

PARENTING STYLES AND SELF-ESTEEM OF ADOLESCENTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

The current paper was an attempt to find out the prevalent style of parenting among the reviewed studies and establish the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' self-esteem. A systematic search of PubMed, Science Direct and Google Scholar was conducted to identify studies that met the selection criteria. A total of 2,013 studies were identified out of which only 25 met the selection criteria. The study had a total sample size of 7, 368, with mean age being 15.8 years. With three research questions guiding the study, findings reveal that the authoritative parenting style was prevalent among the studies reviewed. It also established a significantly positive relationship between the authoritative parenting style and self-esteem and a significant inverse relationship between authoritarian parenting style and self-esteem of adolescents. Furthermore, authoritative parenting style was found to have had the greatest impact on adolescent self-esteem; it enhanced the highest self-esteem levels of adolescents above other parenting styles. The study thus recommends parental skills training for parents of adolescents.

Keywords: Parenting styles; self-esteem; adolescence; relationship; systematic review

1. INTRODUCTION

The period of adolescence, is that time when adolescents develop a unique sense of self and identity. Their self-esteem which before this time has been majorly influenced by parental and family factors such as parental self-esteem, behaviours and styles; supportive home environment; parental encouragements and use of praise; family members' attitudes towards their successes and failures, among others (Dobrescu, 2013, Okonkwo, 2013; Emam & Abu-serei, 2014); begin to fluctuate as they attain adolescence. Meanwhile, Adeusi, Gesinde, Alao and Adejumo (2014) have described adolescence as a time between ages 11 and 21. Hence at this time, their experiences outside the home, such as with peers become an important determinant of self-esteem (Harter, 2006). In sum, the family and peers of the adolescent are major contributors to adolescent self-esteem (Garcia & Santiago, 2017).

Previous research had also established that the "stress and storm" that adolescents go through, make them engage in mood disruptions, risky behaviours, as well as parental conflicts. These three characteristics affect their emotional, social, and physical interactions with others; these in turn affect their self-esteem (Fiest, Fiest & Roberts, 2013). Gesinde (2011) reports that consistent evidence across studies showed that parental emotional maltreatment of children contributed to negative self-concept of adolescents. The role of healthy self-esteem in the lives of adolescents cannot be over emphasized as it is very critical to their functionality. The role of healthy self-esteem in the lives of adolescents cannot be over emphasized as it is very critical to

their functionality. Parents who are understanding and supportive tend to help their adolescents retain healthy self-esteem (Niaraki & Rahimi, 2013). The act of seeking help, by the adolescents in this context, to overcome life challenges is certainly not a new phenomenon (Gesinde & Sanu, 2015).

Research over the years has found connections between adolescents' self-esteem and the style of parenting they are exposed to (Henz, 1999; Wolff, 2000; Martinez, Garcia & Yubero, 2007; Driscoll, 2013). Parenting style is a psychological description of standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing efforts (Adimora, Nwokenna, Omeje and Umeano, 2015). Parenting style describes the approaches parents adopt for the overall upbringing of their children. Different types of parenting styles have been identified: Positive parenting (Walton, n.d); affectionless control (McCabe & Shaw, 2010); and the Baumrind Parenting Typology (Baumrind 1971), among others. Of all these types of parenting styles, Baumrind typology has gained the highest popularity.

The Baumrind's Parenting Typology is a unique classification of parenting approaches, which describe parents in four categories: responsiveness vs unresponsiveness; demanding vs undemanding (Baumrind, 1967). These four, form the basic elements that shape parenting (Baumrind, 1971). In today's parenting style research therefore, four parenting styles are duly recognised; authoritative (high on demandingness and responsiveness), authoritarian (high on demandingness but low on responsiveness), permissive (low on demandingness but high on responsiveness), and neglecting (low on both demandingness and responsiveness, Maccoby & Martin, 1983). The authoritative parenting style tends to present a balanced parenting approach that is high on warmth and communication and moderate on discipline and expectations of maturity (Niaraki & Nahimi, 2013). It allows an open home environment which fosters great emotional support, independence, social and academic competence, self-reliance for children and adolescents (Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994; Akinsola, 2013; Garcia & Santiago, 2017).

