

Relationship between Parenting Styles and Self-Esteem among Adolescents in Public Secondary Schools in Makadara Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Parenting styles are crucial for the development of adolescents as they contribute in building critical foundations for various aspects of adolescent's achievement in life. This study examined the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among adolescents in public secondary schools in Makadara Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The objective of this study was: To find out the types of parenting styles among adolescents in public secondary schools in Makadara Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was guided by John Bowlby attachment theory. The study adopted the correlational research design. The target population was 6351 adolescents, and sample size was 398 participants. The study applied multi-stage sampling technique. The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) were the data collection instruments. Data was analyzed using the SPSS version 25. Inferential statistics including Pearson correlational coefficient analysis, Chi-Square test, and descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used. Findings indicated that 54.5% (n= 176) of the participants were under authoritarian parenting style, 23.3% (n = 114) were under the authoritative parenting style, while 22.2% (n = 103) were under permissive parenting style. The study established that the authoritarian parenting style was the most prevalent among adolescents in public secondary school in Makadara Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya). The study recommended that the school administration should encourage the formation of parenting support groups that allow for the exchange of experiences and strategies. These groups could serve as platforms for reinforcing effective parenting styles and fostering positive family dynamics. The parenting workshops facilitators may highlight the potential downsides of excessive strictness in authoritarian parenting style and leniency in permissive parenting style.

Keywords: Parenting Styles, Self-Esteem, Adolescents, Public Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

Parenting styles play a critical role in the lives of adolescents by laying the foundation for various facets of their development and future success (Kiama, 2018). Ben Arie et al. (2014) describe parenting styles as the assortment of strategies and behaviors that parents adopt to raise and nurture their children. These approaches are deeply rooted in the parents' attitudes, beliefs, and values, influencing how they interact with and discipline their children. The main parenting styles identified are authoritarian, authoritative and permissive.

Zhang (2022) expands on this by noting that parenting styles encompass the techniques and standards parents employ in child-rearing. Many individuals attribute their success in life to the positive parenting they received, which was instrumental in fostering healthy self-esteem. Conversely, psychosocial issues such as depression and anxiety can often be linked to parental absence and neglect, particularly when parents fail to provide warmth and guidance (Mukola, 2022). Lauren and Sharlene (2016) highlight that parents are crucial in meeting both the physical and psychological needs of their children, emphasizing their role as primary caregivers and protectors. Parents are typically the first significant figures in a child's life, providing guidance and protection.

Baumrind identifies three primary parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Smetana, 2017). The authoritative parenting style involves setting boundaries while

encouraging independence, allowing for discussion and rational negotiation. In contrast, the authoritarian parenting style is characterized by high demands, strict directives, an emphasis on obedience to authority, and a lack of sensitivity. Authoritarian parents typically do not permit much freedom for children to make their own choices, which can lead to feelings of judgement, fear, and a lack of personal development (Chou & Starr, 2019; Uata, 2012). The permissive parenting style supports autonomy but offers little guidance and imposes minimal consequences for misbehavior.

Self-esteem is a psychological construct that represents an individual's overall assessment and perception of their own worth and value (Omweno, 2020; Shalini, 2023). It includes one's beliefs about their abilities, competence, and significance within both social and personal contexts. Healthy self-esteem is characterized by a balanced and positive self-view despite one's flaws, where individuals feel confident in their abilities and believe they deserve respect and happiness. On the other hand, low self-esteem is marked by negative self-perception, self-doubt, and a lack of confidence. High self-esteem involves being receptive to criticism, acknowledging mistakes, being comfortable with one's physical appearance, maintaining a positive outlook on life, and having confidence in one's abilities. The development of self-esteem is influenced by various factors, including the parenting style adopted by parents, which shapes adolescents' early experiences (Afen, 2022; Mbagaya et al., 2016).

