

The 'Parent' in the Parenting Style: A Correlational Study Exploring the Impact of Parenting on Self-Concept of the Adolescent

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ABSTRACT

The present research attempts to explore the dynamics of parent child relationship. The investigation aims at understanding the impact of parenting style and its correlates such as personality, life satisfaction and self-esteem on the self-concept of the adolescent. A sample of 50 parents through purposive sampling was selected and evaluated on standardized measures of parenting styles, personality factors, self-esteem and life satisfaction. The adolescent child of the same parent was evaluated on standardized measure of self-concept. Statistical treatment of data involved descriptive statistics and drawing correlations to explore the relationship between parenting styles and its impact on self-concept. Qualitative insights into the data were gained through personal interviews with the participants. Overview of results indicated authoritative parenting style and agreeableness as strong antecedent of self-concept with conscientiousness and openness to experience strongly mediating authoritative parenting style. Life satisfaction and self-esteem exerted moderating effects on the self-concept of adolescent. In conclusion, parent child relationship dynamics revealed the imperativeness of 'parent' in the parenting style with robust impact on the sense of 'self' and well-being of the child.

Keywords: Parenting, Parenting Styles, Parental Characteristics, Self Concept

Drawing on from one of the most popular models regarding the determinants of parenting given by Belsky (1984) the present research investigation attempts to explore the dynamics of the parent-adolescent relationship by understanding the association between parental characteristics and the styles or methods that they employ as parents. The study was designed on the basis of the theorization of parenting as defined by characteristics of the parent, those of the child as well as the social contextual dynamics at large which navigate these two factors (Belsky, 1984). Among these three 'determinants' parental resources were found to be the most influential amongst which personality especially maternal personality was considered the most significant element. Parent

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adolescent relationship is a sensitive realm of interaction with 'parent' in the parenting style exerting a strong influence on the sense of 'self' of the adolescent.

Parenting styles serve as the various components of combinations of parenting behaviour or child rearing practices that occur across a wide range of situations with consistency (Shoben, 1949). In the midst of assessing parenting styles, an often neglected fact is how the 'parent' and his attributes define the path of parenting. Since personality governs the way- one lives his life, behaves, makes decisions or functions, there is no doubt that even when it comes to parenting, individual differences in personality characteristics affects the way one 'parents' which thus, has an influence on the child as well. He considered personality as a central tenet in the process of parenting as the former determines the level or degree of parent's expressiveness as well as proneness to positive or negative moods (Belsky & Jaffee, 2006). A report by Owens (2015) highlight the significance of one's personality in the parenting style one adopts.

Parental well-being has been associated with the development of the child as the former reflects parents' coping strategies and satisfaction which is known to be associated with children's emotional and behavioural aspects (Dumas & Serketich, 1994). Life satisfaction is often considered as a central aspect of an individual's well-being and hence one can state that parental life satisfaction seems to have an impact on the child's life satisfaction (Clair, 2012). Parents who have high self-esteem are more likely to raise kids as competent and high on self-worth (Curran, 1983). In their study, Davis and Burn (2006) found a positive relationship between the self-esteem of parents and parent – child communication wherein they found that parents with higher self-esteem engaged in friendly discussions with their child as compared to those with low self-esteem. They also discovered that mothers with high self-esteem were likely to involve their child in the decision making process known to facilitate child competence, independence and responsibility whereas parents with lower self-esteem, are likely to exert greater control on the child by making decisions for them always (Small, 1988).

Since self-concept is an integral aspect or core component of an adolescent's overall well-being and day to day functioning, the study aims to assess the impact of parenting styles and its correlates on the self-concept of the adolescent. Feelings of 'self-worth' have known to be of critical significance as it seems to be associated with the adolescent's emotional and cognitive outcomes, performance, achievement, self-esteem and many other aspects (Mahalud and Joshi, 2016., Coopersmith, 1957). From previous research in the field, it can be observed that there is limited research with respect to the characteristics of 'parents' in their process of parenting and there have been very few studies in the Indian context pertaining to the same.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To explore the role of parental characteristics such as personality, life satisfaction and self-esteem in defining the parenting styles as an adjunct to understand its impact on the self-concept of the adolescent.