The authoritarian style on the other hand is dictatorial in nature, high in strict discipline, maturity expectations, as well as parent-child communications. It is low in warmth and show of affection, low in child-parent communication and hardly considerate of children's opinion (Niaraki & Nahimi, 2013; Garcia & Santiago, 2017). Ultimately, the adolescents from this background are known to be anxious, withdrawn, with lower levels of wellbeing, and so on. (Steinberg et al., 1994; Bakar, Ahmad, Dolah, Halim & Anuar, 2012).

Permissive style of parenting has few behavioural expectations for the child. It is indulgent, lenient, non-traditional and high in responsiveness, but low in control or exigency (Deshpande and Chiabari, 2013; Garcia and Santiago, 2017). Permissive parents are high in nurturance and acceptance but highly undemanding of compliance and conformity to standards (Driscoll, 2013; Gracia & Santiago, 2017). They are often too open and kind; and as long as a child's action or decision does not bring physical harm, they accept and support, so as to avoid confrontation (Gracia & Santiago, 2017). Children from this background interestingly tend to be friendly, sociable, creative and with a high level of wellbeing (Steinberg, et al., 1994; Bakar, et al., 2012). They are however often aggressive, verbally impulsive and highly confrontational, resistant when limits or boundaries are set for them and with lower levels of achievement (Steinberg, et al., 1994; Bakar, et al., 2012).

The neglectful or uninvolved parenting style is low in both responsiveness and demandingness. The parents hardly supervise or exercise control and discipline over the children. Adolescents from this background often show various forms of externalizing behaviours, such as delinquent acts, substance use, etc (Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, Van der Laan, Smeenk & Gerris, 2009).

Parenting styles and its association with self-esteem of adolescents have received good attention in the literature but limited to western and Asian cultures, leaving a major gap in African research in this area. In Nigeria in particular, parenting style studies are still emerging and the few existing studies have focused on finding links between parenting styles and several other outcomes among adolescents, and not self-esteem. Only the work of Aihie (2016) was found to have examined the self-esteem outcomes of various parenting styles. This dearth in literature motivated the need to systematically review published literature focusing on parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem outcomes. The nature of systematic reviews has been documented to provide authentic evidence of available research in a specific area of research interest (Wright, Brand, Dunn and Spindler, 2007).

The present study is therefore a systematic review of literature of primary studies that measured and reported relationship between parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem. The following research questions were addressed in the study:

- a. What is the prevalent parenting style among the studies reviewed?

- b. What is the prevalent relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among adolescents?
- c. Which of the parenting styles had the greatest impact on the self-esteem of adolescents?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

The design of this study is a systematic review which allows one to harvest available evidences in a given area of interest based on past empirical studies.

2.2 Sample Distribution

The total sample size for studies reviewed was 7, 368. The mean age of participants in the studies sampled was 15.8. The distribution of the study locations of the reviewed studies was also indicated and represented by continents. As illustrated in figure 1 below:

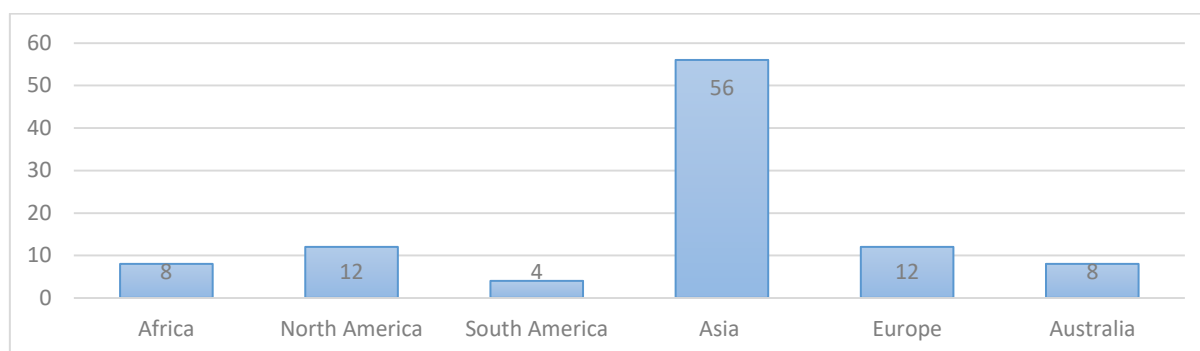


Figure 1: Indicating distribution of study regions.

