

## Significance of Maternal and Paternal Relationship in Their Children's Self-Esteem

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### ABSTRACT

Parents-child relationship is very important for the child positive development, so if the child didn't have good relationship with their parents they have low self-esteem. The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of maternal and paternal child relationship on the self-esteem of the children. To attain the objective of this research an Ex-post-facto research design was planned. A total of 200 children, age ranging from 10 to 16 years, were recruited from normal families living in Meerut city. Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale and Parent-child relationship Scale were used to assess the self-esteem level and positive/negative parental relationship. The results of this study revealed that loving, rewarding, and symbolic as well as object rewarding parental relationship significantly and positively affect the self-esteem, whereas punishing, rejecting and neglecting parental relationship significantly and negatively affect the self-esteem of their children.

**Keywords:** Maternal/paternal relationship, self-esteem

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is generally considered the evaluative component of the self-concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones (Tomaka & Blascovich, 1991). It is also widely assumed that self-esteem functions as a trait, that is, it is stable across time within individuals. Self-esteem is an extremely popular construct within psychology, and has been related to virtually every other psychological concept or domain, including personality (e.g., shyness), behavioral (e.g., task performance), cognitive (e.g., attribution bias), and clinical concepts (e.g., anxiety and depression). Environment of acceptance and success raises self-esteem, while environment of failures lower it. Studies suggest that for children of age seven to adolescents, school frequently represents the first occasion in which they act on their own and measure themselves against others. Thus school represents an initial proving ground. Many adolescents with learning disability are teased and taunted all their lives, and they feel as rotten about themselves that, even when they succeed, they are not comfortable with themselves (Smith 2001). They are constantly looking for any situation where they could possibly fail and be made fun of. So much of their energy is consumed by fear of failure that the learning disabled often don't have much energy left to tackle the learning disability.

Social acceptance is pivotal in a child's life but it is harder to obtain if one has a learning disability (LD). Individuals with learning disabilities experience being ostracized ridiculed and labeled as dumb, subnormal and slow learners by their peers. Research found that individuals with learning disabilities develop a negative self-perception of themselves unlike their peers who do not have a learning disability (La Barbera, 2008). There is literature linking depressive tendencies, negative self-perceptions, low self-esteem, or emotional and behavioral disorders, anxiety and suicidal behavior of those who have a learning disability. Positive communication is a skill that contributes to ensuring the well-being of one another. Studies examined how positive communication can overpower a negative outlook offer support and take one off the path of destruction (Kyle, Melville, & Jones, 2010). Communication during mealtimes helps engage a child with a learning disability to come out of their inner shell and interact with their family. This gives parents an opportunity to ask questions and engage in a healthy conversation. Asking questions assures the child they are important and gives them recognition, self-confidence and reassurance (Wilkinson & Watchman, 2010).

### 2. WHAT IS PARENTING?

The role of parents is important as they model certain behavior for their children with learning disability to learn.

Adolescents know when they are not as successful as other children. Researchers have frequently highlighted the role of family including the quality of parent child relationship in determining the youth's self-esteem. Hence, parents can adjust their style of parenting to reflect these favorable outcomes.

Parenting styles have been studied and classified by many researchers. One of the most commonly used frameworks is Baumrind's parenting style model, which categorizes parenting styles according to levels of responsiveness and entitlement (Baumrind, 1991). The original model shows three types of parenting: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. Later, Martinez, Garcia and Yubero (2007) added a fourth style, carefree. Authoritarian parents are very demanding and insensitive. They expect their children to be obedient without questioning the authority of the parents. They use coercive methods to control the behavior of their children.

1. Permissive parents are the opposite of authoritative parents. They are very responsive but undemanding. They tend to satisfy their children's needs and wants, but have little or no control over children's behavior.
2. Authoritarian parents are very reactive and demanding. They set clear expectations for their children, but they rely on reasoning and negotiating with their children to enforce those rules. They recognize the rights, interests and uniqueness of children rather than expecting unquestioning obedience from their children.
3. Neglecting parents are modest and accommodating. They are indifferent and do not participate in the education of children.