Objectives

- To explore the relationship between dominant parenting style and self-concept of the adolescent

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- To explore the relationship between dominant personality type and with self-concept of the adolescent
- To explore the relationship between self-esteem of the parent and the self-concept of the adolescent
- To explore the relationship between life satisfaction of the parents and the self-concept of the adolescent
- To assess the parenting styles of working and non- working parents and see its impact on the self-concept of the child

Hypotheses

1. Authoritative parenting style will be positively correlated with self-concept of the child.
2. Agreeableness as a personality trait will be positively correlated with the self-concept of the child.
3. Agreeableness as a personality type will be positively correlated with authoritative parenting.
4. Higher conscientiousness as a personality trait would be positively correlated with authoritative parenting style.
5. Agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience would be positively correlated with the self-concept.
6. Self-esteem of the parent will be positively correlated with the self-concept of the adolescent.
7. There will be a positive correlation between the life satisfaction of the parent and the self-concept of the child.
8. There will be a difference in parenting styles of between working and non- working mothers.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

For assessing personality variables, self-esteem, life satisfaction and the parenting styles and its impact on the self-concept of the child, in the present study, parents whose first child was within the age bracket of 15 to 18 were selected. Between both the parents, the parent who spends most time with their adolescent was administered the scales. Both working and non-working parents were included in the sample. Only those adolescents who were geographically living in the same house as their parents were included in the sample for administration of the self-concept scale.

Sample

Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the researcher contacted people who could serve as participants in the study. Using the method of purposive sampling, an appropriate sample was chosen for the present study. After an initial interview with both the parents it was found that even though fathers were involved in the parenting process, mothers spent more time in comparison with their children and were more engaged in the child's daily routine. The sample consisted of 50 participants, all mothers from middle or upper middle class and included 25 working mothers and 25 homemakers within the age bracket of 35 and 50.

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Design

A descriptive correlational design was adopted in the present study. Since such designs offer understanding of the current status of a particular phenomenon as well depict the influence of variables on the topic under investigation, in the present study it was adopted as a precursor to a more quantitative research design embraced later in the study. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, correlations between parental factors like personality, life satisfaction, self-esteem, style of parenting and the self-concept of the child were calculated with the help of Pearson Product Moment Correlation which yielded correlation coefficients between all the variables.

Tools Used

In order to understand the parenting styles, personality, self-esteem and life satisfaction of parents the following tools were used:

- **Parenting Style Four Factor Questionnaire:** was given by T.Y Shyny and serves as an appropriate measure to assess the parenting practices of parents of adolescents in an eastern cultural context. It provides continuous scores on each of the parenting styles instead of categorization into typologies. The scale consists of 32 items and its scoring entails item analysis as suggested by Edwards (1969).
- **Big Five Personality Inventory:** Based on the OCEAN dimensions, O.P John and Srinivastav (1999) developed the Big Five Inventory (BFI) which proves to be an efficient tool for assessment of personality. It consists of 44 items which are personality descriptors or the dimensions of the five factors of personality namely Extroversion vs. Introversion, Agreeableness vs. antagonism, Conscientiousness vs. lack of direction, Neuroticism vs. emotional stability and Openness vs. Closeness to Experience.
- **Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (RSES):** One of the most widely used instruments to measure self-esteem of an individual, the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale was developed by Morris Rosenberg (1965). It is a 10 item instrument which measures global self-worth of an individual by quantifying one's negative and positive feelings in relation to self.
- **Life Satisfaction Scale:** A 35 item questionnaire developed by Singh and Joseph (1998) on the basis of aspects known to be closely associated with one's satisfaction with life such as finding meaning in life, pleasure in day to day activities, feeling of achievement and accomplishment upon attaining goals and being positive in general (Neugarten, et al., 1968).
- In order to evaluate the self concept of adolescents, the **Self Concept Questionnaire** developed and standardized by R.K Saraswat (1984) was used. The inventory consists of 48 items which are indicators of the six dimensions of self-concept namely, the physical self related to how an individual evaluates his or her body or physical appearance; the social self; temperamental self; educational self; moral self and intellectual self. It also gives an overall global score of one's evaluation or perceptions about oneself which represents an individual's self-concept.

Procedure

The data collection for the present study was carried out in three sessions after recognizing suitable participants in accordance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The researcher asked all of them whether they were comfortable taking part in the research or not and assured them that they could leave it in between if they wanted to. This was followed by the

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first session wherein the researcher tried to explain briefly what the study was about and also tried to answer some of the questions the participants had in their minds. In the second session, the parents were administered the four scales chosen as the research tools. Clear instructions were given to them before they started to fill in and any query that they had with regard to a particular question was addressed by the researcher who was sitting near the participant throughout the scales' administration. In the third session, an informal conversation was held with the adolescents of the parent participants to make them feel comfortable and establish a rapport. This was followed by administering them the Self Concept Inventory developed by Saraswat in order to assess their concept of self. They were assured that their responses would be confidential and if the need be, the responses would be presented in aggregate forms only. Soon after a five minute break, a casual and short interview was conducted with the child wherein the researcher tried to explore the parent child dynamic as well as tries to learn more about the parenting process and practices.