2.3 Instruments

Measures for the two variables of concern in this study (Parenting styles and self-esteem) were standardized measures and they varied across the studies. 13 different parenting style measures were identified. The Parental Attitude Questionnaire (PAQ) had the highest frequency (32%, n=8) (Martinez, et al. 2007; Aihie, 2016; Bee, 2017; Garcia & Santiago, 2017). For self-esteem on the other hand, a simple frequency count indicated Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES) was the most popularly used measure (42% , n=11), with the next popular being of Coppersmith Self-esteem Inventory (CSEI) (19%, n=5). This implies RSES is the most widely used measure for self-esteem (Figure 3 illustrates this).

2.4 Procedure for data collection

2.4.1. Search Strategy – to obtain data for this systematic review, three electronic databases were systematically searched to identify studies that met selection criteria. They included Science Direct, Google Scholar, and PubMed. No publishing date restrictions were included. Google scholar was used to hand search reference lists of included studies. The following key words were included in the search: [(adolescent)] and [(self-esteem) OR (self-worth) OR (self-concept)] and [(Parenting styles)]. The search yielded 2,013. These included journal articles, reviews and dissertations. Based on selection criteria, eligible articles were selected.

2.4.2. Screening and Selection

I. Inclusion Criteria- Studies that met the following criteria were included in the study

a. Study indicated clear measures of study variables (Parenting styles and Self-esteem). b. Study reported correlations between parenting styles and self-esteem. c. Study participants included adolescents. d. Study covered male and female participants. e. Study indicated clear sample size. f. Study provided full text access.

ii. Exclusion Criteria: Encyclopedias, view-points, commentaries, letters and qualitative studies were excluded from the review.

2.5 Data analysis (Data Extraction and Synthesis)

Data for this study were carefully extracted and stored in Microsoft excel format. The systematic search returned 2,013 records, out of which only 25 of them met the inclusion criteria and were retained for synthesis. The basis for exclusion included duplicates, irrelevant data, viewpoints, letters, qualitative and exploratory studies were excluded. Studies with incomplete information were also excluded. These were highlighted in Figure 4 above, and the overall characteristics of included studies were presented in table 1, below.

Data extracted included the first author, year of publication, study location, study design, sample size, participants' gender and mean age, measures of study variables (Parenting styles and self-esteem), styles of parenting and the study outcome. Synthesis was conducted using simple frequencies and percentages.

3. RESULTS

Research Question 1- What is the prevalent parenting style among the studies reviewed?

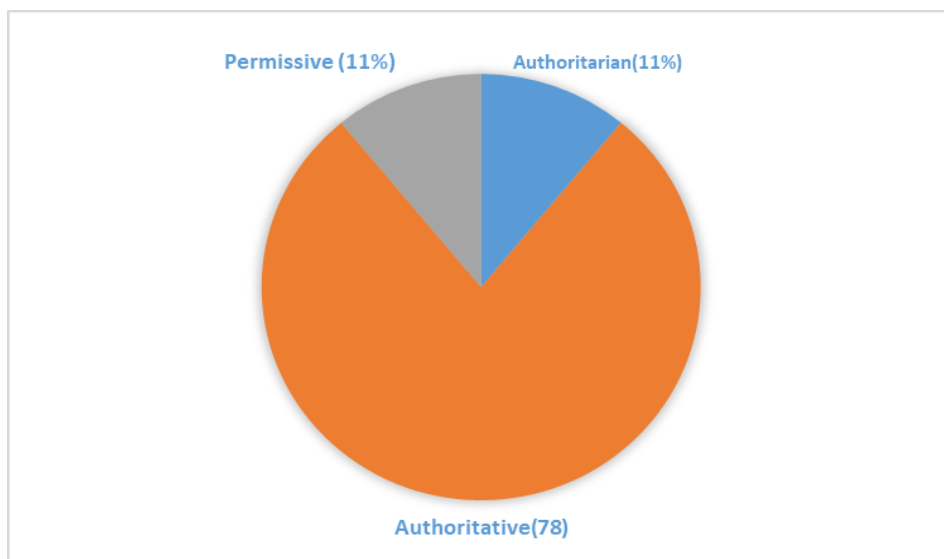


Figure 2 – Distribution of parenting styles, showing the prevalent

Figure 2 above illustrates the distribution of parenting styles as indicated by the studies in this review. The prevalent style is the authoritative (78%), while neglectful parenting style was not prevalent in any of the studies under review. 11% of the parents adopted the permissive style, while the authoritarian parents were also 11% of the distribution.