### 3. PARENTING AND SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is defined as the value a person has of themselves (Flynn, 2003). Morris Rosenberg (2015) proposed that self-esteem is based on two factors: (1) reflexive evaluations and (2) social comparisons. Reflective evaluation means that we attend to the perceptions others have of us and internalize these views as our self-image. In a study Bhatti et al. (1989) found strong associations between self-esteem and perceived esteem, and between self-esteem and the esteem of loved ones. Since parents are important social actors for their children in the early years, perceived parental appraisals may be internalized by children and become their reflective appraisals. The second factor, social comparison, means that we make positive or negative self-evaluations based on comparison with others. Children and adolescents tend to compare themselves to those in their immediate social circle, which may include parents, siblings, and peers. Thus, to have high self-esteem or to love ourselves, we must first be loved, approved, and nurtured by parental figures. Without this parenthood, one cannot develop high self-esteem, according to Bhatti, Derezotes, Kim and Woodpecker (1989). High self-esteem, in turn, may be the psychological condition for the emergence of creativity. Yau (1991) found many common personality traits between creative and confident individuals.

Several studies have found the links between parenthood and children's self-esteem. Self-esteem developed in childhood becomes the basis for self-esteem in adulthood (Singh, 2017). A longitudinal study that followed children from birth to age 27, found that the quality of home environment, which included parenting style, cognitive stimulation, and physical environment in early childhood, affects self-esteem of a person later in life, as significantly predicted (Orth, 2018). The effects lasted into early adulthood, but diminished with age.

Cross-sectional studies have found mixed results on the association between self-esteem and parenting styles (Moghaddam, et al., 2017). A study conducted by Mogonea and Mogonea (2014) on 150 elementary school children and their parents in Iran and another study on 112 Romanian adolescents aged 16-18 and their parents found significant positive associations between authoritarian parenting styles and self-esteem. Additionally, both studies found no significant association between authoritarian parenting style and self-esteem. Both studies used parents' self-reported parenting styles and participants' self-reported self-esteem. Parenting styles explain about 22 percent to 33 percent of the variance in self-esteem in Mogonea and Mogonea (2014) and about 13 percent in Moghaddam, et al. (2017). However, Mogonea and Mogonea (2014) found a negative relationship between permissive parenting style and adolescent self-esteem, and while in Moghaddam, et al. (2017), this was not significant.

Malevsky et al. (2008) compared the self-esteem of participants from different parenting style groups. In a study of 272 college students aged 14 to 17 in the United States, participants completed questionnaires on maternal and paternal parenting styles and self-esteem. In this study, parents were divided into four groups according to the Baumrind model and tested whether the self-esteem of students in these groups was significantly different. Additionally, parenting styles of mother and father were examined separately. The study found a significant main effect of maternal and paternal parenting styles on self-esteem. Students who had an authoritarian mother had significantly higher self-esteem than the other groups, followed by the permissive, authoritarian, and neglectful groups. Students who had an authoritarian father had significantly higher self-esteem than the authoritarian and neglectful groups, but were not significantly different from the permissive father. Thus, this study shows that self-esteem is highest among students whose parents are authoritarian and lowest among students whose parents are neglectful. It also shows that permissive parenting styles promote self-esteem more than authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles. The results were consistent with another study of 1,239 Brazilian adolescents,

ages 11 to 15, which found that children of highly responsive (permissive and authoritative) parents had higher self-esteem than children of less responsive parents (authoritarian and negligent). However, this study found that the permissive parenting style was more conducive to self-esteem than the authoritarian parenting style (Martinez, Garcia, and Yubero (2007). The table below summarizes the findings regarding the relationships between parenting styles and creativity and parenting styles and self-esteem. Basili et al. (2021) found that maternal parental control significantly predict adolescents' antisocial behaviors whereas paternal parental control predict the lower anxious-depressed symptoms. Pan et al. (2016) studied the effects of parental attachment on adolescent development. The results of this study stated that paternal attachment had stronger effects on adolescents' depressive symptoms than did maternal attachment after controlling for all covariates (e.g., family setting, gender, grade, one-child status, father's and mother's education levels). Moreover, multi-group analysis indicated that the stronger impact of paternal attachment on depressive symptoms in comparison to maternal attachment was only evident in high school boys and only children.