Analysis

The study was carried out in two phases wherein the participants were first administered the scales selected to assess their parenting styles, personality factors, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was then used to explore the relationship between these characteristics of the parent and the self-concept of their adolescent. In order to assess the direction and strength the relationship which exists between these variables, the Pearson correlation engendered a correlational coefficient r , which helped the researcher to understand the dynamics between parental variables and adolescent's self-concept within the range of -1 to +1. Thus, with the help of bivariate correlations, the association between the same were found.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary and prior to people's decision regarding agreement or disagreement with respect to participation they were given adequate information regarding the purpose of the study thus making sure that informed consent was present. Confidentiality of the participants was maintained by anonymity of their responses which were reported in aggregate form only and no individually identifiable information was presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parent child interactions form the basis of the fundamental organization of a child's behaviour, attitudes as well as his perception regarding himself. Research has suggested that the development of self-concept gets crystallized around the middle years of adolescence and is influenced by parenting styles and practices adopted by parents (Birkeland, Skogbrott, Melkevik, Holsen, and Wol, 2012). The appraisal of related literature indicated a robust role of parenting in the developmental process of the child. In view of the same, the present study derived its objectives primarily to understand array of variables or parental factors that influence the adolescent's overall concept of self. The findings of the research according to the hypotheses and in the light of previous researches in the field of parenting and parenting styles trying to map its impact on the adolescent's development of self-concept.

H1: Authoritative parenting style will be positively correlated with self-concept of the child
According to Baumrind's classification, the authoritative style of parenting is characterized by a balance between the dimensions of warmth and provision of structure (Steinberg et al., 1994). Authoritative parents have expectations from the child and exhibit some degree of

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control on the child's behaviour in the form of certain rules and restrictions but their parenting practices do not overlook or colour the child's autonomy which seems to foster the cognitive and social skills of the child (Steinberg, 2001). In the present study, the correlation between the authoritative style of parenting and self-concept of the adolescent was found to be 0.42 which was significant at both 0.05 as well as 0.01 levels of significance which suggests that there seems to exist a moderately good relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.42$; $p < 0.01$). The index is in consonance with the second hypothesis of the study which stated that authoritative parenting style will have an effect on the adolescent's self-concept. One of the key components involved in the development of self-concept is the nature of parental acceptance and support in the quest of discovering oneself and one's potentials. During the course of the research, it was observed that authoritative parenting acted a precursor to the child's happiness levels, emotionally balance, tolerance and maturity especially in terms of decision making, similar to what Gaikwad (2019) wrote in her article on parenting adolescents. These aspects may have a significant role in the way an adolescent evaluates or perceives himself.

H2: Agreeableness as a personality trait will be positively correlated with the self-concept of the child

H3: Agreeableness as a personality type will be positively correlated with authoritative parenting

Belsky (1984) is accredited for popularizing the notion that parenting is affected by social contextual determinants and parental personality is considered the most influential since they are a part of the "force characteristics" which significantly guide the development of the child (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). As a personality factor, agreeableness is expected to be associated with nurturance, sensitivity and warmth (Smith et al., 2007). These factors tend to have an influence on the self-concept of the adolescent. Sensitivity of parents as well as the emotional sustenance provided by them have been known to be initiators of the adolescent's quest for understanding his self and having a coherent view of the same (Eder and Mangelsdorf, 1997).

Table 4.2 shows that the correlation between the two variables of parental agreeableness and self-concept of the adolescent was ($r = .160$) which suggests a low but positive correlation between the two thus ascertaining the hypothesis which stated that as a personality trait, agreeableness will be positively related to the self-concept of the child. Since individuals with high level of agreeableness are known to 'pleasant' and 'kind', they are less likely to engage in making deprecating comments which reduces the likelihood of the development of negative self-concept (Thompson and Goodwin, 2005).

From table 4.2, it can be observed that agreeableness and authoritative parenting style were positively correlated with each other, though the value of correlation coefficient was not significant. Interestingly, the dimension of agreeableness was significantly negatively correlated with the authoritarian parenting style ($r = -.319^{**}$) which proposes that parents low on agreeableness tend to adopt the authoritarian style of parenting wherein there is little emphasis on building a 'warm relationship' with their child and more on making the child comply to parental demands in order to establish a sense of 'control' on the child. Agreeableness has been associated with supportive and sensitive parenting and mothers are likely to score high on the dimension of agreeableness (Schofield et al., 2012). Higher agreeableness is also associated with autonomy support and thus parents who are high on

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this dimension are likely to be respectful of adolescent's need for independence (Prinz et al., 2009)