Research Question 2: What is the prevalent relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among adolescents?

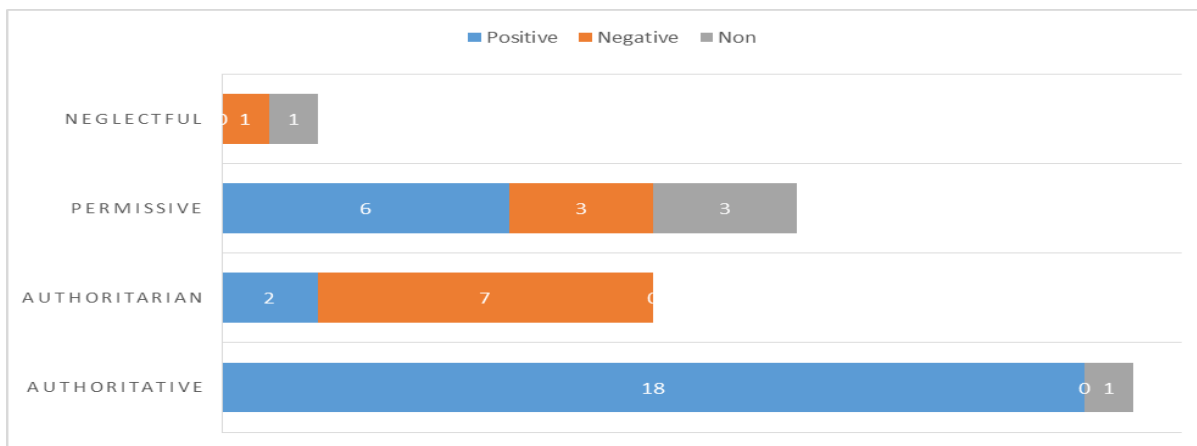


Figure 3: Showing consensus finding of the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among adolescents

Findings from this review indicate that all the studies found a significant relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem. As illustrated in figure 6 above, majority (n=18;72%), of the studies found a significant positive relationship between authoritative parenting style and self-esteem; Some of them (n=5; 20%) however, found no relationship at all between them. For the authoritarian parenting style, only few (n=2; 8%) of the studies found a significant positive relationship with self-esteem, while majority (n=16; 64%) found an inverse relationship between them.

For the permissive parenting style, while some (n=5; 20%) studies reported a significant positive correlation with self-esteem, some others (n=7; 28%), reported an inverse correlation and others (n=7; 28%) reported no correlations between permissive parenting style and self-esteem. For the neglectful parenting style, no study found a significant positive correlation with self-esteem, while only a few (n=2; 8%), found an inverse relationship. Furthermore, a few others (n=2; 8%), found no correlation between neglectful parenting style and adolescent self-esteem.

Therefore, the prevalent relationship between parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem among the reviewed studies is a significant positive correlation between authoritative parenting style and self-esteem among adolescents, which implies that the higher authoritative parents are, the more the self-esteem of their adolescents. A significant negative correlation between authoritarian parenting style and adolescent self-esteem is also prevalent. This means that the more authoritarian parents are, the lower the self-esteem levels of their adolescents

Research Question 3: Which of the parenting styles had the greatest impact on the self-esteem of adolescents?