#### 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following objectives have been stated for the present research:

1. To study the role of positive maternal parenting in self-esteem of children.
2. To study the role of negative maternal parenting in self-esteem of children.
3. To study the role of positive paternal parenting in self-esteem of children.
4. To study the role of negative paternal parenting in self-esteem of children.

#### 5. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

There is no significant difference in self-esteem of children with negative and positive parenting experience.

1. There will be no significant difference in children's self-esteem due to positive maternal parenting.
2. There will be no significant difference in children's self-esteem due negative maternal parenting.
3. There will be no significant difference in children's self-esteem due to positive paternal parenting.
4. There will be no significant difference in children's self-esteem due to negative paternal parenting.

#### 6. METHOD

##### Research Design

In order to examine the effect of positive and negative parenting by mother and father, an Ex-post-facto research design will be employed.

##### Sample

For this study 200 children, 10 to 16 years in age, from general population were withdrawn through purposive sampling method. In the recruitment of respondents three selection criteria were: both parents alive, parents are not divorced, none of the parents is alcoholic or addicted to any drug. This study was conducted in Meerut city therefore, participants were recruited from normal families.

##### Variables

**Independent variables** for present study are: (1) maternal positive relationship, (2) maternal negative relationship, (3) paternal positive relationship, and (4) paternal negative relationship.

The only **dependent variable** is self-esteem.

##### Tool Used

1. **Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale:** This Likert type scale, constructed by Rosenberg (1965), consists of 10 items. Items are to be scored as 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 for Strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, regarding the positive items, and 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 for the same response but regarding negative items.
2. **Parents Child Relationship Scale:** This scale was developed and standardized by Dr. Nalinin Rao. It consists of 100 items categorized into ten dimension namely protecting, symbolic, punishment, symbolic reward, rejecting, object punishment, demanding, indifferent, loving, object reward and neglecting. High score indicates high level of parent-child relationship in the respective area.

##### Procedure

Children of age range 10 to 16 were selected based on inclusion criteria, then two questionnaires namely Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale and Parents' child Relationship Scale were administered. On the basis of high and low scores on each area of maternal and paternal parenting, separate groups were prepared. With regard to each area of parenting self-esteem scores were compared, separately for relationship with mothers and fathers. Data was analyzed through calculating mean, SD, and t-test.

## 7. RESULTS

Two groups of high scorer and low scorer have been formed from the obtained scores on each positive and negative area of maternal as well as paternal parenting. First, in table-1, we observe that high scoring children showed significantly higher self-esteem in comparison of lower scoring children on the positive maternal parenting area, such as on *symbolic reward* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 17.36$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 14.48$ ;  $t = 4.04$ ,  $\rho < .01$ ), *loving* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 17.70$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 14.92$ ;  $t = 3.97$ ,  $\rho < .01$ ), and *object reward* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 16.14$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 14.78$ ;  $t = 2.02$ ,  $\rho < .05$ ). On *Protection* and *indifferent* maternal parenting areas have not been found significant for the self-esteem of children.

With regard to negative maternal parenting areas, in table-2, high scoring children can be seen to have significantly poor self-esteem than the children scoring low on *symbolic punishment* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 14.80$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 16.23$ ;  $t = 1.97$ ,  $\rho < .05$ ), *rejecting* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 12.47$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 16.08$ ;  $t = 5.11$ ,  $\rho < .01$ ), *object punishment* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 14.12$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 15.72$ ;  $t = 2.33$ ,  $\rho < .05$ ), and *neglecting* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 14.02$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 16.18$ ;  $t = 2.94$ ,  $\rho < .01$ ). *Demanding* is the only area of negative maternal parenting which was not found to be significant for the self-esteem of children.

