

Parenting Style and Self-Esteem and Its Impact on Psychological Safety among College Student

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Abstract

Parenting plays an important role in shaping young adults' self-concept, interpersonal behavior, and emotional resilience. This conceptual paper examines the relationship between parenting style and self-esteem, with a focus on how these dynamics influence psychological safety among college students. The classification of parenting styles and self-esteem theories, the paper highlights how different approaches to parenting authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful affect not only self-esteem but also students' ability to feel secure, valued, and confident in academic and social environments. While existing studies show mixed results, this paper argues that psychological safety is an overlooked dimension in the discussion of parenting and self-esteem. It emphasizes the need for educators, parents, and social workers to recognize the interconnectedness of these factors. The paper concludes with implications for social work practice, policy, and higher education, advocating for integrative interventions that promote healthy family relationships and supportive campus environments.

Keywords: *Parenting style, self-esteem, psychological safety, college students, personal development*

1. Introduction

Parenting is among the earliest and most influential socialization processes that shape an individual's personality and psychosocial development. For college students, who are navigating the transition from adolescence to adulthood, self-esteem plays a pivotal role in academic success, social adaptability, and mental health. Simultaneously, psychological safety the sense of being accepted, valued, and able to express oneself without fear of judgment or punishment has emerged as an essential determinant of student well-being and performance.

Traditional research has examined parenting styles and self-esteem separately, but the combined impact of these variables on psychological safety is less studied. Understanding this link is particularly relevant for college students, who experience identity exploration, peer comparison, and academic pressure. The purpose of this paper is to conceptually integrate parenting style, self-esteem, and psychological safety, highlighting their interdependent effects and exploring implications for social work and higher education.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Parenting Style Theory (Baumrind, 1967)

Baumrind identified four key parenting styles:

- **Authoritative:** This parenting style have High responsiveness, high demands; associated with confidence and balanced self-esteem.
- **Authoritarian:** Low responsiveness, high demands; often linked with compliance but lower self-esteem.
- **Permissive:** High responsiveness, low demands; may foster warmth but reduce self-discipline.
- **Neglectful:** Low responsiveness, low demands; associated with poor emotional outcomes.

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2.2 Self-Esteem Theory (Rosenberg, 1965)

Self-esteem reflects an individual's evaluation of self-worth. It influences emotional resilience, decision-making, and motivation. Parenting that balances support and discipline contributes to healthier self-concept.

2.3 Psychological Safety Theory (Edmondson, 1999)

Originally developed in organizational studies, psychological safety refers to the belief that one can express ideas, concerns, or mistakes without fear of humiliation. For students, psychological safety translates to openness in classrooms, trust in peer groups, and freedom to explore identity.

2.4 Integrative Perspective

Parenting style acts as a foundational influence on self-esteem, which in turn impacts psychological safety. Authoritative parenting nurtures self-worth and trust, fostering psychological safety in group settings. In contrast, authoritarian or neglectful parenting may hinder confidence, leading to insecurity and fear of judgment in social and academic contexts.

3. Parenting Style, Self-Esteem, and Their Impact on Psychological Safety

3.1 Self-Esteem as a Mediator

Self-esteem mediates the relationship between parenting and psychological safety. Students with high self-esteem, often raised in supportive households, are more likely to take risks, voice opinions, and engage in collaborative learning.

3.2 Impact of Parenting Style on Psychological Safety

- **Authoritative Parenting:** Builds confidence and autonomy; students feel safe expressing ideas.

- **Authoritarian Parenting:** Creates fear of making mistakes; reduces openness in group discussions.
- **Permissive Parenting:** Encourages expression but may lack boundaries, leading to uncertainty in peer interactions.
- **Neglectful Parenting:** Results in low trust and belonging, undermining psychological safety.

3.3 Gender and Socioeconomic Dimensions

Studies show that gender expectations and socioeconomic background shape how parenting is perceived. For instance, daughters may benefit more from supportive parenting in terms of psychological safety, while students from disadvantaged backgrounds may experience reduced self-esteem irrespective of parenting style.

4. Challenges and Gaps in Research

1. **Limited Integration:** Most studies analyze parenting style and self-esteem independently, overlooking psychological safety.
2. **Cultural Variations:** Parenting norms differ across societies, affecting how self-esteem and safety manifest.
3. **Sample Size and Diversity:** Small and homogeneous samples limit the generalizability of findings.
4. **Measurement Issues:** Psychological safety is often studied in organizational contexts, not adequately adapted for educational settings.