Table 4.2 Correlations between parental variables and self-concept of the adolescent

	Extr over sion	Agre eable ness	Cons cient ious ness	Neur otici sm	Ope nnes s to Expe rienc e	Auth orita rian	Auth oritat ive	Perm issiv e	Unin volv ed	Self Este em	Life Satis facti on	Self- Conce pt
Extrov ersion	1	.033	.118	.065	-.013	-.166	-0.25	.192	.100	.181	.270	.035
Agreea bleness	.033	1	.345*	-.099	.158	-.319*	.206	-.110	-.215	.309*	.145	.160
Consci entious ness	.118	.345*	1	.058	.273	-.178	.067	-.045	-.056	.145	-.006	.103
Neurot icism	.065	-.099	.058	1	-.162	.122	.173	.079	.059	-.230	-.014	.125
Openn ess to Experi ence	-.013	.158	.273	-.162	1	.170	.187	.057	-.092	.292*	.185	.290*
Author itarian	-.166	-.319*	-.178	.122	.170	1	.019	.143	.445*	-.182	-.003	-.014
Author itative	-.025	.206	.067	.173	.187	.019	1	.311*	.068	.275	.163	.421*
Permis sive	.192	-.110	-.045	.079	.057	.143	.311*	1	.356*	-.037	.125	.330*
Uninv olved	.100	-.215	-.056	.059	-.092	.445*	.068	.356*	1	-.160	.055	.143
Self Esteem	.181	.309*	.145	-.230	.292*	-.182	.275	-.037	-.160	1	.435*	.209
Life Satisfa ction	.270	.145	-.006	-.014	.185	-.003	.163	.125	.055	.435*	1	.309*
Self Conce pt	.035	.160	.103	.125	.290*	-.014	.421*	.330*	.143	.209	.309*	1

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

** - Correlation is significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels (2- tailed)

H4: Higher conscientiousness as a personality trait would be positively correlated with authoritative parenting style

The trait of conscientiousness refers to the tendency to be able to regulate and control impulses and behave in accordance to socially appropriate standards to encourage goal directedness (John and Srivastava, 1999). As parents, the personality trait of conscientiousness has been found to be high on both the dimensions of warmth and control since the parents lay equal emphasis on 'pleasant' and dominant qualities (Mehrabian, 2007). In the present study, the correlation between the two variables was positive in nature ($r = .067$) which suggests that conscientious parents are more likely to adopt the authoritative style of parenting. The authoritative parenting style was conceived by Baumrind to represent parental behaviour wherein parents had a warm and friendly relationship with their child, were responsive to the child's demands but also highlighted the importance of discipline through establishment of certain rules and restrictions. Thus, there

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seem to be some common characteristics between the trait of conscientiousness and that of authoritative parenting. In the present study, authoritative style of parenting was positively associated with as mentioned above conscientiousness ($r = .067$), agreeableness ($r = .206$) and openness to experience ($r = .187$) which validates the hypothesis as well as a larger question in the study i.e., to explore the influence of parental personality on the process of parenting. The findings have been synonymous to other researches which have found that the authoritative parents scored highest on the dimensions of conscientiousness and agreeableness (Mirmehdy, Jalali and Abdi., 2010).

Among personality factors, it was the personality dimension of openness which was associated with higher level of self-concept in the adolescent. Table 4.2 suggests that there exists a significantly positive correlation between parental openness to experience and the adolescent's self-concept ($r = .290^{**}$). As a parental personality trait, it has been found to facilitate curiosity, imagination and autonomy, all of which are associated with the authoritative parenting style as well as the facilitation of self-concept (Maddahi et al., 2012). It was found that openness was a crucial factor in learning as parents who are more flexible in their thinking patterns positively encouraged their adolescents which led to a better concept of 'academic self' thus contributing to positive feelings of self-worth in the adolescent (Weiss and Shwarz, 2012). Since success in school and academic achievement is a critical facet of adolescence, it will add to an adolescent's sense of self

H5: Self-esteem of the parent will be positively correlated with the self-concept of the adolescent

To put in simply, the self-esteem of an individual encompasses his or her beliefs, perceptions or evaluation of his overall 'worthiness'. It is a critical component of one's being as it guides the way an individual lives and thus has an impact on others around him as and since adolescents mirror or emulate many qualities of their parents, parental self-esteem is of great significance. Both confidence as well as insecurities of a parent acts as a silhouette to the parent-adolescent relationship and affect the self-worth and various aspects the adolescent's self-concept.