There are the positive paternal parenting areas, regarding which high scoring children showed significantly higher self-esteem in comparison of lower scoring children. These positive paternal parenting area are *protection* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 19.48$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 13.24$ ;  $t = 2.42$ ,  $\rho < .05$ ), *symbolic reward*, ( $M_{\text{High}} = 18.15$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 14.00$ ;  $t = 5.65$ ,  $\rho < .01$ ), *loving* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 17.85$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 14.84$ ;  $t = 4.18$ ,  $\rho < .01$ ), and *object reward* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 17.50$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 15.76$ ;  $t = 2.26$ ,  $\rho < .05$ ). *Indifferent* paternal parenting is the only positive area which had no significant effect on the self-esteem of children.

**Table-1: Positive Maternal Parenting difference in Self-esteem of Children**

Areas of MCR		N	Mean	S.D.	SE <sub>D</sub>	t (Sig.)
Protection	High Scorer	100	14.20	4.22	.595	1.76
	Low Scorer	100	13.15			
Indifferent	High Scorer	100	15.44	4.77	.672	.833
	Low Scorer	100	14.88			
Symbolic Reward	High Scorer	100	17.36	5.05	.712	4.04**
	Low Scorer	100	14.48			
Loving	High Scorer	100	17.70	4.97	.700	3.97**
	Low Scorer	100	14.92			
Object reward	High Scorer	100	16.14	4.79	.675	2.02*
	Low Scorer	100	14.78			

\*\* = Significance level is .01; \* = Significance level is .05.

**Table-2: Negative Maternal Parenting difference in Self-esteem of Children**

Areas of MCR		N	Mean	S.D.	SE <sub>D</sub>	t (Sig.)
Symbolic Punishment	High Scorer	100	14.80	5.13	.723	1.97*
	Low Scorer	100	16.23			
Rejecting	High Scorer	100	12.47	5.01	.706	5.11**
	Low Scorer	100	16.08			
Object Punishment	High Scorer	100	14.12	4.87	.686	2.33*
	Low Scorer	100	15.72			
Demanding	High Scorer	100	14.13	5.27	.743	1.10
	Low Scorer	100	14.95			
Neglecting	High Scorer	100	14.02	5.21	.734	2.94**
	Low Scorer	100	16.18			

\*\* = Significance level is .01; \* = Significance level is .05.

**Table-3: Positive Paternal Parenting difference in Self-esteem of Children**

Areas of PCR		N	Mean	S.D.	SE <sub>D</sub>	t (Sig.)
Protection	High Scorer	100	14.98	5.09	.717	2.42*
	Low Scorer	100	13.24			
Indifferent	High Scorer	100	12.77	4.83	.681	.998
	Low Scorer	100	13.45			

Symbolic Reward	High Scorer	100	18.15	5.21	.734	5.65**
	Low Scorer	100	14.00			
Loving	High Scorer	100	17.85	5.11	.720	4.18**
	Low Scorer	100	14.84			
Object reward	High Scorer	100	17.50	5.45	.768	2.26*
	Low Scorer	100	15.76			

\*\* = Significance level is .01; \* = Significance level is .05.

**Table-4: Negative Paternal Parenting difference in Self-esteem of Children**

Areas of PCR		N	Mean	S.D.	SEd	t (Sig.)
Symbolic Punishment	High Scorer	100	14.15	5.72	.806	3.20**
	Low Scorer	100	16.53			
Rejecting	High Scorer	100	13.88	5.66	.798	2.90**
	Low Scorer	100	16.20			
Object Punishment	High Scorer	100	13.66	5.14	.724	2.43*
	Low Scorer	100	15.42			
Demanding	High Scorer	100	14.74	5.01	.706	.580
	Low Scorer	100	15.15			
Neglecting	High Scorer	100	13.79	5.29	.745	3.10**
	Low Scorer	100	16.10			

\*\* = Significance level is .01; \* = Significance level is .05.