As highlighted by Portela (2023), adolescence, which typically spans ages 10 to 19 years, is a crucial period of physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development characterized by identity exploration and increased independence. During this transformative phase, individuals face challenges related to self-discovery and social integration. Adolescents often encounter self-esteem issues influenced by peer relationships, academic performance, and body image. Positive experiences and achievements can enhance self-esteem, fostering a sense of competence and confidence (Portela, 2023). Nurturing healthy self-esteem through effective parenting is essential for promoting an adolescent's resilience and well-being. During adolescence, teenagers strive to balance their own desires and needs with the expectations of their parents. Therefore, parenting styles are pivotal in either facilitating a smooth navigation through this developmental stage or creating negative experiences that can adversely affect their self-esteem (Kay, 2022).

In China, a study conducted by Zhang et al. (2017) investigated reconsidering parenting in Chinese culture: subtypes, stability, and change of maternal parenting style during early adolescence. The study had a sample size of 2173 grade 5 students ($M = 11.27$ years, $SD = 0.49$ years, 48% were girls). The mothers' and fathers' average ages were 38.17 ($SD = 2.48$) and 39.94 ($SD = 2.99$) years. Similarly in China, Liu and Liu (2016) examined parenting styles and their effects on Chinese adolescents. The study found that authoritarian parenting style was the most common style experienced by the adolescents, which was at 60%. Authoritative parenting was at 30%, while 20% of the Chinese adolescents expressed experiencing permissive parenting style.

In Lebanon, Wassim (2022) conducted research in the Bekaa region to identify prevalent parenting styles from the adolescents' perspective and assess their self-esteem levels. A purposive sample of 728 students participated, yielding a 72% response rate. Findings indicated that authoritative parenting was predominant (88%). In Italy, Bi et al. (2018) examined parenting styles and parent-adolescent relationships. The study had a sample size of 633 students. It was revealed that 200 (31.6%) of the teenagers were raised by authoritative parents, 177 (28.0%) permissive parents, 152 (24.0%) were raised by authoritarian parents, while 83 (13.1%) of the teenagers were raised by neglectful parents. The various studies from the global perspective may not be generalized in the Kenyan context, hence the justification for the current study.

In Nigeria, Adubale (2017) investigated parenting styles as predictors of anxiety and depression among secondary school students in Edo State. The study included 246 students aged 12-20. Results showed that authoritative parenting (78.25%) was the most adopted style, followed by authoritarian (64.89%) and permissive parenting (47.05%). The study recommended increased awareness of the impact of parenting styles on students through seminars organized by school counselors.

In Ghana, Appiah (2022) conducted a study on dominant parenting style used by parents in western north region. The study utilized probability sampling techniques in choosing 252 participants consisting of 142 males and 110 females. The findings from the study indicated that junior high school students in public schools shared that authoritative parenting style ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.210$) was used predominantly by their parents which facilitated

academic performance of the students. This was followed by the authoritarian parenting style ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.269$), and the permissive parenting style ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 0.974$). The study created conceptual gaps since the parenting style was linked to academic performance; and not self-esteem. In Uganda, Izza (2019) surveyed parenting styles in the West Nile region, focusing on their impact on the next generation. The study consisted of 102 participants, with findings indicating a shift toward authoritarian parenting (58%) and permissive parenting (21%).

