lower the instances of difference between self-esteem levels of male adolescents and female adolescents in a general scenario. The present findings are in contrast to some researches done in the earlier times in Asian and Indian context in particular. For instance, one of these studies mentioned that there is often a discouragement of autonomy by parents in South Asians including India unlike in East Asian countries (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Overall, this the results for this study done suggests that there in today's times most parents (mothers as well as fathers) are providing their adolescents with authoritative parenting styles in urban societies of North India. Which is a relatively new and clear finding in contrast to the old research findings on parenting styles in Asian and Indian contexts giving more evidences for authoritarian parenting being majorly adopted in these contexts.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study was done with the aim of studying the parenting styles and its effect on the self-esteem of adolescents, specifically of in Indian urban context. The main objective of doing this study is in the fact that though there exists a good amount of work done in this area but majority of the work is undertaken for adolescents in western cultures. The study suggests that there does not exist any significant difference between the permissive parenting style and authoritative parenting style of both fathers and mothers in terms of their effect upon the self-esteem of adolescents, and that in most cases these two styles of parenting results in higher levels of self-esteem as compared to authoritarian style of fathers' as well as mothers' parenting. Infact a significant negative correlation exists between fathers' and mothers' authoritarian parental approach and the self-esteem of their adolescents. Also, it was observed from the results that there is no significant difference between the effect of inter-parental consistency and inter-parental inconsistency on the sense of self-worth among the adolescents and no specific effect on self-esteem led by the gender of the adolescents. Overall, with the help of this study it can be suggested that keeping in mind the consistency as well as discrepancies of the results of this study with the findings for the effect of inter-parental consistency and inter-parental inconsistency on adolescents in some of the different researches already done in this area, what seems as the only option is a 'mid-way' which reminds of a 'good cop and bad cop formula', that may prove to be more efficient from time to time in parenting.

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