Finally regarding the negative paternal parenting areas, table-4 reports that high scoring children have significantly poor self-esteem than the children scoring low on *symbolic punishment* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 14.15$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 16.53$ ;  $t = 3.20$ ,  $p < .01$ ), *rejecting* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 13.88$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 16.20$ ;  $t = 2.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ), *object punishment* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 13.66$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 15.42$ ;  $t = 2.43$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and *neglecting* ( $M_{\text{High}} = 13.79$ ,  $M_{\text{Low}} = 16.10$ ;  $t = 3.10$ ,  $p < .01$ ). *Demanding* is the only area of negative paternal parenting too, which was not found to be significant for the self-esteem of children.

## 8. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present research was to examine the impact of positive and negative parental relationship on children's self-esteem. The impacts of maternal and parental relationships were separately examined. This research showed that the use of symbolic reward, loving and object reward in maternal parenting help children to boost their self-esteem. Talking about paternal relationship, our study revealed that higher use of protection, symbolic reward, loving, and object rewards, are significantly linked with higher self-esteem among children. On Protection and indifferent maternal parenting areas have not been found significant for the self-esteem of children. Using indifferent parenting relationship by both mother and father, and protection only by mother were found to play no significant role in children's self-esteem. Results related to negative maternal and paternal parenting areas parenting areas, were found to indicate that using symbolic punishment, rejecting, object punishment, and neglecting by mothers, and additionally neglecting by father significantly linked with poor self-esteem among children. Demanding area of parent child relationship can be said has no impact on children's self-esteem.

All these findings are consistent with results presented by previous studies. The findings of Mogonea and Mogonea (2014) on school children and their parents in Iran and Romanian areas found significant positive associations between authoritarian parenting styles and self-esteem. Parenting styles were found to explain about 13 percent of the variance in self-esteem of children, in the study of Moghaddam, et al. (2017). However, Mogonea and Mogonea (2014) found a negative relationship between permissive parenting style and adolescent self-esteem. Further in our study, we found the only difference in effect of maternal and paternal relationship on self-esteem of children was found in relation of protection area. Our study found that the use of protection by mother is not significant but by father is significant to boost the self-esteem of children. Significance of paternal relationship has been proved in their study by Pan et al (2016), who reported that paternal attachment had stronger effects on adolescents' depressive symptoms than did maternal attachment. It was also demonstrated that the role of father-adolescent attachment is important in adolescents' psychological health (Pan et al., 2016). Another dimension was highlighted by Basili et al (2021) regarding the difference in maternal versus paternal parental control. Maternal parental control was found by them to predict antisocial behaviors and paternal parental control to predict lower anxious-depressed symptoms. Comparisons across countries evidenced the cross-cultural invariance of the longitudinal APIM across Italy, Colombia, and USA. The practical implications of these results are discussed



## 9. CONCLUSION, SUGGESTION & LIMITATION

Parents and child relationship is very important for the child positive development, so if the child didn't have good relationship with their parents they have low self-esteem. The result related to difference in self-esteem of students who experienced favorable and unfavorable parenting from their mother and father. The findings of this study can be concluded as the parents (mother and father separately also) and child relationship is significantly associated with self-esteem of the children. Positive areas of parent-child relationship, such as protecting, loving, rewarding were found positively associated with higher self-esteem, whereas negative areas, such as demanding, punishing, neglecting and rejecting were found positively associated with lower self-esteem of children. With regard to protecting areas of parenting fraternal relationship was found significant, whereas maternal relationship was not found significant for children's self-esteem. In conclusion, all the null hypotheses are rejected.

These findings are crucial for the understanding and guiding parents to shape their children to boost their self-esteem and confidence in order to be successful in their life. Further researches are required to understand the path of underlined relationship between parenting and self-esteem of children. Future work also can be planned to test the significance of difference between mothers and fathers with regard to mean scores of each areas of parenting. In present study some variables, such as gender and socio-economic status, have not been controlled, future research can be designed to explain the moderating effect of such variable

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