

Relationship Between Parenting Style & Self-esteem among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between parenting style and self-esteem among young adults using a sample of 183 participants. Standardized questionnaires, namely the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), were used to assess parenting styles and self-esteem. The results revealed a significant negative correlation between parenting style and self-esteem ($r = -.346, p < .01$). All three parenting styles—permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative—showed significant negative relationships with self-esteem. These findings suggest that parenting practices perceived as excessive control, inadequate guidance, or high expectations may reduce feelings of autonomy and self-worth. The study further indicates that the effects of parenting styles on self-esteem may vary across individuals and cultural contexts, highlighting the importance of balanced and supportive parenting practices for healthy emotional development.

Keywords: Parenting Style, Self-Esteem, Young Adults

"Could parenting style be a major factor in why some young adults develop low self-esteem while others feel confident?"

The positive or negative attitude that individuals develop toward themselves, particularly in terms of their sense of self-worth, is known as **self-esteem** (**Morris Rosenberg (1965)**). An individual's mental health, emotional adjustment, and basic personality development are all greatly influenced by their sense of self-esteem. It affects how individuals manage stress, build relationships, and make choices in day-to-day living.

When parents raise their children, their emotional environment and the collection of their attitudes, behaviours, and practices are referred to as their parenting style. The two primary dimensions that it encompasses are demandingness (control) and responsiveness (warmth). Three main styles of parenting were first distinguished based on these qualities, which include control, communication, maturity needs, and nurturing: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative **Diana Baumrind (1971, 1991)**. built upon Baumrind's work to develop a four-quadrant model based on two dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness. This model produced styles that are permissive, authoritarian, authoritative, and neglectful/uninvolved. **Maccoby and Martin (1983)**. The traits of authoritarian parenting include

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rigorous compliance, limited emotional support, and a high degree of control and low warmth. In authoritative parenting, parents set clear boundaries while maintaining communication and support. They also exhibit high levels of warmth and acceptable control. Having a lot of warmth but little control, permissive parents are forgiving and don't put a lot of demands on their kids. The characteristics of uninvolved parenting include low warmth and control, when parents give little direction and show little concern in their kids' needs.

The best way to help kids develop strong self-esteem, independence, and emotional maturity is through authoritative parenting, which blends kindness, attentiveness, and firm standards. Authoritarian parenting is characterized by interactions that are severe, domineering, and occasionally cold. Because of too much criticism, kids frequently experience anxiety, low self-esteem, or a fear of failing.

Warmth and a lack of structure or control are traits of permissive parenting. Because kids don't have the support they need to become competent, this can result in reduced self-esteem. The way parents' mentor, correct, and encourage their kids can have a big impact on how well their self-esteem and self-concept grow.

Parenting style and self-esteem have been the subject of numerous worldwide studies, but there hasn't been much research done in India. Not much research has been done on how various parenting philosophies affect young people' self-esteem in India, especially given the country's distinct familial and cultural dynamics. In order to fully comprehend this relationship within the Indian population, more research is therefore required.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between different parenting styles and the level of self-esteem among young adults in India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of scholars are studying the connection between self-esteem and various parenting philosophies in various cultural contexts, emphasizing both the positive aspects and drawbacks of parental actions.

A study that observed the connection between teenage self-esteem and parental practices was carried out at public secondary schools in *Makadara Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya (2025)*. The study used a correlational research approach and was informed by attachment theory. Data were gathered from 398 teenagers using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ). According to the findings, the most common parenting style among the participants was authoritarian, which was followed by permissive and authoritative. In order to encourage healthy parenting techniques, the study suggested the creation of parental support groups and highlighted the significant effect that parenting practices had on teenagers' psychological development. The findings suggest that teenagers' development of good self-esteem may be affected by either excessive strictness or extreme leniency.

A study conducted in India assessed how various approaches to parenting affected the self-esteem of teenagers. 110 teenagers from Delhi and the National Capital Region, ages 13 to 19, made up the sample *Sethi, A., & Singh, P. (2023)*. After reviewing ten research publications, the study came to the conclusion that an authoritative parenting style, which strikes a balance between control and understanding and emotional support, has the greatest positive effect on teenagers' self-esteem. However, because overbearing control and a lack

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of emotional warmth have been shown to impair self-confidence and promote feelings of inferiority, authoritarian parenting has been consistently linked to poorer self-esteem. In urban Indian settings, the study also found no discernible gender variations in the self-esteem scores of male and female teenagers. These results highlight how crucial it is to use good parenting techniques in order to provide kids a positive self-image and emotional security in children.

