

Parenting and Its Role in the Development of Self-Esteem in Adolescents

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Received April 10, 2020; Revised May 09, 2020; Accepted May 11, 2020

ABSTRACT

The present study endeavored to investigate the development of self-esteem in adolescents in relation to parenting, age and gender. A 3x2x2 factorial design with 240 adolescents out of whom, 120 were girls and 120 were boys from six different schools of Gorakhpur district (U.P., India) and their parents participated in the study. Modified version of Cooper Smith Self-esteem Inventory was used to assess adolescents' self-esteem and its various domains i.e. General self-esteem, Social self-esteem, Home self-esteem and Academic self-esteem. Further, Multidimensional Parenting Scale [1] was administered on their parents to determine their parenting strategies i.e. Positive Parenting strategies (love, encouragement, acceptance, progressiveness, democratism, independence and dominance) and Negative Parenting strategies (hate, rejection, autocracy, discouragement, submissiveness, conservatism, and dependence). Data analysis was done using Univariate analysis technique. Results revealed that parenting has exhibited pervasive impact on development of adolescents' self-esteem. Specifically, due to positive parenting adolescents expressed greater extent of self-esteem as a whole and related to its various domains which reflect that due to supportive and non-abusive parenting practices adolescents exerted superior level of self-esteem as compared to adolescents of negative parenting group. However, the effects of age and gender on self-esteem were found partially significant. Apart from main effects, many interaction effects were also found significant which determined that the development of self-esteem was jointly influenced by age, gender and parenting strategies. Findings are discussed.

Keywords: Age, Adolescents, Development, Gender, Parenting

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. Many parents create their own style from a combination of factors and these may evolve over time as the children develop their own personalities and move through life's stages. The parents' role in the growth of self-esteem is studied very imperatively since the personality formed in a child's very early life, has an impact on foundation of personality and development of self-components in adolescents. Parents who interact with adolescents in approachable and friendly way with appropriate parenting strategy help the adolescents to groom a good personality and higher level of self-esteem. Undeniably parenting strategies of parents decide the success or failure of adolescents throughout their lifespan [2]. Though, adolescents are able to think about the pros and cons of a situation, but the influence of early interaction with their parents might be helpful in enhancing their self-esteem because parents are the very first person to whom a child relates and the foremost figure for children to help them to build their character, persona, ethics, belief and trust in

children. Therefore, the role of parents to enhance children's potential can be realized through the concept of effective parenting style [3]. Thus, a number of studies have been directed due to the well-documented significance of different styles and strategies of parenting on overall development.

The review of the present paper indicates that parents' relationship with their child is not the only contributory factor in the development of self-esteem. In fact, there are numerous other factors like parenting process, parent's relation with children, child rearing practices, parents' interpersonal relationship, level of warmth and discipline, all have been

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Citation: Tripathi N & Pandey S. (2022) Parenting and Its Role in the Development of Self-Esteem in Adolescents. J Psychiatry Psychol Res, 5(2): 307-309.

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found to affect child's self-esteem. Thus, positive parenting style is the major factor behind appropriate development of self-components whereas negative parenting strategies are found detrimental on overall growth of a child. Yet, there are still unexplored issues related to parental factor and its impacts on self-esteem. Therefore, it was considered relevant to explore the role of parenting, age and gender in development of adolescents' self-esteem.

Results obtained from Univariate analysis (ANOVA) revealed that parenting exhibited strong impact on development of adolescents' self-esteem. Specifically, due to positive parenting adolescents expressed greater extent of self-esteem which reflects that due to supportive and non-abusive parenting practices adolescents exerted superior level of self-esteem as compared to adolescents of negative parenting group. However, the effects of age and gender on self-esteem were found partially significant. Apart from main effects, interaction effects were also found significant which reflected that the development of self-esteem was jointly influenced by age, gender and parenting strategies.

Findings of the present study have been supported by number of empirical evidences. In this sequence of findings, major studies evinced that children who have a good relationship with parents tend to show better social adjustment and self-esteem development. Contrary to this, adolescents who were physically abused by their parents expressed inferior level of self-esteem [4]. Another study revealed that parental loving and demanding dimensions towards children exhibited positive relationships with children's self-esteem, while punishment showed a negative relationship. In Indian context, many studies have proved the significance of parenting on children's development. Another study [5] found that negative parenting styles caused differential effect on child's behavior. Further in a study, serious emotional and psychological problems in children exposed to domestic violence were identified [6]. A different study [7] found that positive parenting played favorable role in the development of creativity in school age children. Further, it was identified in another study that positive parenting played favorable role in shaping desirable behavioral functioning in children [8]. Another research denoted that mostly positive parenting practices would result in higher self-esteem as compared to negative parenting practices [9]. In a recent study, Pandey and Tripathi [10] revealed that abusive treatment of adolescents obstructs the proper development of self-esteem.

Findings of this research have sound theoretical supports. Erikson [11] noted that as individuals grow older, they begin to review their lifelong accomplishments and experiences, leading in some cases to more critical self-appraisals (ego despair) and in other cases to increased self-acceptance (ego integrity). Thus, a developmental shift toward greater self-reflection in old age may produce increases in self-esteem for some individuals but decreases for others. The period of adolescence is characterized by rapid biological, cognitive

and psychological changes because it marks the advent of puberty. In this respect, Konopka [12] argues that the adolescence is seen as a time of preparing the individual for adulthood that places youth in an ambivalent situation where they neither feel as children nor adults. This is the reason, that with the developing age i.e., from neo-adolescence to mid and late adolescence the linear declination in self-esteem has been found in the present study.

Moreover, gender differences in self-esteem were partially supported in the present study. Conversely, on some of the domains of self-esteem i.e. self-esteem (as a whole), general self-esteem and home self-esteem gender interaction effects were found significant. Many studies on self-esteem based on gender differences have reported ambivalent results. However, several studies reported higher self-esteem for men ([13,14] ;). Likewise, girls experience low self-esteem as compared to boys (Carlson et al., 2000; [15]). Another study [16] examined sex difference in self-esteem and reported that men scored significantly higher in global self-esteem than women. Furthermore, a majority of other researchers have also observed that male students scored higher on the self-esteem than female students on some domains [17,10].

CONCLUSION

Numbers of research papers have been published by scholars on self-esteem associated with different variables. Undoubtedly, considerable amount of knowledge about self-esteem has been documented by researchers in the Western culture. On the other hand, fewer amounts of research papers have been published to compare Western and Asian samples, on self-esteem. The Asian countries have totally different features regarding their culture, political conditions, socio-economic status, language, religions, child rearing practices and urban-rural living conditions among other factors. Therefore, more studies are needed to examine self-esteem in relation to these factors on Asian participants in general and Indian participants in particular. With reference to the assessment concern, the key problem inherent in the measures of self-esteem is associated with social desirability. Thus, alternative measures should be exercised. Though present study proved the strong influence of parenting strategies and other contributory factors on the development of self-esteem in adolescents but in further research above issues should be taken into account.

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