In Kenya, Mutunga and Guantai (2023) examined the influence of negligent parenting on the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County. The study involved 552 participants, including students, principals, deputy principals, guidance and counselling teachers and parents' representatives within public secondary schools in Meru County. Findings revealed that negligent parenting significantly affected student discipline management ($\chi^2=26.428$, $df=1$, $p=0.000<0.05$). The study emphasized the importance of addressing negligent parenting behaviors for effective discipline management. In another study in Kenya by Kay (2022) who focused on parenting styles as an antecedent to the self-esteem of adolescents in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County, found that authoritative parenting was most common (278, 73.2%), followed by authoritarian (78, 20%) and permissive (26, 6.8%).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational research design. A correlational research design is appropriate to investigate the relationship between two or more variables without any intervention or manipulation by the researcher (Rose et al., 2012). The study had an overall student population of 6,351. This study applied the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, in order to determine the sample size of the study. It applied a 95% confidence interval and an approximate error of 5%. The study employed multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage utilized a simple random sampling technique to choose 4 schools from a total of 10 public secondary schools participating in the study. This constituted 40%, a proportion deemed appropriate according to the recommendation of Mugenda and Mugenda (2013). In the second stage, proportionate sampling technique was employed to select the sample size from each school according to the ratio of students in each school to ensure representation according to the population of the school. The study used two standardized tools: Parenting Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (RSES), then a Social Demographic Questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to identify the prevalent parenting styles among adolescents in public secondary schools. Securing consent in this study involved addressing ethical concerns by being transparent with participants regarding confidentiality and its limitations, data usage, and material handling.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rates

Table 1, presents the response rate of the questionnaires that were distributed to the participants involved in this study. It provides a breakdown of the total number of questionnaires distributed, the number returned, and the overall percentage of responses received.

Table 1 Response Rate

Respondents	Target Distributed Questionnaires	Returned Questionnaires	Spoiled Questionnaires	Valid Questionnaires
398	398 (100%)	398 (100%)	5 (1.7%)	393 (98.7%)

In Table 1, this study had 398 respondents. Out of the 398 questionnaires that were distributed, 398 were returned to the researcher, 5 of the questionnaires were spoilt and hence rejected. The remaining 393 questionnaires were properly filled and were used for data analysis. Hence, this study had a 98.7% response rates. According to Groves et al. (2018), a response rate of 70% or higher is considered as excellent and it indicates a high level of engagement and reliability in the data collected, which is seen as representative of the target population, allowing for reliable inferences and generalization about the study area.

Demographic Characteristics

Data was gathered under the following demographics of age, gender and form of study. The findings for demographic characteristics are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13-14 years	119	30.3%
15-16 years	242	61.6%
17-19 years	32	8.1%
Total	393	100.0%
Gender		
Female	264	67.2%
Male	129	32.8%
Total	393	100.0%
Whom do you live with at home		
Both Father Mother	270	68.7%
Single Parent	117	29.8%
Relative	6	1.5%
Total	393	100.0%
Level of education		
form 1	121	30.8%
form 2	102	26.0%
form 3	95	24.2%
form 4	75	19.1%
Total	393	100.0%

As seen in table 2, the study found that 30.3% (n=119) of the participants were between the ages of 13-14 years, 61.6% (n =242) of the participants were between the ages of 15-16 years, and 8.1% of the participants (n=32) were between the ages of 17-19 years. In terms of gender 67.2% (n =264) of the participants were females, and 32.8% (n =129) were male. It was also found that 68.7% (n = 270) of the participants lived with both parents, 29.8% (n=117) lived with a single parent and 1.5% (n = 6) lived with their relatives. Levels of education showed that 30.8% (n = 121) of the participants were in form 1, 26.0% (n=102) were in form 2, 24.2 (n=95) were in form 3, and 19.1% (n = 75) of the participants were in form 4.

Establishing Types of Parenting Styles Among Adolescents in Public Secondary Schools in Makadara Sub-County, Nairobi, Kenya

The first objective of this study was to find out the types of parenting styles among adolescents in public secondary schools in Makadara sub-county, Nairobi, Kenya. The findings are tabulated in table 3.

Table 3 Types of Parenting Styles Among Adolescents in the Public Secondary Schools

Types of parenting	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Authoritarian	176	54.5%	25.5078	2.57282

Authoritative	114	23.3%	23.0130	3.24316
Permissive	103	22.2%	22.5165	2.83750
Total	393	100	71.0373	8.65348

According to table 3, results indicated that 176 (54.5%) of the participants fall under authoritarian parenting style which was the highest, 114 (23.3%) participants fall under authoritative parenting style, while 103 (22.2%) participants fall under the permissive parenting style. This finding suggests that the largest number of the participants of the study fall under authoritarian parents. These outcomes also demonstrate that there is distribution of the various parenting styles among adolescents in public secondary schools in Makadara Sub-County, Nairobi, Kenya.