A review-based study examined how adolescents' self-esteem and other psychological outcomes, including life satisfaction, well-being, aggression, and academic achievement, were affected by four parenting philosophies: authoritarian, permissive, authoritative, and neglectful (Kou, 2022). According to the review, better psychological adjustment and higher levels of self-esteem are linked to excellent parenting practices. On the other hand, it has been discovered that adolescents with inadequate or neglectful parenting practices are more likely to exhibit violence and emotional issues. The study also highlighted how parenting style and learning results are mediated by self-esteem. Better academic achievement, less academic procrastination, and more self-regulated learning have all been associated with higher self-esteem. Yet, the review pointed out that not much research has examined how gender differs in these connections, indicating the need for more study in this field.

Another correlational study examined how young adults' self-esteem developed in a collectivist cultural context in connection to their perceptions of their parents' parenting approaches. 234 college students between the ages of 18 and 27 made up the sample Hayee, A. A., & Rizvi, Z. (2017). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Baumrind's parenting typology was used in the study to examine the connection between self-esteem and ways of parenting. The results indicated that whereas male parenting style was significantly associated with self-esteem, female parenting style did not. It's interesting to note that self-esteem was found to be negatively correlated with authoritative fathering and positively correlated with authoritarian fathering. The widely held belief that authoritative parenting always results in the best psychological effects is put upon by these findings. The study further highlighted that cultural context plays an important role in determining how parenting styles influence self-esteem.

Overall, the reviewed literature suggests that parenting styles have a significant influence on self-esteem and psychological development of adolescents and young adults. Although authoritative parenting is typically linked to positive outcomes, this relationship can be altered by cultural circumstances. For example, in collectivist countries, authoritarian parenting may occasionally be linked to higher self-esteem. Furthermore, self-esteem seems to be greatly influenced by parental roles, especially those of dads. The research also shows that self-esteem plays a mediating role in psychological and academic results, suggesting that positive parenting can indirectly improve wellbeing and learning. To really understand the complex link between parenting methods and self-esteem, more empirical study is necessary, as evidenced by the lack of attention paid to gender inequality and gaps across cultural contexts.

Objectives

to research the connection between young adult's self-esteem and different types of parenting (permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative).

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Hypothesis

- There is no significant relationship between permissive parenting style and self-esteem among young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and self-esteem among young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and self-esteem among young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between overall parenting styles and self-esteem among young adults.

Sample

Young people between the ages of 18 and 25 made up the study's sample. Convenience sampling was used to choose the participants.

Tools

- **Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ):** Parental Authority Questionnaire constructed by Buri (1991) was used in the present study to assess parenting styles. The questionnaire consists of 30 items measuring three dimensions of parenting style, namely authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, with 10 items in each dimension. The participants were required to respond to each item based on their perception of their parents' behaviour. The PAQ is a widely used standardized tool. The reliability coefficients reported by the author range from 0.74 to 0.87 for different subscales, and the questionnaire has been found to possess satisfactory validity as reported in the manual.
- **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES):** Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Morris Rosenberg (1965) was used to measure self-esteem in the present study. The scale consists of 10 items designed to assess overall self-worth by measuring positive and negative feelings about the self. Responses are recorded on a Likert-type scale. The scale has high reliability, with test-retest reliability reported as 0.85 and internal consistency ranging from 0.77 to 0.88. The scale also shows good construct and concurrent validity as mentioned in the manual.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Mean & Standard Deviation value of parenting styles and self-esteem.

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PS	101.07	18.18725	183
SE	25.01	3.19769	183

Descriptive statistics were computed for Parenting Style (PS) and Self-Esteem (SE) for a sample of 183 participants. The mean score of Parenting Style (PS) was **101.07** with a standard deviation of **18.18**, indicating a moderate level of perceived parenting style among the participants. The standard deviation suggests that there is noticeable variability in participants' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviours. The mean score of Self-Esteem (SE) was **25.00** with a standard deviation of **3.19**, indicating an average level of self-esteem among the participants. The relatively lower standard deviation shows that most participants' self-esteem scores were clustered around the mean, reflecting less variation in self-esteem as compared to parenting style.

