

Emotional autonomy and self esteem in teenagers: in association with authoritative parenting style

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine whether the relationship between teenager's emotional autonomy and their self esteem is mediated by parenting style. The sample of the study consisted of 50 adolescent boys and 50 adolescent girls who were selected from Delhi through convenience sampling. All the participants were aged between 14 to 19 years old. It was made sure that all the participants were living with both their parents. The following tools were used in this study; Emotional Autonomy Scale - Steinberg And Silverberg (1986), "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale" developed by Rosenberg (1965) and "Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)" - Bury (1991). Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data. The present study concluded that significant relationship exists between authoritative parenting style and self esteem and the emotional autonomy of the adolescents.

Keywords: Teenagers, emotional autonomy, parenting style, Self-Esteem

Adolescence is dictated by internal and external changes which lead to maturity and development. It is important that the adolescents master these tasks for a healthy psychosocial functioning. Developing autonomy is crucial for reaching adulthood. A healthy sense of self is promoted once an individual is able to function with autonomy, and therefore he develops in other areas of life as well. Autonomy is a psychosocial issue which effects throughout the life, though it is considered to be important during the teenage years, because of the biological causes that happen in puberty, advanced cognition emerge and the individual adapts new roles of the society.

The quality of a parent-adolescent relationship plays a major role in the development of emotional autonomy of a teenager. The parent child relationship is transformed as the adolescents develop "responsible autonomy" from the parents (Steinberg, 1990). Adolescence begins with the adolescents "attainment of separation and independence from the parents" and ends with a "return to the parents in a new relationship based upon equality". The parents replace their childish image of the child with a new, more matured image which is also complicated and realistic in nature.

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It is extremely important that the adolescent's self esteem is also high during the adolescence because it has been proven that the self esteem developed during adolescence remains throughout their life.

In India, being a collectivistic culture, obedience, restrictions and adhering to the group norms is seen as a way of being loved. The construct of parenting styles exists in both collectivistic as well as individualistic cultures (Sorkhabi, 2005).

One parenting style is Authoritative parenting style, and the parents who follow this style "Want their children to be socially responsible and assertive, and co-operative and self-regulated" (Baumrind, 1991). Adolescents whose parents are authoritative are socially more competent than the ones whose parents are not authoritative (Baumrind, 1991).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Siu Mui Chan, Kwok-Wai Chan (2011) did a study "Adolescents' Susceptibility to Peer Pressure: Relations to Parent-Adolescent Relationship and Adolescents' Emotional Autonomy From Parents". They examined how adolescents' vulnerability to peer pressure is affected by the relationship with mother and emotional autonomy. The sample consisted of 550 students of Hong Kong. To compute the results, structural equation modelling was done. The results showed that the teenagers' vulnerability was negatively affected by the behavioural control of the mother and was positively affected by the psychological control.

McBride-Chang and Chang (2003) did a study "Adolescent-Parent Relations in Hong Kong: Parenting Styles, Emotional Autonomy, and School Achievement. It was a 4 phase study done on 906 Hong Kong adolescents and 1091 parents. They concluded that (a) there were differences in the perception of the parenting styles between the adolescents and the parents (b) there was negative relationship of autonomy and perceived authoritative parenting style of parents (c) the parents who had their children studying in more academically oriented schools rated themselves as being more authoritative and less authoritarian, than their counterparts of lowest academically oriented schools.

Akbay and Gündüz (2020) did a study "The Role of Self-Esteem in Adolescents' Perception of Parents and Social Anxiety Levels" to investigate the mediating role of self esteem in the relationship of teenager's perception of their parents and their social anxiety. 694 adolescents were selected as sample. "Perception of Parents Scale", "Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale" and "Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents" were used. Data was computed using multiple regression analysis. They concluded that there exists a negative relationship between the social anxiety levels of perception, the perception of the parents and the self esteem.

Objectives

The present study is based on the following objectives.

1. To study the relationship between emotional autonomy in adolescents and parenting style of their mother and father.
2. To study the relationship between emotional autonomy in adolescents and self esteem.

Hypotheses

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1. There will be a significant positive relationship between emotional autonomy and authoritative parenting style.
2. There will be a significant positive relationship between emotional autonomy and self esteem for both boys and girls.