The findings of the current study reveal authoritarian parenting as the most common parenting style at 54.5%, which is similar with the findings by Liu and Liu (2016) in China, who examined parenting styles and their effects on Chinese adolescents. The study found that authoritarian parenting style was the most common style experienced by the adolescents, which was at 60%, the authoritative parenting was at 30%, while 20% of the adolescents acknowledged experiencing the permissive parenting style.

In the current study, the authoritarian parenting style was the predominant (54.5%), while, in Lebanon, the finding of Wassim (2022) differs with the findings of the current study. Findings revealed authoritative parenting style being the predominant parenting style (88%). The current study's findings indicate authoritarian parenting style was predominant (54.5%) which is similar with the findings of Bi et al. (2018) in Italy, who examined parenting styles and parent-adolescent relationships. The study revealed that 200 (31.6%) of the teenagers were raised by authoritative parents, 177 (28.0%) permissive parents, 152 (24.0%) of the teenagers were raised by authoritarian parents. The findings of the current study indicated that authoritarian parenting as the predominant parenting style (54.5%) which is different with the findings by Adubale (2017) in Nigeria, who investigated parenting styles as predictors of anxiety as well as depression among secondary school students in Edo State. Results showed that authoritative parenting (78.25%) was the most adopted style, followed by authoritarian (64.89%) and permissive (47.05%).

Authoritarian parenting style was predominant (54.5%) in the current study, which disagrees with the findings by Appiah (2022) in Ghana, which found that junior high school students in public schools shared that authoritative parenting style ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.210$) was used predominantly by their parents which facilitated academic performance of the students. Also, this was followed by the authoritarian parenting style ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.269$) and the permissive parenting style ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 0.974$) was the least which was also revealed in the present study.

The current study found different distributions of parenting styles among the participants, authoritarian style 176 (54.5%), authoritative style 114 (23.3%), while 103 participants (22.2%) fall under the permissive parenting style. Some possible reasons for these findings may be that parenting styles often vary across different cultures, societies or set-up. Adolescents from single-parent households might experience different parenting styles than those from two-parent households due to the availability of resources, time constraints, or emotional availability of both parents. Adolescents from divorced or separated families may experience shifts in parenting styles as a result of changes in family roles or the influence of different parents/caregivers. The findings of the present study evidently pointed that most of the participants were raised by authoritarian parents. Hong and Long (2015) argue that parents are very important in teenager's growth. Through their interactions with their parents, children begin to comprehend themselves and gather experiences, preparing them for future challenges. The way that teenagers behave toward one another, society, and themselves is greatly influenced by these interactions and the parenting style.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the authoritarian parenting style was the most prevalent among adolescents in public secondary school in Makadara Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya. The high prevalence of authoritarian parenting raises concerns about the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescents. To foster healthier developmental

outcomes, there is a need for parental education programs to promote authoritative parenting practices that support both emotional connection and appropriate boundaries. Future interventions should focus on enhancing parenting awareness and skills to help create nurturing environments conducive to positive self-esteem development among adolescents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommended that, the school administration should encourage the formation of parenting support groups that allow for the exchange of experiences and strategies. These groups could serve as platforms for reinforcing effective parenting styles and fostering positive family dynamics. The parenting workshops facilitators may highlight the potential downsides of excessive strictness in authoritarian parenting style and leniency in permissive parenting style.

Longitudinal studies can help identify how the impact of parenting styles evolves as adolescents grow and develop into adulthood. This approach can reveal whether certain parenting styles have long-term effects on self-esteem and how these effects might change throughout different stages of adolescence.

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