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Table 2 Correlations between Parenting styles and self – esteem.

		PR	AU	AT	SE
PR	Pearson Correlation	1	.506**	.818**	-.318**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	183	183	183	183
AU	Pearson Correlation	.506**	1	.528**	-.305**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	183	183	183	183
AT	Pearson Correlation	.818**	.528**	1	-.274**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	183	183	183	183
SE	Pearson Correlation	-.318**	-.305**	-.274**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	183	183	183	183

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

Pearson’s product–moment correlation was computed to examine the relationship between Parental Rejection (PR), Authoritarian parenting (AU), Authoritative parenting (AT), and Self-Esteem (SE) among 183 participants.

The present study examined the relationship between parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative) and self-esteem among young adults. The findings revealed that all three parenting styles showed a **significant negative correlation with self-esteem**, indicating that higher levels of permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting were associated with lower self-esteem.

The negative association between **authoritarian parenting and self-esteem** supports previous findings which suggest that excessive control, strict discipline, and low emotional warmth may hinder the development of a positive self-concept. Such parenting practices may limit autonomy and foster feelings of inadequacy, thereby lowering self-esteem.

Similarly, the negative relationship observed between **permissive parenting and self-esteem** may be attributed to the lack of clear boundaries and guidance. When parents fail to provide consistent structure, adolescents may experience insecurity and poor self-regulation, which can adversely affect their sense of self-worth.

Interestingly, the present study also found a **negative correlation between authoritative parenting and self-esteem**, which contradicts many classical Western studies that report a positive relationship. However, this finding is supported by several recent studies which indicate that authoritative parenting does not always enhance self-esteem.

For instance, a study by **European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences (2017)** reported that parenting styles showed a weak or negative relationship with self-esteem in certain cultural contexts. Similarly, a study conducted in Kenya found a weak negative association between parenting style and self-esteem among adolescents. Another study published in **PubMed Central** also reported a low negative correlation between authoritative parenting and self-esteem.

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These findings suggest that the effect of parenting styles may vary across cultures. In collectivist societies, high parental involvement and expectations may be perceived as pressure rather than support. Adolescents and young adults may interpret parental monitoring as a lack of trust in their abilities, which can reduce feelings of autonomy and competence, thereby negatively influencing self-esteem.

Furthermore, the strong positive inter-correlations among permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles indicate that parents may not strictly adhere to a single style, but rather use a mixture of practices. Such inconsistency in parenting may contribute to confusion and emotional insecurity in children, which in turn affects their self-esteem negatively.

Overall, the findings of the present study, along with supporting literature, demonstrate that parenting styles do not have a universally positive or negative effect on self-esteem. Instead, their impact is shaped by cultural background, parental expectations, and the individual's perception of parenting behaviour.

Table 3 Correlations between overall parenting style & self - esteem

		PS	SE
PS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.346**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	183	183
SE	Pearson Correlation	-.346**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	183	183

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

Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between Parenting Style (PS) and Self-Esteem (SE) among 183 participants. The results showed a significant negative correlation between Parenting Style and Self-Esteem ($r = -.346$, $p < .01$). This indicates that higher scores on Parenting Style are associated with lower levels of Self-Esteem. The obtained correlation coefficient suggests a moderate relationship between the two variables. The significance value ($p = .000$) confirms that this relationship is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative) and self-esteem among young adults. The findings revealed that all three parenting styles were significantly and negatively correlated with self-esteem, indicating that higher levels of these parenting practices were associated with lower self-esteem. The negative association of authoritarian and permissive parenting with self-esteem suggests that excessive control or lack of clear structure may hinder the development of autonomy and self-worth. Interestingly, authoritative parenting also showed a negative relationship with self-esteem, which contrasts with traditional Western findings and highlights the influence of cultural context. In collectivist settings, high parental involvement may be perceived as pressure rather than support, thereby reducing feelings of competence and independence. Overall, the results indicate that parenting styles do not have a uniformly positive effect on self-esteem. Their impact appears to be shaped by cultural

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background and the individual's perception of parental behaviour, emphasizing the need for balanced and culturally sensitive parenting practices.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Muskan (2026). Relationship Between Parenting Style & Self-esteem among Young Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(1), 2512-2518. DIP:18.01.251.20261401, DOI:10.25215/1401.251