From table 4.2 it is evident that the correlation between self-esteem of the parent and the self-concept of the child was positive ($r = .209$) Although the value of correlation coefficient was found to be insignificant, it does support the hypothesis which stated that self-esteem would be positively correlated with the self-concept of the adolescent. Research indicates that higher levels of self-esteem in parents have a close liaison with the likelihood of parents engaging in positive interactions as well as having open and friendly conversations with their adolescents as found by Small (1988) in his study, who also discovered maternal self-esteem to be more influential in parenting and the communication between parents and the adolescent.

H6: There will be a positive correlation between the life satisfaction of the parent and the self-concept of the child

Sumner (1966) defined life satisfaction in terms of judgment of one's life in accordance to some standards or expectations whereas Diener (1984) conceptualized life satisfaction as one of the components of well-being of an individual and the criterion entailing the definition of the life one thinks as appropriate. Table 4.2 shows that life satisfaction is significantly and positively correlated with self-concept as the correlation coefficient ($r = .309^{*}$) which corroborates with the hypothesis which stated that there would be a positive

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correlation between life satisfaction of parent and the self-concept of the adolescent. In the present study, as the results show, life satisfaction was positively correlated with personality factors of extroversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience. The correlation between the authoritative style of parenting and the self-concept of the adolescent ($r = .421^{**}$) advocates that since life satisfaction is positively correlated with authoritative parenting style, it does play a role in defining the child's self-concept implicitly.

Since life satisfaction is associated with feeling states of contentment and happiness, it can be expected that parents would be more likely facilitate the same in their adolescent as well. An article by Live Staff (2011) throws light on how relationship satisfaction, an ingredient of overall life satisfaction among adults influences the adolescent's happiness level and self-esteem, critical components of his overall self-concept. Maternal contentment, they noted was more influential in defining the same.

H7: There will be a difference in parenting styles of between working and non-working mothers

There have been decades of research on how different aspects of mothers affect the child and one of the recent questions in this field is whether there is difference in parenting practices and behaviour of mothers who stay at home and those who work. It was believed that maternal employment was linked to maternal deprivation which led to a plethora of research which we have tried to compare various dimensions among working and non-working women and their influence on the child.

Table 4.3 Correlation of parenting styles of working mothers and self-concept of adolescent

	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Uninvolved	Self-Concept
Authoritarian	1	.080	.194	.412*	-.076
Authoritative	.080	1	.393	-.076	.651**
Permissive	.194	.393	1	.549**	.691**
Uninvolved	.412*	-.076	.549**	1	0.008
Self Concept	-.076	.651**	.691**	0.08	1

*- Correlation is significant at 0.05 level of significance (2 tailed)

**-. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level of significance (2 tailed)

Table 4.4 Correlation of parenting styles of non-working mothers and self-concept of adolescent

	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Uninvolved	Self Concept
Authoritarian	1	.070	.183	.420*	.050
Authoritative	.070	1	.263	.124	.255
Permissive	.183	.263	1	.189	.141
Uninvolved	.420*	.124	.189	1	.331
Self Concept	.060	.255	.141	.331	1

*- Correlation is significant at 0.05 level of significance

From table 4.3 and table 4.4, it can be seen that among working mothers, adoption of authoritarian parenting style is negatively correlated with the self-concept ($r = -.076$) while interestingly both authoritative and permissive parenting style were associated with greater level of self-concept among adolescent since both correlation coefficients were found to be

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significantly positive ($r = .651^{**}$; $r = .691^{**}$ respectively). One of the key differences noticed in the two groups of parents was that while authoritarian parenting was negatively associated with the adolescent's self-concept in case of working mothers, it had negligible influence on the self-concept of those whose mothers were homemakers. However, no significant difference was found among the self-concept of adolescents of the two groups. In this research study, it was found that some working mothers believe in institutionalizing the adolescent with emphasis on rules and structure while maintaining a warm relationship with the child (indicative of authoritative parenting style).

CONCLUSION

The objectives of the study primarily focused on understanding the dynamics between styles of parenting adopted by parents and its relationship with aspects of personality, life satisfaction, self-esteem of the parent and how the same influenced the adolescent's self-worth. Statistical analysis included drawing correlations among variables and it found that the authoritative parenting style, trait of openness to experience and elevated levels of life satisfaction were significantly and positively correlated with the self-concept of the adolescent.

Limitations and Future Implications

As obstacles are a part of every research the present study was also not free from the same. Considering the wide array of variables investigated in the research paucity of comprehensive literature emerged as a major problem. Dirth of assessment tools standardized on the Indian population complicated the journey. Future research related to parenting styles should also take into account the characteristics of the adolescent as it constitutes another component of Belsky's model of determinants of parenting.

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Conflict of Interest

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