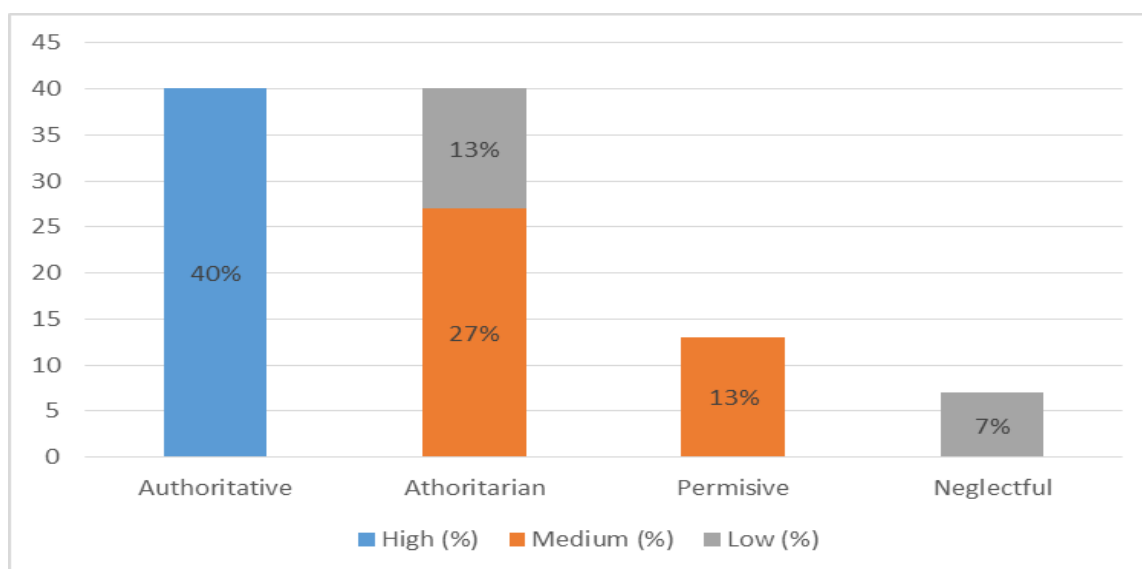


Figure 4– showing Parenting styles with highest self-esteem outcomes

Figure 4 above presents the parenting styles outcomes on adolescent self-esteem. Only 15 of the reviewed studies reported the specific impact of parenting styles on adolescent self-esteem. 40% (n=6) of them reported the authoritative parenting style as the style with the highest self-esteem outcomes. 27% (n=4) of the studies reported that adolescents from authoritarian families had moderate self-esteem levels, while 13% (n=2) from authoritarian reported low self-esteem. For the permissive parenting style, 13% (n=2) of the studies reported moderate self-esteem among the adolescents, while the neglectful parenting style was reported have enhanced low self-esteem among the study adolescents from 7% (n=1) of the studies. In the light of the foregoing, the authoritative style of parenting has the greatest impact on adolescent self-esteem level.

4. DISCUSSION

The first research question was to find out the prevalent parenting style among the studies reviewed. The results showed 78% percent of the studies reported the authoritative parenting style as the prevalent style in their studies. This implies that majority of the adolescents in this study; receive warmth, support and acceptance from their parents. It further implies that most of the parents in this study are flexible individuals,

who listen to their children when they have explanations towards not so desirable outcomes they exhibit from time to time (Garcia & Santiago, 2017). This result of the second research question aligns with previous theoretical underpinnings which attempt to situate a significant contribution of parenting styles to adolescent self-esteem (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Furthermore, the findings confirm the analysis of Baumrind (1991) who stated that the authoritative parenting style is the most associated with positive psychological outcomes (such as self-esteem) on the child.

A good number of the studies reviewed also found a significant inverse relationship between authoritarian parenting style and adolescent self-esteem. This means the more authoritarian the parents were, the lower the self-esteem of the adolescents. According to Niaraki & Rahimi (2013), when parents get too strict, leaving no room for negotiations and simply hand down rules without room for emotional openness, there is tendency for a child to develop low self-esteem. This low self-esteem may heighten during adolescence when interactions with peers become a major source of self-esteem reinforcement (Deshpande & Chhabriya, 2013). Sankra (2007) argued that when children cannot confide in their parents and cannot express what they are going through, they tend to have a poor evaluation of their self-worth and could ultimately result into drug use and various deviant acts.

The results of the third research question showed that both adolescents from permissive parenting style and some of the adolescents from the authoritarian showed moderate self-esteem levels. Those from neglectful parenting backgrounds, as well as a few from authoritarian, however showed low self-esteem levels. Permissive parents are high in warmth and acceptance but low in control. They tend to be indulgent and hardly engage the force of discipline in their child rearing approaches. The result for neglectful parenting, which is the fact that neglectful parenting enhanced the lowest levels of self-esteem among adolescents, corroborates previous research, especially the works of Maccoby & Martin (1983); Baumrind (1991, 1996) and Darling (1999). These authors posit that neglectful parents are highly uninvolved and very low in both responsiveness and demandingness. They have no sense of connectedness to their children and overtimes raise adolescents that are runaway children, truants, with behaviour problems and generally poor in all domains (Darling, 1999; Niaraki & Rahimi, 2013).

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