5. Implications for Social Work and Higher Education

- **Family Interventions:** Social workers can design parent education programs to promote authoritative parenting practices that build self-esteem and psychological safety.
- **Student Support Services:** Counseling centers can address low

self-esteem and help students develop resilience in unsupportive environments.

- **Curriculum and Teaching:** Faculty should foster psychologically safe classrooms by encouraging open dialogue, empathy, and acceptance of mistakes.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** Higher education institutions should incorporate psychological safety into student well-being policies.

AIM OF THE STUDY

To understand the relationship between parenting style, self-esteem, and psychological safety.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify how socio-economic status influences self-esteem.
2. To explore the relationship between parenting style and self-esteem.
3. To examine the gender difference in parenting style.
4. To analyze the most effective parenting style that influences self-esteem.
5. To identify how parenting style influences the psychological safety of individuals.
6. To understand how psychological safety mediates the relationship between parenting style and self-esteem.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study focuses on a **descriptive research design** on the topic parenting style, self-esteem, and psychological safety. This design was chosen because it allows for a detailed analysis of how different parenting styles influence self-esteem levels and psychological safety among college students. Parenting is the foundation for an individual's personal growth and emotional well-being, while psychological

safety reflects whether individuals feel accepted, valued, and secure in expressing themselves without fear of rejection. Together, these factors shape the confidence and resilience of young adults.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

The research was conducted among the students of Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, with a total of 36 participants representing the entire study population.

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The study used a **structured questionnaire**, which included four sections:

1. **Demographic Information** – Age, gender, department, domicile.
2. **Parenting Styles Assessment** – Based on *Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)*.
3. **Self-Esteem Measurement** – Using *Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)* to evaluate confidence and self-worth.
4. **Psychological Safety Scale** – Based on Edmondson's model to assess the extent to which individuals feel safe to express themselves and take risks without fear of negative consequences.

TABLE 01

One way analysis among the Domicile of the respondents and parenting and self-esteem.

S.NO	Source	SS	DF	MS	Mean	Statistical inference
1	Parenting style and self-esteem	2115.261	2	1067.631	126.40	F= 3.615
	between Groups	9655.489	23	292.591	114.56	P= 0.38
	within Groups				134.83	P> 0.05 Not significant

The result is not significant because the p-value (0.38) is greater than 0.05, meaning the differences in self-esteem among different parenting styles might have happened by chance. One reason for this is the large variation within each group, which doesn't show clear differences between them. Another reason is the small sample size, which reduces the chances of finding an effect between the parenting style and self-esteem. This suggests that either parenting style has little impact on self-esteem, or a bigger so further research is needed to get clearer results.

Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association among parenting style and self-esteem.

Research hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association among parenting style and self-esteem.

Result: Since $p > 0.05$. There is no significant association among domicile of the respondents and parenting style and self-esteem. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted and research hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 02

t- test among the gender and parenting style and self esteem

SNO	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistical inference
1	Male	123.41	22.040	t= -0.765 p= 0.134 p> 0.05 Not significant
	Female	128.22	14.611	

The t-test result is not significant because the p-value (0.134) is greater than 0.05, which means there is no clear difference between the scores of males and females. While females have a slightly higher average score (128.22) than males (123.41), this difference is small and could have happened by chance. Also, the scores for males vary more than those for females. To be sure if there is a real difference, a bigger study with more participants might be needed.

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference between Gender of the respondents and parenting style and their self-esteem.

Research Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference between gender of the respondents and parenting style and their self-esteem.

Result: Since $p > 0.05$. There is no significant difference between Gender of the respondents and parenting style and their self-esteem. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and research hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 03

t- test among the age and parenting style and self esteem

SNO	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistical inference
1	MSW(HRM)	123.15	20.371	t= -1.012 p= 0.342 p> 0.05 Not significant
	Others	129.53	15.514	

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference between the MSW (HRM) and others groups in their mean scores.

Research Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference between the MSW (HRM) and others groups in their mean scores.

Result: Since $p > 0.05$, there is no significant difference between the MSW (HRM) and others groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted, and the research hypothesis (H1) is rejected. The observed difference in mean scores could have occurred due to chance rather than a real effect.

FINDING AND SUGGESTIONS:

The study found that parenting style does not have a clear effect on self-esteem, and there is no big difference in self-esteem between males and females or between MSW (HRM) and other students. This might be because the study had only 36 participants, and their self-esteem levels varied a lot. To get better results, future research should include more people, look at other factors like friendships and mental health, and use different methods like interviews. Studying the same people over time and comparing results from different colleges could also help understand how parenting affects self-esteem more clearly.

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