Sample

A sample of 50 adolescent boys and 50 adolescent girls were selected from Delhi through convenience sampling. All the participants were aged between 14 to 19 years old. It was made sure that all the participants were living with both their parents.

Data collection tools

1. **EMOTIONAL AUTONOMY SCALE (EAS) - STEINBERG AND SILVERBERG (1986):** Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) developed the EAS based on Blos's (1969) theory on individuation. Emotional autonomy refers to the relinquishing of childish dependencies and conceptualization of parents and replacing them with more mature ones. There are four components of emotional autonomy: two relatively more cognitive components and two relatively more affective components. The four subscale scores can be added to yield single score of emotional autonomy. Scores can range from a minimum of 14 to a maximum of 56. Higher scores indicate greater emotional autonomy.
2. **PARENTAL AUTHORITY QUESTIONNAIRE (PAQ) - BURY (1991):** Buri's self-report parental authority questionnaire was designed to measure Baumrind's three-fold typology of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting. The scale was constructed with the premise that actual behavior to which an individual has been exposed affects the individual both in a specific way and to the extent to which he or she perceives the behavior (Buri, 1991). The PAQ is a 30-item, 5-point likert-scale ranging from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (5). The scale has 10 items per style:
Authoritative parents have firm and clear expectations but are flexible and rational in manner. Such parents retain firm control yet are willing to consider the child's point of view.
3. **ROSENBERG'S SELF ESTEEM SCALE (Rosenberg, 1965):** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) is perhaps the most widely-used self-esteem measure in social science research. A 10-items scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be unidimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point likert scale format from strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. The respondents are asked to encircle SA if they strongly agree with the statement and subsequently it is follow agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD).

Statistical analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that the Pearson's correlation coefficient between emotional autonomy and the authoritative parenting style is 0.34, which is significant at 0.05 level, and that the relationship between the two is positive.

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Table 1. Correlation between emotional autonomy and authoritative parenting

Correlations			
		Emotional Autonomy	Authoritative Parenting
Emotional Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.34*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	100	100
Authoritative Parenting	Pearson Correlation	0.34*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	100	100

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that the Pearson’s correlation coefficient between authoritative parenting and self esteem of the adolescents is 0.21, which is significant at 0.05 level and is positive.

Table 2. Correlation between authoritative parenting and self esteem

Correlations			
		Self Esteem	Authoritative Parenting
Self Esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	0.21*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	100	100
Authoritative Parenting	Pearson Correlation	0.21*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	100	100

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The primary aim of the study was to explore “Emotional autonomy and self esteem in teenagers: in association with authoritative parenting style”. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was computed to find out the relationship between authoritative parenting with self esteem and emotional autonomy of 100 adolescents (50 males and 50 females) selected from Delhi. Rosenberg’s Self Esteem Scale, Parental Authority Questionnaire and Emotional Autonomy Scale were used to collect data. Authoritative parenting was found to be positively and significant related to both the self esteem and emotional autonomy of the adolescents. Hypotheses 1 and 2 have therefore been accepted.

The following studies support our findings- Seyed , Rahmani , Baradaran and Sedaghat (2010) did a study “Relationship between parenting style and autonomy among adolescents

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studying in Tabriz high schools” to examine the relationship between the parenting styles and the autonomy of the adolescents studying in Tabriz high schools. 360 adolescents were studied for this study. Parenting Style Inventory II and Emotional Autonomy Scale (EAS) were used. They concluded that there exists a significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and emotional autonomy as well as the behavioural autonomy of the adolescents.

A study was done by Wolff (2000) in which he aimed to understand the parent-child relationship and its effect on the self esteem of the children. Data was collected from 84 children who were aged between 11-12 years of age on 3 questionnaires. The tools used were Child Report of Parental Behaviour, Self-perception profile for children and a demographic scale. It was found out that children who had authoritative parents had significantly higher self esteem in global, scholastic and physical domains than the children who had authoritarian parents.

The present study concluded that significant relationship exists between authoritative parenting style and self esteem and the emotional autonomy of the adolescents.

Suggestions

Both the hypotheses have been accepted.

The parents can be suggested to:

1. Attend educational programs about different parenting styles.
2. Attend trainings regarding the developments and characteristics of the adolescents.
3. Learn about parental outcomes in order to promote healthy outcomes for the teenagers.
4. Get more involved with their teenage children.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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